

## Handfast

*For Isa Muazu*

Think of his starved hand  
Reaching for England  
As they stretchered him  
Towards the exit: his small wrist  
Helpless in the terminal  
Darkness, and his thin fingers,  
Through which Justice slipped.  
If you could stand and listen  
To his dry lips whispering *freedom*  
Like a password – his sole prayer  
To breathe our English air –  
Then would you hold that hand,  
England?

I think you would  
If it were up to you, though  
England's grim-eyed guards  
Say otherwise, and ranks of hobnailed  
Headlines stand behind them.  
Would you cast off the newsprint's  
Mailed glove, to save a dying man?  
If you could choose – I say  
You'd take his hand and hold it fast,  
Not letting go. *Handfast*,  
An English word.