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# Apparition: Damage; A Man with Unclenched Fist

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## APPARITION

### DAMAGE

Is it the top has screwed  
from my head, like the cap off a grenade? Screams  
rise from me, who's missing my lid. I'll screw  
to myself, what I must find again.  
He throws the best cup  
in the house, not at her; the wall  
breaks into china  
the handle in pieces dribbles to the skirting.  
I've my hands to my ears, to scream,  
shaping to a question mark. I am trained  
into the serifs, ridges, and hollows of letters;  
I am a watermark inside paper. No, I am something;

the boy fastens to the back of the couch  
fingers like silent tongues. The voices of father  
and mother make of my silence  
this question, who will be hurt most?

### A MAN WITH UNCLENCHED FIST

They chase about the table, hate, that takes  
away gender. Her hair swishing cheeks,  
that was the darling of his fingers.

My brother will die of their shouts. He weeps  
and I must attend. But why won't they stop, who have  
more energy than a child's? Why is this night

different from all others? How can  
the four of us, unforced, hold each by the waist  
to weep contrition and love? Unlovely mother

and weeping father, divorce, the church's  
legal knife. There were chairs and heavenly cups;  
a man, with unclenched fist blessed me and vanished;

it was as if I thought I could not die.

### THROUGH LEAVES AND FRAGMENTED LIGHT

Through leaves and fragmented light the cricket flakes  
her shaped notes off wings. Crouching  
by a woman in pain, in the hair on my arm,  
on wood, or its faecal ash, she has made visible  
the idea for a spring hardened to tear, slowly  
apart, our bodies. She is not  
that idea: a contralto, her oily discs twanged  
into our lives. If what it is  
to make pain, what more

to clash this soft battering consequence, lyric  
percussion, a pebbled  
softly rattled water, that unfastens the two selves  
of one mind, to stiffened facing flighted wings.  
I search for, find your body-sound  
flickering winter in ash's doldrums, the atomic drowsing  
in a hearth. And with you  
waiting is remembering, where none need  
rise in the dark. Tell her, it is so.

*for Margaret and Michael Mott*