

Ode to my Hands

Hands, resting on this silent book
bony and reddish like the feet of birds,
stiff from long nights clinging to their perch,
I take you for granted each time you
pull the brush 100 strokes,
quench the water buckets' thirst,
or hurl yourselves down to break my fall.

There is magic in you, hands,
a mysterious willingness to do as I ask.
You are unconditional as dogs,
more patient than the spider on her perfect web.

Suffering small accidents, you heal quickly, complain quietly,
more for communication than spite.
You are horses with soft hooves, tireless nonetheless.

Evenings, you prepare my meals
sense the fine grit of flour, the sucking caress of dough,
the fragrant crush of basil that wakens the fingertips
like crickets singing dawn into the sky.

And how you thrum with love's ecstasy,
your caresses like tingling rivers flowing sensation
across the body, on skin as warm and fleshy and firm
as a papaya ripening in the sun.

Unendingly generous, you teach me the world.
You make no demands, dear hands, for fame or gratitude, or rest.

Just the occasional longing
to stroke a housecat's silken fur,
to feel the guitar's vibrating strings,
or grasp a river-wet stone
and lift it into the sunlight.