

She is a Stainless Steel Bar

By Tonn Pastore

She is a stainless steel bar
forced through his nipple.
Painful, exiting, provocative, inviting
an infection
red, warm, a shock when touched.
Remove the bar it will hurt at first
heal rather quickly.
Leave it in, it might get better
might stop hurting every time
it is brushed by his shirt,
a wayward emotion,
the next argument.
Stays inflamed, festering
Gifts, antibiotics, displays of affection
work for a while, but the pain remains.
The nerves light up.
Christmas tree of electricity
convergence of feelings
The O'Hare airport of nerve endings
won't let him go
he leaves it in
She stays inside his chest
infecting his skin, burrowing within.
A fishhook, a burr, a hangnail, a stir
of hornets that sting, maybe a ring?
Touch it, tweak it, pull on it again
at least it helps him feel
something.

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