

Claire Scott

How Can We Bear It?

We talk about bearing grief, five stages
to see us through so we don't break
every window or swig bottles of red wine
books and books and books written
to guide us through grief's bleak corridors
of furred promises and failed prayers
until we reach Acceptance
entire shelves at Barnes & Noble
Bearing the Unbearable, Finding Meaning in Missing
hundreds of grief counselors waiting
to take your money and soothe
your grief in only forty sessions

We talk about bearing pain
ninety-eight results for *Pain Medicine Near Me*
scads of yoga and meditation classes
breath your way to a better life
do twenty-seven sun salutations
sit in silence an hour each day
pain doctors hawking on every corner
holding signs, shoving each other aside
ready to relieve the pain in your ankle, your knee,
your neck as well as headaches and hangnails
and don't forget the miracles of pharmacology
like Fentanyl, Vicodin and Oxycontin

But what of tenderness
with its soft eyes and thistled tongue
no one teaches us how to bear its touch
how to dare when wide wings have atrophied
and caged hearts flutter song-less
how to dare when you feel the flash of a fist
the forever of fear in a locked-in closet
how to let the rusted hands of a clock click
and turn, how to swallow cool night air
or watch a rose unfold delicate petals
how to dare let go and allow yourself to fall,
wings sprouting, settling into the arms
of someone waiting, someone wanting
to receive your wavering heart

Claire Scott is an award winning poet who has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations. Her work has appeared in the *Atlanta Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Enizagam* and *Healing Muse* among others. Claire is the author of *Waiting to be Called* and *Until I Couldn't*. She is the co-author of *Unfolding in Light: A Sisters' Journey in Photography and Poetry*.