

Quintet in a Natural Key

by Gary Hardaway

Illumination

Sunlight is a merciless critic
of housework and handcraft
especially low and out of the west.

The spider's web work glistens
this afternoon and the sad joints
in the foyer's drywall scratch the eyes.

Scorpion

I like the cool and dark beneath my rock.
It protects me from the glare and scorch
of noonday sun and the chilling shadows
of midnight moon. The space here
suits my soft new exoskeleton
which hardens in this solitary refuge.
When the stars emerge, I will be ready
to hunt again, the fine, mechanical
elegance of my tail a stinging wonder
to the dull, delicious beetles too large
for pedipalps alone to seize and hold.

Grace

An ordinary squirrel leaps and skips
along the fence top, disappearing
in a last leap to ground.
Means nothing much to the squirrel

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but makes me smile for the first time
at the end of an otherwise ordinary day.

Voluntary Hive

Honeybees have made a home
in the hollow of the brick column
at the end of our wing wall.

Spring and summer days
they buzz and buzz around
the entrance to the hive

and when the heat is high
emerge as a beard of bees
to cool the queen and her court.

We keep our distance.
They pollinate our plantings
and sometimes drown

fetching water from the pool.
We sadly skim their carcasses
along with leaves, trash,

and, in their season,
crape myrtle blooms.
Someday, the queen

will send out a new queen,
and another, and the bees
will sting and eat us

for the house and all its

nooks and hollows perfect
for an empire of bees.

Natural Perspective

Nature
will eat you
without remorse.

