

# What He Did With His Hands

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He stood firm on two feet  
with his hands clasped carefully  
in front of him and looked

the guy in the eye and didn't flinch  
when they shook hands.

He'd said his own name, fully, first,

middle, and last, and explained  
that he would work hard and show up,  
and that he could be depended

upon if only the man would hire him.

Which he did, on probation,  
he called it. *That means*, he said,

*you gotta prove yourself.*

*Maybe you do okay, I give you a small  
raise. Fuck up once, though,*

*you're outa here.* It was alright. He  
understood this. That's the way  
things were, except that things were

always this way. This is what he knew.  
And that he would have to be  
different from what he knew. He left

with his hands at his sides,  
unpocketed until he was a block away,  
and then his hands found

the small lint pills and loose threads,  
but they seemed for the first  
time to lack any comfort, the posture

no longer useful. He just gave  
up, letting them hang naked in the air  
at the ends of his arms, fingers

loose, small creatures that did not  
torment or make him curious,  
but his palms itched, *like a sonofabitch*,

he said out loud into the bluing  
shadows coming down around him.  
Tomorrow, he would begin.