

## These Hands of Mine

The fingers crooked like a hen's  
foot, the knuckles as big as the *karidia*  
on this tree from holding on to  
children's hands, washing, wringing  
out clothes and floor rags. Closing  
around the wrist of my man, lifting yet  
another glass of wine.  
What good are these hands to me now,  
barely fitting around the teats  
to milk this goat.

If only the rain came—  
I would stand behind this shed  
stretch out my hands to catch  
the first drop, watch the rain  
opening them up, my fingers grow  
smooth and straight again, I would grasp  
its strings to pull me high up  
toward the sky, leaving behind this goat,  
this house of my son-in-law with the red-  
painted plaster peeling like a scab  
off a wound. My hair, black once more,  
flying behind me like a flock of black ravens,  
I would watch this island, that bent my spine  
into a scythe till it resembled its own,  
getting smaller, smaller and shout  
to the boy down below whom I have watched  
for thirty years measuring  
with a stick the shadow cast  
by a cypress: *throw away your stick,*  
*look up to the sky and wish too for the rain!*

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