

Claire Scott

Kneading Paranoia

Sliding down the backside of anxiety

slipping into paranoia

my neighbor plans to steal the plastic peacocks on my lawn

the bartender put rat poison in my lime daiquiri

UPS is spying on me, hiding cameras on the deck

under the porch, inside the doorbell

my nervous system on high alert, despite hours

of meditating and mindful breathing

despite walking alive under whispering redwoods

listening to the ripple of spring streams

despite bottles of white wine and blueberry gummies

falling blotto into bed only to snap awake

and stare at the cracks in the ceiling, hearing

the sound of robbers and rapists

clumping up the stairs, even though

I have five alarm systems
and triple deadbolts on every door
but I can't seem to knead paranoia
into plain everyday anxiety, the way
I knead sourdough bread
pressing, folding and stretching
until the dough is smooth
and the bread rises to perfection
so I no longer worry about being snatched
by spotted aliens on flying saucers

Claire Scott is an award winning poet who has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations. Her work has appeared in the *Atlanta Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *New Ohio Review* and *Healing Muse* among other journals. Claire is the author of *Waiting to be Called* and *Until I Couldn't*. She is the co-author of *Unfolding in Light: A Sisters' Journey in Photography and Poetry*.