

A Study of Hands

In school, we read about Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

'Miss,' my voice shoots up. *My mother's friend has Jekyll and Hyde hands*

Mrs Brown shakes her head. Carries on. But it's true.

My mum's friend has Jekyll and Hyde hands.

He holds my arm when we cross the street.

Waves me off at the school gate.

'Be a good girl now.'

Evenings he bends over my homework, his hand a feather against my cheek.

'Clever girl.' He smiles and does my sums.

'Get ready for bed,' mum shouts. Her voice is a red flag.

His baby snuggles in her lap.

'I'll help,' my mother's friend offers.

'Thank you sweetheart'. Mum pecks his mouth, grateful
she's found a man who'll stick around.

Mum says I'm a big girl but still he follows me up...

There are fifteen steps. I count them all.

The coir carpet has a stain like a bruised eye on the last tread.

I want to keep climbing on, make it Jack's beanstalk

Let it go on and on...to

where koala bears suck on stars to help them sleep.

My tummy gurgles. Eyes itch. He murmurs,

'Hurry up love. Stop daydreaming'.