Memory of the Hand

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Ray Gonzalez

**Memory of the Hand**

The hand recalls what it has held,  
the fist of the truth wedged inside the knuckles,  
fitting into the drum of things you cared about,  
lifting its memory to allow you  
to be alone when  
you are not alone,  
forcing you to reach out, take care  
of that memory you made up with your hands,  
the one about taking your father’s arm  
you have never held,  
helping him cross the street  
where you let him go  
without waving goodbye or making  
a fist at him in anger.  
The hand aches for what it has held,  
mist washing its fingers  
like a smoke where you hide your knowledge  
of a sign language, a movement of joints,
palms and fingers trying to spell
that silent moment when
you touched what moved out
of your reach—
a soft yearning, a bare back,
the tiny mountain range of spine rising
to remind you the hand holds onto little flesh,
knows nothing about the skin except lines
on its own palm, deep furrows where
the weight of remembrance is held.