

# Strange Fruit of Unrewarded Labor

*by* Gary Hardaway

## **Citizen X**

His trash goes uninspected to the dump.  
A little fame would open him  
to gloved, enquiring analysts  
gleaning tossed out information:  
Keeper of cats. Patron of  
the postal service. Skimmer of  
mediocre local news. Eater of  
industrial calories. Consumer of  
domestic beer, cheap wine,  
intoxicating spirits.

## **Poems Like Biscuits**

Mix ingredients with care.  
Resist temptation-  
do not overmix  
and issue bricks  
instead of pillows  
from the oven.

## **To Those Indelible Coils Along Her Arms and Shoulders**

I don't live in tattooed skin so  
can't be certain why this Goth-ic

woman inks her arms and shoulders,  
and probably less visible skin,  
with these insinuating snakes  
and briars. The impulse is akin,  
perhaps, to that compelling me to  
scratch remarks and hope for readings  
both affirmative and close.

### **Creative Differences**

Fictionists, like God,  
are makers and destroyers of worlds.  
Poets are more like Jesus,  
suffering the cross  
after the priests and prefects  
have their fun.

### **Where Worlds Collide**

Artists straddle worlds-  
their larger parts in one  
contrived by fortunate investors,  
their accountants, attorneys,  
and double jointed politicians-  
and the rest (at least a toe,  
an ear, an eyelash) in another  
that whispers vulgar insults  
about the dull world  
to the artists  
who dutifully try  
to bring the worlds together

but never quite can manage it.

