

Clarinet

by Gary Hardaway

We had disposable income once-
at least enough to act at times as if we did-
and disposed of it often

for Half Price books- so many
remaindered poets yet unread-
and curios at after Christmas clearances

where cash flow matters more than profit.
So it was, eight years ago, December,
that I bought the clarinet

that ornaments the large buffet
that stands against
the windowless north living room wall.

It's beautiful to look at and to hold
though true musicians would be appalled
by the black plastic

emulating ebonized wood
and its history of songless silence.
Long ago, I chose the clarinet

as the instrument I'd learn
in junior high school band before
I learned that making music is a luxury

families like mine cannot afford
and wouldn't drafting class
be better for me than band?

