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# The Hands

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## THE HANDS

walking down the street he is afraid  
of all the things that move, and mostly  
he is afraid of time, whose movement

involves hands, for instance  
the hand of death. also,  
years before there were  
the fearful, sociable hands stretching out

like torn instruments from the deep  
friendliness of salesmen,  
and now, each morning, forever,  
the life insurance comes up with the sun.

he asks the sidewalks, is this real?  
this morning i get up, my wife  
is warm, asleep, massaged  
but not by my hands, if these are hands.

she is soothed  
by good luck and dull machinery  
and nothing flows from her hands but sleep.  
my hands are hands, only

sometimes they grow outward and then they  
are everything, the re-enactment  
of the wrong, extended craziness of flesh  
and what it covers, our risked valuables,

the fast clocks, the back seats  
of cars loading up on death and semen,  
the nights that force us  
into practically death and always  
the choked out hands of my wife  
in the bed, still sleeping.