

**DARBY PRICE**

**This Requires Wisdom**

We woke up this morning, each of us,  
a stinging in our right hands.

The flesh welled up in a red curving line  
as if a brand had been pressed

to our skin as we slept. We puzzled it over coffee,  
consulted our lovers or parents or friends.

No, it doesn't burn anymore. No, doesn't itch.  
There's nothing the matter, it seems, except

we're convinced this can't be good—  
the suddenness of it, the uniformity.

We begin to lay one hand over the mark when we meet.  
We nod at each other instead of shaking.

It is like a nakedness, this flushed swell, and  
no one wants to talk about it anymore.

But behind our backs, our fingers move:  
tracing, retracing the rise.