

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.

