Editor’s Note: The author writes, “I wrote ‘Living With Pain’ to shed light on what it’s like to live with a loved one in chronic pain.” Sarah Rohrs is a 30-year newspaper reporter veteran, photographer, and poet.

Living With Pain

Pain, blipping lines on a radar saying here I come again today, this morning, any time. Furrows on your face sag again as you write in your pain log. It’s a red day, up from orange, a long way from green. Birds stand alert on wires outside our kitchen window, their shapes notes on sheet music but no songs come that sound relief. Lines go over our streets and sidewalks, tunnel under ground, the very rooms we’re in. I’m about to speak, more words that come narrow and squiggly, or may erupt in volcanic spurts again and again rising in spikes and arrows across the equilibrium we try to keep, that might keep days whole and sane from the pain. Damn it. Angry at this hour’s lament, a roaring shoot of flames up and down your spine, lightning bolts igniting more tendrils of frayed nerve endings through flattened, degenerated discs, snaking deeper and deeper ever intent to throw off guard, keep us fixated on a light emanating somewhere in this maze of tunnels, no straight tracts here. More banging for voices on phone lines. Now. Somebody please listen and help. Line up a new battery of pills and prescriptions. Lay flat along a line of yoga mats with a Buddha at the end of the room and wonder where the mercy has gone, how we got lost here.

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