

soft touch

mother to child (to mother to child to mother to child to...)

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*Recall the hand
is the hand of a child
a warm hollow
no hand here
would fit
into
an impression
of an impression
of shelter
shell*



*take hold where I am
most likely to break
at the neck
a hollow stalk
past bloom
in trust take hold*

*your hand is a shell
I'll lay along
the rippled edges of
your fingers' end
holding by the sea's breath
released
within*




*encircle and steady me
in the hollow
of your palm
no more
your mother
than stone
encircle*



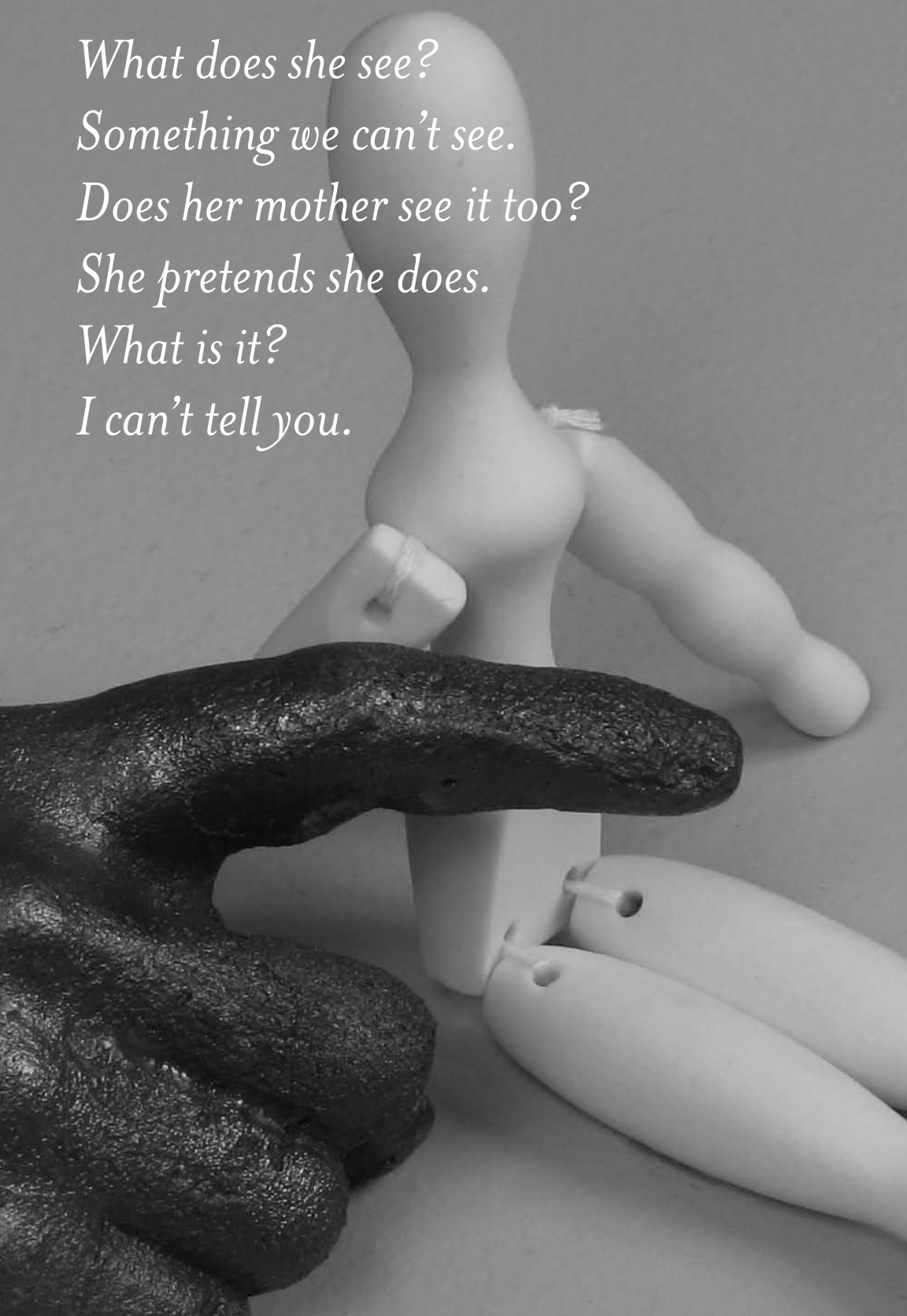


*you came through me
and now you are all
that is between me
and where I would fall
were you not*



*till I lay down
in the shadow
of your fingers'
uncertain bridge
there is a space
neither reaching
nor bending
connect
neither bending
nor reaching can
close*

*What does she see?
Something we can't see.
Does her mother see it too?
She pretends she does.
What is it?
I can't tell you.*





