

The Dropped Hand



The  
Dropped  
Hand  
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<i>Atelier:</i>	"Letter from Bornholm" "Scallop: in Memoriam"
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<i>Driftwood Review:</i>	"Peter Pan on Derby Day" "Here. There. Here."
<i>Ekphrasis:</i>	"Recalling 'The Diver'"
<i>The Florida Review:</i>	"Signaling Bridge" "Maundy Thursday"
<i>The MacGuffin:</i>	"Holding Hands with the Tin Man" "The Dropped Hand"
<i>Nimrod:</i>	"It Is" "Missing the Caves"
<i>Performance Piece:</i>	"A Blessing"
<i>U. S. 1 Worksheets:</i>	"A Puzzle"
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<i>Visions International:</i>	"Everything About Elephants"

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<http://onefullstop.net>

For Julie

— and for Judy

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Let word be to absence  
As color is to shadow...

*Yves Bonnefoy*



## *Everything About Elephants*

"This is not a joke," Metro Traffic explains, but this herd of elephants slowing traffic along I-275 makes news I'm glad to bring to you in the Health and Living Center where you lie, curled most days, your gaze fixed below the sill. Why don't they make these windows wider, deeper, let them stretch from ceiling to floor, let in shrubbery, clouds, road construction, teenagers waving cloths to bring customers to their weekly carwash? I make such a shallow window, bringing what little I can—tales of self mostly, easy to relate and you eager to hear. Of poems, friends, Fredrika at the Cape on vacation. Before she returns, you will be gone. Later she'll say she saw a shadow over the sun, a passage I try to deny, especially today as you sit upright, tugging at the stocking cap slipping over your brow. "Go on!" you scoff at the pachyderm report, eyes bright with the humor of it. These last few weeks, I, slow to speak, have done most of the talking, while you, always fluent, strain and wait for words. *Stir-fry, Kleenex, hope* have eluded you. So this quick laughter, set free from a cumbrous dark, makes me grateful for everything I know about elephants—their stately walk to the grounds of their dead, the placid browse of the great wide heads and their escape today from the traveling circus into waist-high grasses.

## *Peter Pan on Derby Day*

*The Fairy and Human Relations Congress will hold its annual meeting ... the first weekend in May.*  
Wireless Flash Weird News

Do **you** believe in fairies,  
smudged sparrow—will you hang on to toeholds  
of light, those pinpoints darting  
through the darkened hall?

These days you run through the green  
mornings, each footfall a rebuttal  
of cloud spots, liver spots, lung spots.

We missed War Emblem's victory today.  
Next year, we'll get swept by the pound and gleam,  
photo finishes and all the controversial dust.

We're planning to wear gaudy hats  
and let horses make divinest sense.

Last Derby Day, just before they were Off!  
we explained the race to our Bengali waiter  
as we watched it from the counter in that Manhattan bar.

You bet your peanuts on Keats, who faded early.  
I put mine on the colt whose trainer saved his life  
with a mixture of milk, turpentine and faith.

I don't recall if he won or lost, but I'm shopping  
for a comical hat, something bursting with spring  
and belief, like the wires and pulleys I couldn't see

when I was five—supports that kept the actors  
flying out over the stage.