

Bounty

The old hat on the hook
with its moth-eaten holes
letting in more than light.

Note with the Hand I Sent You

for Ashley Wood

Suppose I could spare one. Hope the left will do
as I'd have a hard time writing without the right.
To fill you in on its background, it's always been
somewhat wiry, but don't let that belie its strength;
you can count on it if you're ever about to fall.
It likes oatmeal and seaweed soaps, scratching chins,
the occasional massage in the middle of the palm.
It doesn't like being balled up into a fist
or pointing out faults. Leave the nails a little long
and every once in a while gaze wonderingly
at the scars. On grey rainy mornings, play it
some *irie* music. When it starts feeling the groove,
give it a dime and the time to tap along.
Offer it a glove as soon as the air smarts
against the cheek. Keep it happy with plenty
of boob to feel and it'll gladly help you
carry groceries when the rest of your hands
are full. And when the world seems too much,
when you need a hand on your shoulder,
it'll be there, you won't even have to ask.

Scoffing at Eternity, Softening in its Wake

Eternity, bah, we don't know two hundred years,
let alone two hundred thousand,
let alone a turning that never, ever ends...

And yet in the turning of a year, a day, a now,
we talk of a timelessness that gave birth to the moment,
to before and afters, to a forgetting of the clock—

we talk of forever as if we come from that condition,
as if there's no doubt that the best and most
indestructible part of us will go there;

as if forever, far from the distant reaches of the measured
universe, is right here, the measurer taking stock,
under our senses, when and where we stand.

Bliss, Even in Ignorance

for Christian Wiman

Into the moment's torrent never breathed one man
whose body was not a nervous wreck of harmony,
even as health held him warm against the sky.

And yet every rise and fall of the chest
was grace and attention to the blessed swell
of affection that he did and didn't notice.