To my father's hands

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To every blister and callus,
Created under the burning heat
Of broken Toyota Camrys.
Within your crevices
You whisper tales of my father,
Walking miles past blazing ants,
Just to get some water for the day.

Your worn-out palms
Remind of us when
His mom dragged you to the states
In search of *el sueño Americano*.

But it turns out that the American Dream
Was actually bullshit.
And Springfield Massachusetts wasn’t a place of prosperity
It was just a place where people like my father had to
Learn a new language
Learn a new style
Learn to erase himself.

But while he conformed,
You continued to be
Rougher than the San Juan sand
Browner than the coconuts in the trees,
Strong as your ancestors,
Who were forced into submission,
Stuck on an island,
Where they had to conform.

Now you’re calloused
Years of pretending to be Joe
Years of translating words in your head
Only to be made fun of when you use the wrong form of your.
And as you wrap yourself around my hands,
Smooth as South Carolina clay,
Lighter than cold brew coffee,
But still as strong as our ancestors,
My father knows that you keep this alive,
Even in a land that wants our ancestry
Washed off with soap.