**Titch by Titch**

—for Deb Beyer

*Scoot over just a titch*, she says—

eyeing the space on her table.

*Titch*? I question.

I have a quirky affection for words.

*It’s a word.* *A small amount.*

It is a word! She was right—

my physical therapist

with hands and eyes that seem to hear

what rattles wrong in the body.

It’s been months, no years now.

And still there’s no end to her repertoire.

Each visit, first I walk,

and she observes my motion.

We talk about my body’s pain and performance—

like an engine diagnostic.

And her repairs are rarely the same.

In-between I text with questions.

Always a response about what to try.

My tush is on fire—

*Place one hand on the base of the skull.*

*The other hand on the chest spanning*

*each side of the sternum.*

*Gently rock the chest hand*

*side to side (a small amount).*

I do. And it’s better.

Titch by titch.

The ankle’s tight, doesn’t flex—

*If you have Kinesio tape,*

*tape back the distal lateral ankle bone*

*and try walking. Then try taping the talar dome,*

*the tape pulled open maximally.*

*Like a Band-Aid.*

Her knowledge. Wisdom—a Band-Aid.

Salve for the wounded. The hurting.

I’ve spent years looking for fixers.

Self-fixing. Learning names of the anatomy

because I needed to. Tunnel-visioned

in desperation.

*Go easy along the line from the ischial*

*tuberosity to the sacrum.*

*That's the route of the sacrotuberous ligament.*

Titch by titch.

At times I fret the fixers will give up.

That she will. That I will.

*I think you need to get your diaphragm*

*on board—breathing is a must.*

The pain subsides. She gives me tools.

Body-mechanic tools.

Yoga Nidra to muffle the nerves, modify the cells.

NFP, neural fascial processing—

a tune-up. Blueprints for redesigning

the body without new parts—

all repairs I can do

to bring back the body’s humming

when the pain ratchets up.

Titch by titch.

I need to clone you, I say.

*No cloning,* she texts,

adding the scared paled-blue-head

screaming in fear emoji.

And once when I’m afraid, I write—

I hope you don't ever give up on me.

*Never giving up!*