*how you have me
and hold me up
is by the hand
opening
you have hold*



*And I lean back into all you can touch me with
to recall
I can touch*

an open hand is offering

an open hand is wanting

an open hand

is offering

an open hand

is wanting an open hand

is offering an open hand





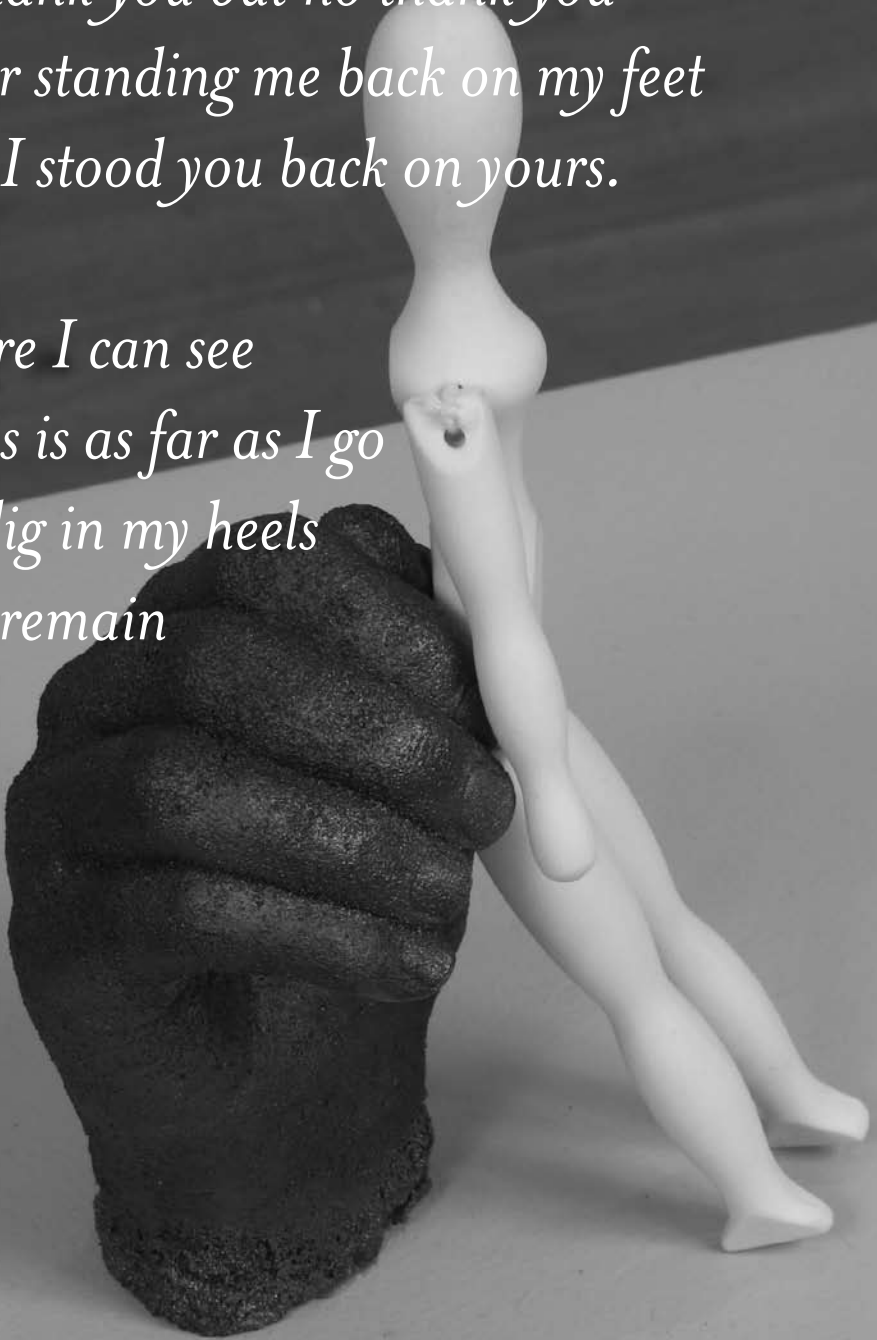
*As long as your eyes were open, I was not supposed to close mine.
Wake up wake up wake up, you said—
using your fingers to peel open the lids of my eyes*

*Now your hand is shelter
your hand is the sky
you will one day close
(my eyes)*

*for my eyes your hand is
the sky*

*Thank you but no thank you
for standing me back on my feet
as I stood you back on yours.*

*here I can see
this is as far as I go
I dig in my heels
to remain*





*some say I have your back
when they mean I am between you
and danger
a second spine
to safety*

*awaken to
the slightest
deliberate move
to touch*