

Poem on the Table

by Gary Hardaway

Go ahead—vivisect the poem.
It won't die if you should slice
and peel away the skin
to trace the muscles
and tendons of control.

Its intelligence won't be
diminished when you take
a bone saw to its cranium
and explore the hemispheres
and wrinkles of its brain.

Its sexuality isn't compromised
if you reveal the paired gonads.
A poem can't be killed
by a bladed, clamped,
and scissored investigation.

Even a stake
through its heart
has no effect—
it breathes again and even
burned and buried carries on.

