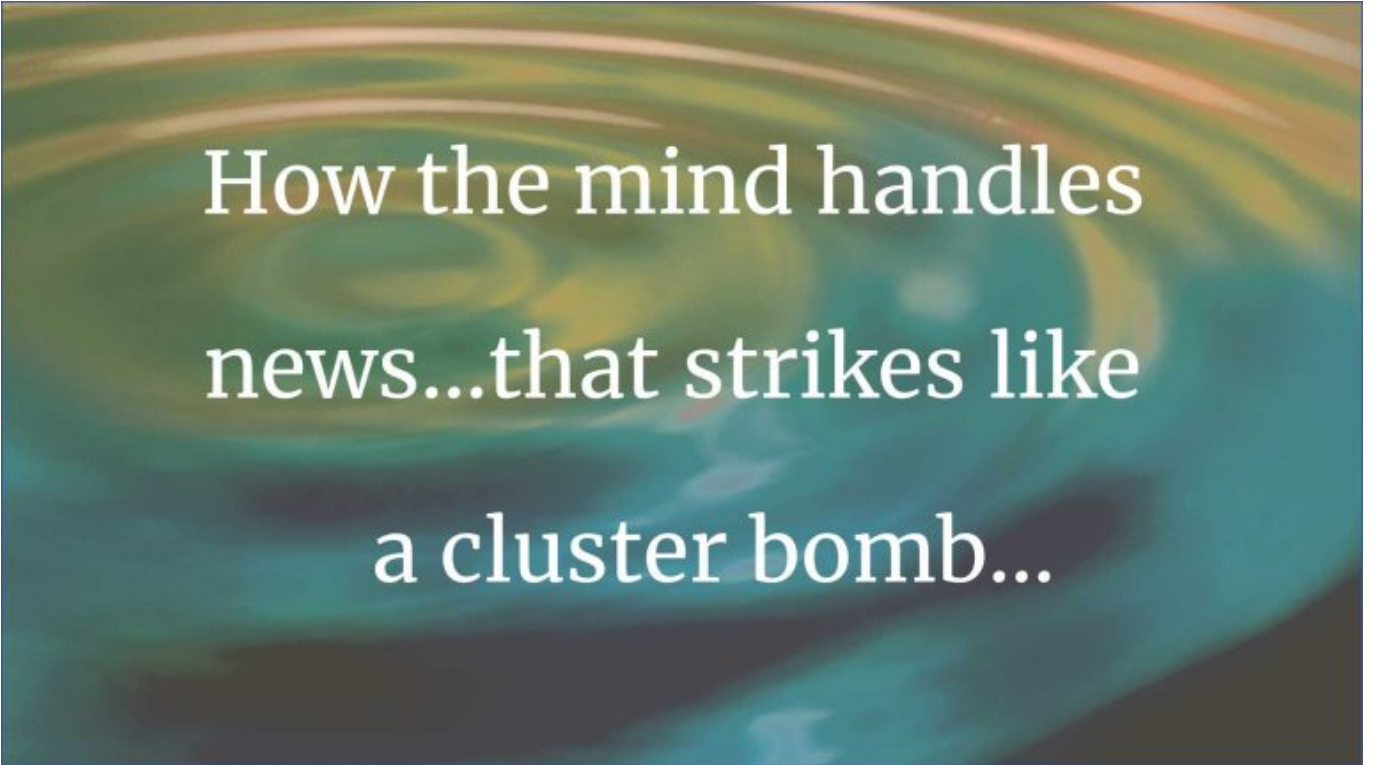


On Attempting Containment

Category: Poems

written by Debbie Hall | June 27, 2025



How the mind handles
news...that strikes like
a cluster bomb...

R said when he heard the words
aggressive prostate cancer,
he heard location, containment, intruder
confined within hard boundaries,
not parsing each loaded syllable
as its own explosive detail
capable of spreading.

How the mind handles news
that strikes like a cluster bomb,
how it compartmentalizes the sharp
language, keeps it fenced in
with razor wire.

But eventually the words jump the fence,
knock against each other laughing
and puffing their chests
like supervillains, cracking
the blue sky with their fists,
air suddenly thick
with everything wrong.