

# Not by Choice but Circumstance

*by* Gary Hardaway

I haven't overcome the anger yet  
at having lost the amniotic comfort  
and constraint of not yet being thrust  
into the glaring world

with its burdens of instinct-  
all that chemical desire-  
and consciousness- all that  
placement of the self

within the overwhelming awe  
and terror that is this space and time-  
and the not quite unbearable beauties,  
sensible and imagined.

With small and fleshy hands  
I scratch at enigmatic stones,  
shred the soft pulp of fingertips,  
and split the more incisive nails

striving to impose or discern  
a pattern that includes me.  
The body is a fragile dwelling place  
and ill equipped to understand.

