

The End

Hanging the miniature ornaments
With the girl on the miniature tree
While the baby sleeps
Beneath sheets of white noise and
Uncorrupted darkness

'Ouch!' she says each time the needle pricks her finger
There is no way the little tree can wear it all
Can bear it all
Its branches began to droop under the cheer
Angels mostly

Now the girl goes to bed
Reluctantly, falls asleep instantly
Now the night comes full on

And so the Christ Child will be born again
His animal life will be born again
The story will begin again
His tiny mouth will curl towards his mothers breast
Strong mouth of the newborn
That part that comes knowing
What to do

They will meet for the first time
She'll have those breasts
Until the end of time
He'll have that mouth
Until the end of his

Before the Hands

What were they
before they were

the hands
that can hold

a pencil, cut
fruit and skin

fish, feel
with fingertips

the very spot
on the root

just beneath
the earth, take

hold and pull up
with precise

force the life
story of a weed?

Before, was it
only a dream

of hands, the dream
of apprehending

which became
the hands

which became
the holding

and then the taking?

Try Me

by Carrie Fountain

Try me

says the heart that feels itself lost in a world
of hearts, unknown by others. Excuse me,

says the body, Feed me, says the child. Feed
me what? says the mother. Feed me, please,

says the child. That's better. Today the world
will open as it does every day, and that scrim

behind which you hide—you will push at it.
You will try. Someday it will give way.

And what will you find looking back
at you? Who will your true audience be?