

My Father's Hands

Karin Breuer

My father had slender hands with long, elegant fingers that belied their strength;
Piano-player hands I used to muse.
His hands had the colour and look of leather;
The same leather that he used to fashion stylish shoes for the stores in Heidelberg.

A quiet man, his hands expressed the feelings he could not utter.
He had the firm clasp of a man who had no secrets; who slept well at night;
Hands that proudly held the little hand of his son, walking the streets of Riga;
Hands that circled my mother's waist and made her smile;
Hands that swept my little sister up to his shoulders so she wouldn't tumble in the deep ruts of
the muddy streets in McBride.
Hands that held me close as we danced on the night of my wedding.

I saw my father's hands hold hammer, saw and plane, to build our house.
I saw my father's hands hold shovel, hoe and rake, to make a garden where only brush once
grew.
His hands were artists creating designs on paper that came to life in carvings from wood.
His hands were craftsmen, building furniture, hooking rugs, making macramé wall hangings and
knotting silken threads into evening purses.
His hands were inspired, inlaying white pine with slender red cedar crosses for the pulpit,
baptismal font and pews of our church.

My father's hands spoke of life, a life of hard work and a soul filled with beauty and truth.
He had hands designed for an easier life: piano player hands.
He smiled when I told him that and said, "I think I would have liked to play the violin."