

The vigil

by [Angela Alaimo O'Donnell](#) in the [April 7, 2009](#) issue

How did he do it?
Open those good hands,
spread his five fingers wide
to receive the blunt nails?
Hear the crack of bone,
delicate wingwork of phalanx and carpal?
Hang the weight of his whole self
from those soft clay doves
and trust them to hold?
To hold?

They flutter light.
Brush against the good wood.
His mother's eye catches,
watches as she used to watch
beside her dreaming child
those white birds of paradise
gently reach
for some thing lost,
some thing left behind,
a kingdom he saw about to come.