

## Jeff Dolven

### HOW DO YOU DO?

All hands are out in the street today,  
 straining against the leashes of forearms.  
 Little concerned with us, they leap  
 to greet each other, tangle and clasp,  
 a subtle suction, like a kiss,  
 then off again in a friendly game  
 of overlord and underdog  
 we only understand in part.

Sometime later, folded in prayer,  
 or contemplation, right says to left,  
*if anything should happen to me*  
*you'll know, won't you, what to do?*  
 and left says to right, *you've always kept me*  
*friendless and illiterate.*  
 We really ought to get them to shake,  
 but it's not clear they fit that way.

### EXILE

For some years now I've lived in Exile:  
 long enough to pass for native  
 if there were any natives here,  
 which there are not.

The sand in Exile falls like rain.  
 It fills my glass,  
 the kind of sand that stands for time,  
 the kind of *like* that means *instead*.

Each of us says his evening prayers  
 to the star above a different town.  
 We couple, yes,  
 but always it's with someone else

and long ago.  
 I like you, though. I like you well,  
 the kind of well you drink from once  
 was cool and unforgettable.