

## Keturah Considers Abraham's Hands

*Robbie Taggart*

—*Genesis 25*

as he sits across the room holding a pear in one and a knife in the  
other

She thinks of all the things those hands held and touched  
before they held and touched her

Unlike the hands of this child, her sixth son who nurses at her breast,  
which grasp tightly to all things as if everyone and everything  
could be taken away in a moment

there is something free and confident in Abraham's old hands  
like the open sky which holds whatever God puts into it:  
sun, moon, cloud, stars, emptiness

This is what it means, he told her, that eternity is our covering  
We hold our hands palm up and receive all that the day places there  
We do not wonder about tomorrow

Now he cuts the pear, making small slices he will share  
with the small boys who gather around him like  
dogs around a wounded animal

Somewhere the second son sits alone in a field listening to  
the cypresses creak in the wind thinking of the way his  
mother's voice walks the desert

Tell me about the time, she begins, but his fingers are so gentle  
These old supple hands like the water whose fluidity  
makes it stronger than the rocks it erodes

Hands turned downward and laid indiscriminately on all things  
Benediction flung across vast spaces he cups each face to bless  
all the families of the earth

There is a learned gentleness in these hands that will cease to hold her  
and as she walks with her sons into the east country she yearns  
to be held so completely in the hands of God