

# Hands Full

*by Jennifer Whalen*

I did it with my hands. Sometimes one  
outstretched before my breast; the other,  
a *come hither*. I did it with calculation,  
other times without knowing. I hid below

the staircase, cowered from the rain. I did it  
with my heart the way people do things  
with their mouths. I said the words precisely  
three days late; not-listening-speaking—

I held it like a bookend to a book,  
still pushing beside to feel its warmth. I did it  
with my mind. Blueprint-perfect urges,  
a pearl in its world of a shell. Once I left

when planned. Once I didn't leave  
at all. We forgot there was never not  
time before now. I crushed my hand to sleep,  
finally felt my own creased palm.

It said life would be full, of what  
who could say. Once I danced my own body,  
pretended joints dashed intervals  
up my arms. I did it with my hips,

with a hand tangled in hair. I did it & kept  
doing it until the song finished & fullness  
flattened smooth. Are the dark rooms we go  
for vitality of life or where it most needs

decompress? I thought on the last image  
I loved: a reflection of the sky  
in a photo frame. We can hold this,  
although briefly. Sometimes the drums

have to kick in. Sometimes the rain  
has to start, then stop. Your life will be full  
of something; that will have to be enough.  
I muttered an honest nothing. I lied

about what I was thinking. I loved it  
with all my caution. I thought on it until  
it moved *just right*. The sky is framed;  
the rose birds are bound to a peach sky.

I touched you the way music  
grasps its rhythm. I couldn't not.  
I did it with my hands.