Labors

Cassandara Dings
St. John Fisher College

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Paws

Thick, strong works
short stubby fingers
Callused, close at palm.

Soft slaps, spankings,
squeezings active, useful,
moving, flare patterns, handball,
gardening, rich, experienced,
gentle tips, back rubs,
duck bites,
prayers.

--Mark Crowe

Labors

Swinging the anvil
tore his muscles taut.
The beads of sweat
streamed down toward
his navel like nectar.
Tanned skin stretching
over the meaty arms
and a strong back made
of a hard day's work.
His hair was golden -
the son of a farmer -
with brown chestnut eyes
reflecting his mother's
sweet potato pies.
A line in the forehead
drawn from burying
a small child
with the same eyes.
He swings the anvil
in one long sweep -
enough power to crush
the life from a man.
Callused leathery hands
That so often caressed
my cheek, my neck, my breast.
Each day I wish that
I might swing that anvil
for him --
ease the ache in his back,
soften his callused hands
like the way he lays me
down at night and
gives me life, gives me breath.

--Cassandara Dings