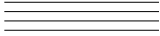


D E E P T I S S U E



C H R I S T O P H E R C H I L D E R S

It's for their own good. Yes, it's going to hurt.

We settle on a tool –
forearm or elbow, knuckles, fingers, palm.

The force that we exert
should deepen toward the kindly edge of cruel.

We tell them to be calm,
to concentrate their breathing and attention
on points of tenderness
and let go where the pain is. We sink in,
drawing a line of tension
back toward us, then slowly drag and press
away from the median,

keeping the deeper layers beneath the thumb;
or else we find a knot
and lean in till we feel it softening.

Pain thresholds differ: Some
require the lightest touch at every spot,
and some can't feel a thing,

however hard we strain. Sometimes they store
emotions in the tissues;
the muscle is a battery for stress.

Warn them that they'll be sore,
that they might have to face some heavy issues.

It's hard work, this release:

Adhesions are like floodgates – when they give,
sometimes we weep to lose
dysfunction intimate as memory,
and pain as dear as love.
Keep working till they palpably unclose,
then exit gracefully.