In Our Hands

They say …

That each is born owing to their past karma,
Distinguishing a dignitary from a lowly farmer…
That in our past lives we must have been sinners,
So in this one we can never be winners…
That society works like a hand with unequal fingers,
While we are an excess digit that lingers.

But we won’t be fooled that this impeaching
Discrimination is the wise Buddha’s teaching.
Society is made by the hands of many,
To which we contribute no less than any.
The hands of a *kathoey* are no cruder
Nor less human than those of the Buddha.

There’s no distinction that can separate us,
Whether tribe, rank, age, gender or any status.
All primordial hands were imprinted equal
In the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia,
Before Hammurabi inscribed his stele legal
And sovereignty was invented in Westphalia.

*A term denoting transgender persons in the Thai language*
Our hands that have wiped oceans of tears
And trembled in handcuffs under mountains of fears
Like those fighting to be heard of Hande*
Are the same as the salt-making hands of Gandhi.
The chain-breaking hands of Mandela,
And the visionary hands of Helen Keller.

The angry hands that threw bottles outside Stonewall
Are as mighty as those in the National Mall,
For they dared to hold another hand for love
From the depth of the hearts, not imposed from above,
And to celebrate the full gamut of genders
With splendid joys and joyful splendors.

These hands are manifested divine reflection
In flesh and blood, towards self-perfection,
To uphold the values which once set to dispersal
Can’t be unthought because they’re universal.
Our upraised hands won't go down without a fight
Because in these empty hands lie our human rights.

Paisarn Likhitpreechakul, FOR-SOGI, Thailand

*Hande Kader, the Turkish transgender activist who was brutally raped and murdered on August 12, 2016.