

The Bar

By Helen Hill

This place I'm at is killing me.
Not softly or slowly or peacefully.

My abscess is my existence.
That I live at all, in this time and place.
I have buried it and tried to shove it aside
For as long as I can remember.

But there is nothing inside.
It is empty and full of nonexistence.
Work and doing good deeds has justified my existence.
Raising my family and loving my children has been a salve to my existence.
Working hard to prove myself worthy of love is my "false" salvation.

And now? What do I do with myself now?
I search for something to do, because being with the "nonexistence" is killing me.

I thought I was strong.
I am weak.
I am tossed about like a rag doll.
WHO IS TOSSING ME AROUND?

I have set the bar very high.
I have met the bar each time.
The higher I jump, the harder I land.
I have learned to jump.
But I have never learned to catch myself as I fall.

I have set the bar very high.
Why? Why do I do that?
The landings are destructive.
The effort to jump takes all of me.
Why do I do this?

Because then I do not have to look at my existence.
I do not have to look at myself.
I simply must keep my eyes on the bar.
Clear the bar and achieve... EXISTENCE!.

But it is not true.
For there is nothing on the other side of the bar
Unless there is something to start with inside me.

My nonexistence drives me to clear the bar.
But it does not help me land softly
I simply keep pushing the bar higher
Until I fall so severely that it destroys what is left of me.

The unholy pursuit of existence from without,
To salve the intolerable pain of nonexistence within.

Must it always be this way?