

POETRY | SPRING 2023

## Daughter Gesture

By Joanne Clarkson

No mirrors in this too warm room.  
No frames for silver strangers.  
In these final, bed-confined days,  
all memory comes through her hands.  
They move in her sleep: kneading,  
knitting, hoeing until they bleed.  
At rest they bend around an invisible  
wooden handle. You can think of

nothing else to honor. She believes  
you are her sister, too old to be a daughter.  
You choose Hollyhock pink, the hue  
of summer by the back gate, and paint  
each broken and ridged nail. A tender

sunset gesture. She regards her shining  
fingertips as if she has never seen them.  
You cannot gauge her moods these days,  
relieved when she sighs, seems pleased.  
She touches your chapped and reddened  
palms, raw from all the washing.  
“You have my hands,” she whispers.

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**Joanne Clarkson is a poet whose sixth poetry collection, "Hospice House," was released by MoonPath Press in 2023. Her poems have been published in such journals as Poetry Northwest, The Healing Muse, Examined Life Journal, American Journal of Nursing and Beloit Poetry Journal. She has received an Artist Trust Grant and an NEH grant to teach poetry in rural libraries. Clarkson has Masters Degrees in English and Library Science, has taught and worked for many years as a professional librarian. After caring for her mother through a long illness, she re-careered as a Registered Nurse working in Home Health and Hospice.**

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