

**The Deaf-Mute**

We, too, are revoked by the way he understands—  
Banked up orally, our ears plugged with the hardened, resinous gum of sound,  
We jerk inwardly with repressed desire to be talking with our hands.

We want to place our fingers on another's moving lips,  
Tap on our palms, make strange, gnostic notations:  
We must find the devious route for our profoundest thought, the paltriest of our  
quips.

Yes, for a moment, but, oh, what a difference when we turn, at bay,  
Inundate the jeweled lady with our lavish compliments,  
Let the words flow like semen and with her have our way—

Until at midnight or some such final and exhausted hour,  
Hearing the lovely lady still talking like an enchanted doll,  
You have strange castrative doubts about your virile power.

You listen then only to her beautiful gesticulating fingers  
And wish that she would feel some secret, stifled vibrato on your lips  
As if something that you wished to say still palpitates and lingers.

You go to the window to look at the stars, and see one shoot—  
It is as if you had released it yourself without a word or any sound at all  
And the lady by your side were loved beyond all reckoning, and deaf, and mute.

*Charles Edward Eaton*