

text for *To the Hands*

I. Prelude

*[no text — choir on vowels only]*

II. *in medio* / in the midst

[text from Buxtehude's *Ad manus* — Zechariah 13:6 — adapted by Caroline Shaw, with the addition of *in medio manuum nostrarum* (“in the midst of **our** hands”)]

*quid sunt plagae istae*  
*quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum tuarum*  
*in medio*  
*quid sunt plagae istae*  
*quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum nostrarum*

translation:  
what are those wounds  
what are those wounds in the midst of your hands  
in the midst  
what are those wounds  
what are those wounds in the midst of our hands

III. Her beacon-hand beckons

[text by CS, responding to the 1883 sonnet “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus, which was mounted on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in 1903]

**Her beacon-hand beckons:  
give**

give to me  
those yearning to breathe free  
tempest-tossed they cannot see  
what lies beyond the olive tree  
whose branch was lost amid the pleas  
for mercy, mercy  
give  
give to me  
your tired fighters fleeing flying  
from the  
from the  
from  
let them  
i will be your refuge  
i will be your refuge  
i will be  
i will be  
we will be  
we will

IV. ever ever ever

[text by CS — the final line, *in caverna*, is from Buxtehude's *Ad latus* — the line from the Song of Songs, *in foraminibus petrae, in caverna maceriae*, or “in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow of the cliff”]

ever ever ever  
in the window sills or  
the beveled edges  
of the aging wooden frames that hold  
old photographs  
hands folded  
folded  
gently in her lap

ever ever  
in the crevices  
the never-ending efforts of  
the grandmother's tendons tending  
to her bread and empty chairs

**left for Elijahs  
where are they now**

*in caverna  
in caverna*

V. Litany of the Displaced

The choir speaks global figures of internal displacement, sourced from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (<http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures> — accessed 01/03/2016). The numbers spoken are the numbers of internally displaced persons by country, in ascending order. These are people, some of whom may have legal refugee status, who have been displaced within their own country due to armed conflict, situations of generalized violence or violations of human rights.

VI. i will hold you

[ text by CS — The final line is a reprise from the Zechariah text.]

**i would hold you  
i would hold you  
ever ever will i hold you  
ever ever will i enfold you**

*in medio  
in medio  
in medio  
in medio  
in medio manuum tuarum*