

FIFTEEN

A change in the lighting.

The fingers of the left hand, still affixed to the chair, have become slightly more cramped. Otherwise, same as before.

My own hand—I mean
 My hand
 When it was still a hand, a simple ordinary
 Human paw,
 Made of the usual stuff
 That ordinary hands are made of—
 Flesh,
 Skin, sinews,
 Nerves, I suppose, what else is there?
 Endoskeleton.
 Gelatinous nails—That hand
 Always seemed weightless—never was it
 A burden,
 Something that would have to be carried around. Not once
 In my entire association with that hand
 Did I feel it pulling
 Downward,
 Anchoring me to the earth.
 Oh, it must have weighed something, of course—
 I don't deny that—my hand was a massive
 Entity,
 Obedient, like all other
 Massive entities, to the gravitational
 Imperative. But it never occurred to me to take my hand
 Into the bathroom, place it on the scale,
 And weigh
 The damn thing! To be honest,
 I never gave my hand much thought when it was still
 A hand, useful
 For a thousand tasks: it did
 What it was told, more often than not, though I don't recall
 That it ever brought
 To the performance of its duties any unusual
 Grace
 Or speed. My hand
 Was an unexceptional hand, of average

Size

For a man my height—it showed up
Each day to do
Its job.

But this new hand—it's difficult to say
What it's good for—I still
Don't even know what it is! That first moment—when I glanced
Down, to make sure my image,
My look,
Was ready to pass muster and instead
Discovered
This appendage, this new
Thing, here at the end of my wrist, I must have spent—
Who knows
How much time—it must have been
I-don't-know-how-long
Or longer, trying to study it, to figure out
What the hell it was—
Look at it! No wonder my eyes
Got sore from the effort, from trying to determine
Which of these apparent
Surfaces were real, and which reflections—
Its shape
Made no sense to me: here concave but there convex,
This profusion
Of conic sections, hyperbolas and parabolas
Convolutéd
Upon themselves, now and then
Interrupted by a rectangle, or a loose-jointed
Rhomboid!

After a time, who knows how long, I turned away,
Closing my eyes,
Not in defeat—or so I told myself—
But in
Rejection.

(He closes his eyes.)