

# Dark-Thirty

*by Gary Hardaway*

The city's dome of artificial light  
ghosts a crosshatch of contrails  
under the dimmed stars. The throb

of a Dodge Ram Hemi with after  
market pipes dopplers past. No need  
to see- the sound declares the facts.

The smell of garlic, soy, and onions  
exhausted from Skillman Wok  
perfumes December air. You shudder

with the chill and crush the filtered  
Marlboro Black against the bottom  
of the brown, bakelite ashtray

and retreat to gas-fired warmth  
inside a sagging, taxed and mortgaged,  
wood-framed, suburban house.

