

# Pebbles Against Empire

*by Gary Hardaway*

## **Exceptional and Unsurpassed**

We're Americans. We can quantify  
and commodify anything--  
beauty, vulnerability, despair.

Whatever you have,  
we can monetize it  
for investors

savvy to the common touch,  
schooled by sociologists  
and the marketing department

to recognize the mother lode  
that stitches the tender loin  
with marbling unsurpassed.

## **Deus Ex Machina**

O, sad, sad, people-  
there is no God in the machine.

There are but blips of electromagnetism  
and the algorithms coded

by sad, sad people  
whose role it is

to die, neatly,  
off stage.

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Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/gary-hardaway/pebbles-against-empire>»*

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## **Dynamics of the Free Market**

Our anxieties wear out.  
We find new ones, just our size,  
for the shelves are always stocked  
with bright new offerings, free for the taking.  
Some, of course, wear like iron  
and, like the little black dress  
or cordovan penny loafers,  
are always in fashion.  
With a little dry cleaning,  
or saddle soap and polish,  
they're always ready to wear again.

## **Commerce**

The new Fascists  
won't even run the trains  
on time.      Fuck trains—  
if you can't afford your own  
transportation, who needs you?

## **The Art of the Deal**

If you need some shit,  
we'll sell you some shit.  
If you don't need shit,  
we'll still connive  
to sell you shit.

