

Winner of the Lynda Hull Memorial Poetry Prize

HADARA BAR-NADAV

Thumb

Who means what it is to be human
and is scarred by childhood.

Thick and neckless. Your head shaped
like a gravestone.

A smile opens across the knuckle and disappears
every time you lift a tumbler of scotch.

Who holds a pen and lies.

Who holds a chopstick
in the language of still-twitching fish.

When you think of the past you form a fist
until a heart beats.

Once removed by a chisel. Then reattached.

You stiffen in the rain and dream
of pudding—a smooth, boneless lake.

Who butters morning toast
while wearing a butter hat.

Who fingers the ad for beef, grows numb
while talking to a girl on the phone.

Useless while typing. Useless
tool who only worships space.

A stump. A blackened stamp.
Your own private map of loneliness.

Who always leans to one side. Detached.
Distant from all others.