

# Sparks Beneath the Surface

*by* Gary Hardaway

## **List**

Again, you make a list of things  
you need to do. Each time, you list  
“Make a list of things to do”  
as number One. Something on the list  
must be one thing you can scratch  
right through each time.  
You notice items Two through Last  
look much the same, list to list.  
Were you more efficient,  
you would scan and save the list,  
after reading it through,  
so you could save and print it  
next time. You won't be doing that.  
As always, after scratching item one,  
you'll paralyze, seized  
by all the work the living make by living.  
Then you'll soldier on  
to clean the litter box and watch  
as indolent cats piss and scratch  
the tranquil Shinto garden you just raked  
to mime a calmly waving sea.

## **Cleanliness and Godliness**

Most can't tolerate a squalor.  
An underlying sense of order prevails

and out come the trash bags, dust rags,  
and soaped-up warm water with sponges.  
It takes an addled or despondent  
or despondent and addled mind  
to tolerate and cultivate  
a proper, sordid squalor  
which draws the well, like  
car wrecks and open, runny, sores;  
they are compelled to right  
the toppled monuments back to upright  
evidence of human enterprise.

### **Creative Control**

There are too many writers.  
If we could portion ourselves out,  
like diamonds through De Beers,  
we'd have a higher value,  
our dark and common origins  
pressured by the tiny valves of control  
into something sparkly and coveted  
though fundamentally useless.

### **Writer's Block**

It's nature's way  
of saying Shut  
the fuck up!

## **End Times**

If I should wake  
before I die,  
just shoot me through  
the one good eye.

## **Why You Sympathize with the Despised Few**

Suicide's the special toy  
you hide behind the heavy chest

and when there's no one looking  
take and wind up with the key

hidden in the secret space  
behind the night stand drawer

and watch march slowly like  
a great stone statue come to life

to take you home to the hypostyle  
temple of Anubis, far away,

where stonework never spalls  
and cracks, eaten at by water.

## **Respite**

Words arrive,  
small sparks

beneath the surface  
of the great gray sea.

