

But persevere and you'll survive the years
It takes to grow to fill your perfect niche.
Enough advice, the best's been said for us;
I open doors for those that follow me,
Don't make the universe a *cul-de-sac*.



Rosemari Mealy

THE HANDS WHICH SPOKE — FOR THE EYES THAT
COULD NOT HEAR

With the same hands with which she use to caress me come
evening—
I had to rub those same hands that for a day's work/were in such
pain

Such beautiful hands
now, tough as the hide of those old
brown boots she wore/because of her swollen feet
they had been cut at the toe

Those same hands with which she use to caress me
were stained by the juices of leaves/
the red dirt of the land
and the excrement of the worm

With those same hands I had watched her gesture to the workers
one day
calling them from the fields without
even a word—
saw the long-handle hoes—imprinted with time
used by the tobacco workers—symbol of their craft
as the pen is of mine—
the hoes slid from under each beautiful hand—
remembering that at the end of last season
their voices were not heard
and she had called a stoppage for this—and many other reasons

I watched each hand rise in unison
from those sunburnt arms

A scene—like the smoke—unfurling from the curing barn
Such beautiful hands
as tough as the hide
of the brown boots she wore....

Come evening, I would caress
those paining Black hands
for what I thought that day/if only she could
hear me say—
So beautiful are your hands
they organize in such a different way—

BLUEPRINT (FOR ALEX)

Tall, thin carpenter man—
building things—beautiful things
with your carpenter hands

Reminding me of:
my granddaddy who died
a broken man—he too was
a tall, thin carpenter man

Granddaddy drank a whole lotta
white lightning, talked trash
schooled his sons and daughters too
at eight taught me how to shoot
his twenty-two, left grandma and at
one time ran off with a beautiful

Cuban woman—my grandpa was
a tall, thin carpenter man