

The Wish for a New Hand

one that snakes down the page like threads of wet black hair
left behind in the bath. A free hand,
very delicate, alive. It might take

a lifetime not to master but to serve, so many
fixed notions must first uncramp in old fingers, there are
so many tiny bones in the hand you have now.
And the musculature of the arm, the barbed wire
network of nerves knotting up in the brain

must be loosened, become as tendrils
from the heart, unfurling into
green song. Listen

to the whisper of the grass, and accept
dictation from each of the sun's innumerable children.
This grass is very dark, as the wish for
a new hand is a dark wish
to have names for the nameless inklings, *dark to come
from under the faint red roofs of mouths.*

GLEN DOWNIE