

His hands

*Is this Mary speaking about Jesus? Thora speaking about Magnus?
Or someone you know speaking about their son?*



It was his hands.

They were so still.

So... lifeless.

He has, he *had* such strong hands.

Used to work, used to shaping the world around him.

Always moving, always on the go.

I remember as a bairn

He would grip so fiercely

Grasping your finger as if his life depended on it.

I suppose it did, for a while.

Then, the only time they were still was when he was sleeping.

So still.

Such peace, but more than once that awful moment where, despite yourself,

You think: is this it?

And panic overtakes reason until, thank God, he sighs and breath continues.

You never want to outlive them, no mother does.

You'd do anything, *anything* to prevent that.

So many griefs along the way.

When he no longer takes the breast

And you're glad, in many ways, and yet, just once more would have been grand.

When a cuddle is refused, or another preferred.

When you no longer mark the circumference of his world

When things happen, dreadful things and you can't stop it.

Oh God, such dreadful things. And those wounds.
Wounds no mother should have to see, or tend.
And still this fiercest feeling – give me my son and I can make it better.
Just give him to me, let me make it better.
And you try and you try and you take his hand
And, oh God, its so cold. So very cold.
This can't be his hand surely. There must be some mistake.
And there has been, and there is no correcting it now.

Such bonny hands.
I held them, held them for a long while.
As if holding might stem the tide.
As if the womb might be restored around him
and this vital connection supply all he needs once more.

Later, when he'd grown, and I thought my heart would burst once more.
His hands would be still, from time to time, not just when he slept,
Though I no longer could watch him then.
But when he prayed.
Such stillness in his hands as he prayed.

Like they'd found a home and searching was no longer needed.
Like they were being held by someone else, someone I couldn't see.
I have to believe that, you see.
It's the only thing that helped me to let go his hand in the end.
The thought they were still being held.
Else I'd be holding them still.