

# Dark Heart

*by Gary Hardaway*

To know a thing, you have to see it  
or hear it, faintly, where it hides  
or catch a whiff of it, sweet or sour,  
or touch it when the lights are out  
or taste the way it flavors  
what you thought you knew.  
T know a thing is to recognize  
its properties and how it interacts.

When we take Vengeance,  
shave and shower him,  
deodorize and scent him,  
clothe him in a starched shirt  
and dark gray worsted wool,  
and call him Justice,  
in his dark heart  
he is Vengeance, still. Know

the dark heart. Taste  
its limbic chemistry  
as metal in the mouth. See  
the way it pulses through  
the bloodworks and muscle,  
clenching fingers in a fist. Hear  
its paleomammalian shriek  
inside the throat. Feel  
its surge through the lungs,  
abdomen and legs. Smell  
the coppery scent within  
the gorged nostrils. Seize

the dark heart where it lives

and stoke it back to calm routines.  
Let it serve your human life  
instead of something  
with savage eyes  
hiding in the bush.

