

Without Hands

Lorna Crozier

[In memory of Victor Jara, the Chilean musician whose hands were smashed by the military to stop him from playing his guitar and singing for his fellow prisoners in the Santiago stadium. Along with thousands of others, he was tortured and finally killed there in September 1973.]

All the machines in the world
 stop. The textile machines, the paper machines,
 the machines in the mines turning stones to fire.
 Without hands to touch them, spoons, forks and knives
 forget their names and uses, the baby is not bathed,
 bread rises on the stove, overflows the bowl.
 Without hands, the looms
 stop. The music

stops.

The plums turn sweet and sticky and gather flies.

Without hands

without those beautiful conjunctions

those translators of skin, bone, hair

two eyes go blind

two pale hounds sniffing ahead and doubling back
 to tell us

of hot and cold or the silk of roses after rain
 are lost

two terns feeling the air in every feather
 are shot down.

Without hands my father doesn't plant potatoes

row on row, build a house for wrens,

or carry me

from the car to bed

when I pretend I'm sleeping.

On wash-days my mother doesn't hang clothes
 on the line, she doesn't turn the pages of a book
 and read out loud,

or teach me how to lace my shoes.

Without hands my small grandmother


doesn't pluck the chicken for our Sunday meal

or every evening, before she goes to sleep,

brush and brush her long white hair.

Lorna Crozier. *Angels of Flesh, Angels of Silence*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988.

IN CONCERT : DANIEL VIGLIETTI



IN SOLIDARITY WITH EL SALVADOR

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LOCAL: Lord Beaverbrook High school 9019 Fairmount Dr. SE

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