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## Rule of Thumb

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*College of DuPage*

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RULE OF THUMB

*Teri Lavelle*

Those fingers that birthed the calf, and picked  
(with docile precision) the burr from the collie's  
belly, smacked a scarlet limbed tattoo onto her  
cheekbone and nose.

Fingertips, that soothed the milk cows' udders  
with balm, and coaxed out their milk by  
kneading furry ears, pinkened, with a blow, her  
banded left hand.

*His hand, a thrust of white, a thunderclap of flesh,  
sears a five star mark across her plump cheek.*

The palms that groomed the gelding's  
dun back, and cupped slices of apple under its  
muzzle, were the palms that slapped a pulsing  
bougainvillea atop her bare shoulder.

Hands that gear engines, fuel the tanks of  
mechanized beasts,  
hands that tinker in the bowels  
of a pumping system,  
or rake the straw in animal stalls,  
are same hands that blood coated lips, with  
knuckles, tamping her next retort.