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I Wore My Mother's Hand

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I WORE MY MOTHER'S HAND

It was like wearing leaky dishwashing gloves
and fumbling in scrambled-egg water

I wore her dead flesh, a reverse
pleasure like farts, or if you have ever
sunk your hand in warm blueberry pie
I wiggled my fingers in the mush of it

until brined and puffy my hand in hers
inflated full and rose like a balloon

up there waving absurd like a fiddler crab's one giant claw except his
is not absurd for courtship and dominance
doUBt I'll court or dominate in a hand like this

couldn't weave or sort grain
if I gripped the rough bark to climb trees
her wet flesh would tear

I could swirl white fog and watch the designs
could open her hand, soundless mouth
could close it but not all the way
and pat things in place but not arrange them precisely

I'd feel a jolt when her finger would stop
at a surface my own couldn't feel, descending
through her flesh a half-inch more until it too
felt something hard
falling apart her hand offered
no protection, or, perhaps from the cold, so warm
inside but that was my own
hand's heat given back
don't know why I didn't take it off
could keep it with my dishwashing gloves
upright on bottles, orange or green,
still life at the sink, the bright foreground fingers,
beyond, out the window, the garden

my other hand small and dark
dry as the crumb of a tea-leaf
flew up of its own weightlessness, like a bat

Tenenbaum