To Have Without Holding, by Marge Piercy

Learning to love differently is hard, love with the hands wide open, love with the doors banging on their hinges, the cupboard unlocked, the wind roaring and whimpering in the rooms rustling the sheets and snapping the blinds that thwack like rubber bands in an open palm.

It hurts to love wide open stretching the muscles that feel as if they are made of wet plaster, then of blunt knives, then of sharp knives.

It hurts to thwart the reflexes of grab, of clutch; to love and let go again and again. It pesters to remember the lover who is not in the bed, to hold back what is owed to the work that gutters like a candle in a cave without air, to love consciously, conscientiously, concretely, constructively.

I can't do it, you say it's killing me, but you thrive, you glow on the street like a neon raspberry, you float and sail, a helium balloon bright bachelor's button blue and bobbing on the cold and hot winds of our breath, as we make and unmake in passionate diastole and systole the rhythm of our unbound bonding, to have and not to hold, to love with minimized malice, hunger and anger moment by moment balanced.

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