

The Place of No Distance

by Thea Hillman

Look, it's not uniquely Jewish
But it is very Jewish, to live in close proximity to grief.
For there to be a very short distance between you, and grief.
For many of us, so many in fact, and for as long as our bodies can remember
We have held grief and grief has held us.

On October 7, 2023, the cracks where the light gets in, collapsed
And every day since, there is no space, no distance at all
If any of us were privileged, unaware, or lucky enough to have that distance still
Because of where we live, the color of our skin, what we believe, what we pray for.
The safe rooms, the walls between rooms, the fences between us and our neighbors
The lines between us and them, obliterated. One. Conjoined, in the deepest sorrow.

And now there is no distance.
No space between frustration and yelling
Between confusion and fog, between sadness and sobbing.
The friend you'd call is gone, or has never been the same since.
No space between "How are you?" and "Starvation. Torture. Tunnels. Killing, every day.
No, I'm not okay at all."

In this place of no distance, we are united, together once again,
With barely enough room to breathe, reaching out for and pushing each other away
For comfort, for survival. For home.