

# Helen's Choice

by Jenny Sherman

I don't know the right words to say  
so I hug you too long  
smooth my rumpled shirt when  
you turn away.

the wheel twirls  
wet clay whirls  
opens round in the bowl of your palms

you work the mass to symmetry  
pulling high the walls  
the lovely neck

trimming the rim for  
a Cupid's bow lip  
mouth of a chubby ewer  
celadon stained

I pass olives, the blue cheese  
offer another glass of wine  
which you decline  
though you're now allowed.

the wheel whirls  
the walls shudder  
unfurl, unfold  
too wet, too thin, too fast, too

the revolution slows  
your hands hover, suspended between  
why and  
try again  
before collapsing the clay

I don't know the right words to say  
so I squeeze your arm, mound flour  
while you wait for the bleeding to stop  
make pasta, fingers slick with yolk.

*Jenny Sherman writes poetry, fiction and nonfiction. A former sex education instructor, she now works as an editor for a sexual and reproductive health research organization. In between these roles, she wrote articles on topics ranging from cowboy artists and children's literature to women's health and the environment. She has also volunteered as a writing mentor to young women. She grew up in Minnesota and lives in New York City in the USA.*