

# **Hope is Not a Bird, Ms. Dickinson**

**by Katie Kim**

Hope is the thing with six long spiny legs  
That twitch on the ground with its reddish-brown oval body  
And scamper around in corners night and day.  
Some say it's a cricket, chirping incessantly about desires and aspirations;  
And others say it's a cockroach, hissing in the darkness  
and needing a good squash.

Most clearly – in the night – it's singing is heard;  
A pounding little ear pain, but sometimes a lullaby -  
A bedtime companion seeking singalongs to "Wish Upon a Star"  
Or a true creepy crawler like Edgar the Bug,  
An alien presence than can burrow beneath the skin.

Once in a while, you catch a glimpse  
By an overflowing dumpster or odious street gutter  
That makes you shiver in disgust, and yet admire the gritty hope  
Rooted in survival and tenacity – making the best of its situation;  
Or perhaps it appears during the warm summer picnics  
To captivate you with gracious leaps that hold tender hope,  
A patient faith that its next bounds will carry it higher than before.

See, Ms. Dickinson, Hope is not the thing with feathers  
That sing a lovely tune against the fierce winds  
Or amidst the strongest of storms;  
Hope is the small little creature that makes your physically shrink  
And yet lets your scream grow in different directions,  
That at times fuels your fears  
But at times helps let them go.

Hope is a pesky little thing -  
A darkling pest and a thing that can fly free,  
A tiny gardener, preparing the rich earth for future roots,  
A tenacious creepy-crawly, finding cracks in the pavement to flourish.  
We humans chase Hope, as if it's the beautiful thing with wings -  
But more often than not, Hope is the thing flipped upside down  
With its flailing little legs kicking the air,  
Begging – for the chance to live – from me.