

# Green

Barely done with growing but enough  
done for use, big and brand-new  
to themselves, and to us fresh-minted,

the bodies of boys on the last laps  
toward manhood, by which we mean  
humanness, are harvested. Shocks

of them are bound and sent  
still green, to ripen  
in the shipping like tropical

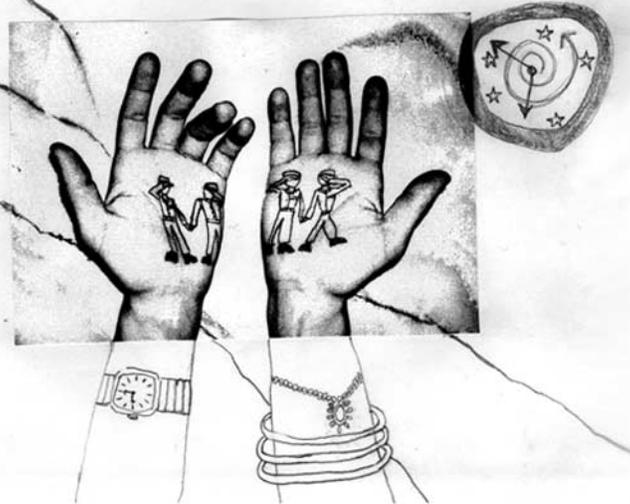
produce. They have achieved  
size. They have produced mass—  
arms and legs, the back's long

muscles, unlined quick strong hands.  
It is as though we do not know  
that they are boys still, that

they have souls, still boys', to which  
the dander of the world clings  
benign or malignant, irritant

or balm to the willow-green nap  
of the soul. Barely have they  
stopped being measured against

the doorframe, bringing the pencil  
and tape to another and pressing  
hard against the jamb up toward



adulthood. It is as though we do not  
know they are our sons, and do not  
know they are not done yet. It is

as though we did not see them stand  
like that, so hard trying not  
to cheat, to keep the heels flat and

the head level and yet to have grown  
another inch. It is as though we  
do not know that they don't know

they are not done yet. They are  
so big they think so. Yet we know  
they are not done and so will go

when we send them, bound in shocks  
like brothers, to ripen or to rot  
with their mothers' blessings.