

# *Long Term Touching*

MARTHA CHRISTINA

When I held his hand  
for the first time,  
it was thinner,  
younger, eager.

Ten nails bitten  
to the quick  
might have,  
if I'd been watchful,  
warned me  
of edgy mornings  
and long, nervous nights.

Now I raise  
those punished fingers  
to my lips,  
remind my mouth  
to be careful. The hands still  
an entrance to the body.