

January 2005

## More Than One Hand

Dara Cerv

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

---

### Recommended Citation

Cerv, Dara (2005) "More Than One Hand," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, Article 31.  
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol4/iss2/31>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

MORE THAN ONE HAND

Dara Cerv

Standing in Josephine's yard  
I beg the tall grass to tell me when I'll learn  
something motherish. I don't kneel or scream,  
but treasure the emphatic gesture of hands  
raised to the night sky. I need more  
than one hand on which to count  
engaged or married friends, their children,  
terriers, tabbies, fish. They no longer preen  
as I do: *oh, god no, I can't hold that, I'm terrible  
with kids*. I am really terrible with kids.  
Josephine can tell the sex of a baby  
just by looking at its bundled face, has packed  
a separate little world into this white house  
in Westchester. Forced outside to smoke,  
I beg the tall grass to tell me when  
I'll learn something motherish, as if it's like Danish,  
Spanish, or gibberish. I lurk the backyard  
like I don't belong near a family, my hand  
along their clothesline, touching its delicate things,  
plucking its strange chords, an instrument  
I'd like to learn. Then again I've dropped one too many  
china ballerinas. The tall grass *must* sense  
something motherish in my step—*Stop  
standing in backyards, watching the world  
on a screen, thunking your hands against the thick  
glass like a child. Get out there and get nine months  
of bloat, a husband who will walk  
your small, hairless dog at midnight.*