

**From An Alphabet of Women****Yvette**

i

Thirty years after your hands  
rippling allegro, shaping  
flowers or stillness, I wake  
stricken and grateful: the night  
has been your hands, unbidden—  
sonatas you fired, that peace  
you guarded and spoke as grace,  
every unsummoned shape, tone,  
gesture lives, reaches—I wake  
to thirty years, their unknown  
reaching, a touch unbroken.

ii

Letters from ghosts are absurd:  
from thirty years of silence  
not a word sounds right, not one—  
intricate hands, eyes, voice, step  
all delicacy, all fire,  
these have had their words . . . Only  
this, Yvette: Nothing we make  
our own by our surrender,  
innocent of time, is lost:  
we reach always, not knowing  
we reach, not knowing we touch.

— *Robert Beum*