

POND'S HAND CREAM

My mother set the white jar
on a shelf beside the kitchen sink,
its blue label turned neatly forward.
When I asked her if I could have some
she would say, "Bring it to me."
She would press her fingertips
to the little hill of lotion.
"Give me your hands," she would say,
and I would, I gladly would
give her my hands, holding them out
as if ready to catch a large ball.
First one hand, then the other. Then,
she would press my hands together
and cover them with hers,
rubbing the last of the lotion dry,
my hands both warm and cool
at the same time.

Hand, first cup,
small valley at the end of the arm,
when you were still animal
or the shell of an animal
that is when love first touched me.
That is how I know to ask.