

2000

to conceive

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to conceive

in its coupling with the flesh of the world,
the body contributes more than it receives:

If my left hand can touch his right
while it palpates, can touch it touching,

a reciprocal insertion of one in the other
makes of hands one sole organ, as it makes

of my two eyes the channels of one sole
Cyclopean vision. That lacuna where our eyes

lie is filled—I recognize in my green his green.
If am close enough to hear his breath and feel

his effervescence and fatigue, I almost witness,
in him as in myself, the birth of vociferation.

My voice is bound to the mass
of my own life as is the voice of no one else,

but if I am close enough, forming tirelessly
the strange statue, this flesh that one sees

and touches is not all there is to flesh.

—Tom Hankinson '02

All of the word in this poem are found in the chapter "Intertwining –The Chiasm" of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's The Visible and the Invisible, edited by Claude Lefort, translated by Alphonso Lingis. Originally published under the title Le Visible et L' invisible, copyright 1964.