

# Odysseus as Superintendent

*by* Gary Hardaway

Bandy-legged and barrel-chested,  
with a bit of gut above the belt-cinched waist,  
bronzed by life under sun  
though not Aegean sun,  
he oversees the small addition  
rising in cinderblock and skeletal steel  
outside my office window-  
ten auto service bays with heat, no air.  
No king of Ithaca, but of each  
whining, banging, dust—clouded island  
of focused, physical work  
responsibility takes him. He pulls a tape  
to mark the bearing points of joists.

Not Odysseus. But aren't we all  
Odysseus? Self-indulgent, devious  
as circumstances warrant, curious,  
brave enough to soldier on  
through whims of pissy gods and  
unexpected weather. And clever, too,  
enough to keep the sea  
from sucking us down,  
always with something like an Ithaca  
to rope us back each time  
the wine dark waves sing sweetly  
of the calm beneath  
the troubled surface of the sea.

