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 cant do it, you say its killing  
me, but you thrive, you glow  
on the street like a neon raspberry,  
you float and sail, a helium balloon  
bright bachelors 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.