

# Deus Ex Machina

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Some gifts simply will not go away: instead,  
like magic, they break sullenly in the fickle hand  
(should it tire of them). They leave  
splinters, pointy relics, in even the  
shallowest of palms. You  
know this now; for my touch has gotten  
under your skin, and given birth.  
Despite yourself, you nurse  
our subcutaneous child each time  
you bathe; you tickle the embryo god  
each time you touch your breasts  
(or let someone else rest a hand there). In return,  
as intrusive as rain,  
our godspring transforms each caress,  
no matter how contemporary,  
into my familiar ghost.

The god has tampered with me, too  
(for you are not alone in this): I  
am elusive now; neither in space  
nor time, nor in the vanishingly thin squeak  
of the telephone. No, I live now  
(and it is a fine life, all things considered),  
sandwiched between your skin,  
and everyone else. I am  
only tactile these days: available to you  
at a touch, even if you shake hands  
with a total stranger, and whisper to yourself  
hopefully, "This, at least, is innocent."