

JERI THERIAULT

reach

after Left Hand, 2007 by Jenny Holzer

the inked left hand
raises its life-line
love-line
splays a young man's
reach
surrendered
smudged
the rest of him
unseen captive
this hand-off/stand-off
this hard reading
of hands the way we hand-letter
on hand-made paper
unhand me
the messy way
we hand things down & over
the way my cousin's unmarked
hands his pale priest's
hands dug his mother's grave
because hands demand
earth
 blessing
a boy who left home
too soon
lifts his left hand
hurls dirt on the coffin
in the rain
touches air
water
earth
 whose mother
this hand almost
reaches