

# Grandma's Fingers

*by* Larry Strattner

I remember Grandma's fingers,  
gnarled by arthritis.  
Loving as they touched you.  
Gentle while they prayed.

Her hands could still be strong,  
justice ministered as you passed,  
caught up in childish warfare,  
peace restored with a sudden snatch.  
Your caught-short collar  
made your Adam's apple jump,  
your feet flew up,  
those invaded got away,  
lived to fight another day.

Grandma prayed, she moved her lips  
in time with slowly moving beads,  
her hands twined up, as carved  
from stone, each to fit the other.  
To whom she prayed, a mystery.  
Prayer was private to her,  
many she proffered were answered,  
instinctually we knew.

Even nuns revered her,  
looked upon her as a saint,  
drawn by humble holiness.  
Grandma loved the nuns in kind,  
gave them alms and sustenance,  
lit their church with votive lights and gladness.  
Glad she was, to live, serve and love,  
glad with children swirling all around her.

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Grandma saw her hundredth year.  
She is gone now, tending to the saints no doubt,  
else they are tending her.  
I noticed on a recent night;  
my fingers have begun to curve,  
a little sideways twist.  
I'd guess Grandma's fingers once began like this,  
a subtle crookedness grew to be her hands  
as I remember.

I hope if Grandma's genes  
lead me to a life with hands twined up,  
I get the rest of her as well, helping me be glad,  
pray, and love, serve,  
live to fight another day.

