



San Diego
Poetry Together
Challenge



Commission for
Arts and Culture

ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO

POETRY TOGETHER CHALLENGE

The San Diego Poetry Together Challenge: A Poetic Response to Pandemic Project was founded in May 2020 by Ron Salisbury, who is serving as the City of San Diego's 1st Poet Laureate. Salisbury established the project as a way to engage, document, and encourage a public appreciation of poetry as well as acknowledge the important role creativity could play during the state shelter-in-place order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project called for San Diego poets and writers to share their poems or spoken words and the response was overwhelming. Over 170 San Diegan poets submitted poems. Of the works submitted, Salisbury selected six works to be published on the City's website. The project culminated with the collection contained here which represents the entirety of the submitted poems. These works were submitted in response to two prompts, one on *dreams*, and the other on *waiting*. The works archive a collective experience, a month of local resilience, creativity, and loss - a San Diego poetic testimony to the global pandemic.

*FOREWORD BY
RON SALISBURY
SAN DIEGO'S FIRST POET LAUREATE*

We all write poetry for different reason, how we write our poetry is as varied. Some of us have an idea or feeling that we want to express. And some of us write to find out what we are feeling. In almost all instances, we are surprised with the results, some in small ways and some in large. That is because poetry is the shortest distance from our unconscious to the page of any of the written arts.

Poetry relieves some of the pressures we experience in these times. Poems may not cure anything, but poetry allows us to go on. Each in their own way, these poems from "Poetry Together Challenge," surprise us. Each in their own way, these poems reveal to us, the readers, the little key hole to the inside the poet has found. It is no surprise to me, the impact I experience seeing all these poems in one place. Good job poets of San Diego, keep writing.

A WORD BY

JONATHON GLUS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

COMMISSION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

COVID-19 has landed us all in a place we never expected, in some ways an entirely foreign place where our very ability to move about in our normal lives is hampered. So many questions. Is movement a right or a privilege? When does individual right give way to the collective safety? What does it mean for family and for isolation? Is there a new normal we all will have to find post-pandemic?

We are so fortunate to have Ron Salisbury as our inaugural poet laureate for the City of San Diego. Ron's lived experiences and his deep commitment to teaching poetry, mentoring poets and raising poetry as a shared conversation among us all is the genus of this book of poetry informed by this unique time in the life of San Diego.

Please enjoy.

PROMPT 1

DREAMS: DURING THESE DAYS OF SECLUSION, THE NIGHTS ARE SOMETIMES CALM AND SOMETIMES NOT. IT MAY BE CRAMPED WITH EVERYONE HERE, OR SOMEWHAT LONELY WITH ONLY YOU. AND THE DREAMS WE HAVE ARE SOMETIMES FINE AND SOMETIMES NOT. WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS LIKE IN THESE TIMES?

The Mayor Called

In his dream, Reggie is dreaming
and the mayor calls,
needs a poem by tomorrow.
Even though vexing,
it made a kind of sense to him, in the dream
he was dreaming, even though
Reggie hasn't written a poem
for sixty-five years, since the one
to Jeannie Balabus in seventh grade,
intercepted by Mrs. Johnson
who made him read it to the whole class.
In the morning, Reggie is already confused
enough
with the dream of dreaming
without the poem and the mayor.
The mayor called on a land line
which Reggie doesn't have.
But it was so real!
He thought he might try something
just in case,
turns on his lap top and begins typing,
"We miss the mauzy woods of Torrey Pines,
the flaming furze along the Sunset Cliffs."
What? I didn't type that! Tries again.
"Its neighing cleaves, its gladsome plenty
purling down, ridgy waves, our graver thoughts."
What is going on?
"Oh San Diego, its days adagio, we miss you so."
The phone rings in the bedroom, Reggie goes to
answer,
picks up the receiver. It's Mrs. Johnson.

Ron Salisbury, San Diego Poet Laureate

SELECTED POEMS

From the submission to each prompt, Poet Laureate, Ron Salisbury selected 3 works to be featured along with his poem.

Quarandream

Lawn mower buzzing on the
other side of the window
rattles my head
I wake
walk downstairs to the kitchen
where coffee brews
Its steam trails to the altar where smoke
from a lavender scented candle
hovers over the hands
of my Mother
She prays the world heals
and liberates from the outbreak
lifting her hands to her forehead
Eyes closed connecting to Buddha and her angels
above
We are awake
But I sit in the kitchen and observe
sip my coffee
Black
like a portal to a dream
I dream of a time when she
can walk to the grocery store
Alone without fearing for
shouts and kicks
That will rattle her head
because everyone Asian must be from
China and carry the "Chinese Virus"
Therefore, a threat
What a dream today becomes when
one of her children must accompany her
to the grocery store just in case

Had to sit outside
The same Goldfinch sings as if
they now guard the canyon and the sky
beyond the backyard
I think about these times
Feels like Earth looks up to its own sky
Wrapped in the black of space
Wondering if
this is all a dream

Krysada Phounsiri, 91911

I try to read the name of your perfume

I dodge unmasked walkers on the Silver Strand,
rebreath stale breaths beneath the pajama
fabric

of my mask. Toddlers in oncoming strollers
stare. Yesterday, unmasked, I could have smiled

at them. Sunlight slips over the kestrel
sculpture
made of spoons in my father's house. Anderson
Cooper

shows viewers the divot in the haircut he gave
himself. Cuomo
broadcasts sweating from basement quarantine. We
binge-watch

Joe Exotic, Fleabag, Ozark. The coyotes on the
Russian River
yip by night, prehistoric silver sips. People in
Marin

howl now too, I'm told. I pull tarot's Tower
card, the Lovers
next. Chile, Iceland, Denmark, India, San Diego,
Mexico

and Maine: Facebook Live, Snatum Kaur's morning
circle, guitar
in her arms. We chant, we sing from home: 700,
800, 1k the counter

counts, thread of heart emojis like a diver's
bubbles on the screen,
our upraised palms to sky. For Father on a
ventilator. For Auntie

who won't ever see one. For Grandma living with
her two dogs
in Texas. For the pregnant mother in ICU. For
the twelve pages

of Boston obituaries. For the ER doctor who took
her life. Three
times we hold our breath, once for the self,
once for the circle's

every prayer, a third time for time itself, all
beings, every heart
beating despite suspended breath. I dream in
perpetual zoom,

gallery view. I see you, propped on pillows,
your dresser behind you.

I try to read the name of your perfume, the
spines of the books

on your shelf, forget to unmute my audio when my
turn to speak,
my house shrunk, a wooden star afloat on a sea
the red tide churns

bioluminescent blue, a tsunami's curling wave at
every sill.

I hold my breath, raise my palms to the ceiling,
and sing.

Tania Pryputniewicz, 92118

Dreams Can Go Viral

I probably shouldn't be telling you this. I
should be talking to a psychologist, a priest,
or maybe even the police because something is
chasing me, and it means to do me harm. So far,
I have no evidence, at least none that anyone
would believe, but just before I wake up and
immediately after, I see robot-like figures
about to overtake me, throwing hand grenades
filled with Covid-19. I'm hesitant to speak up.
I'm afraid people will think I'm nuts but then I
consider Jacob dreamed he saw angels climbing
ladders to heaven about 3500 years ago, and he's
still pulling that one off and Mary Shelley,

while hanging out with Lord Byron a couple hundred years ago, dreamed of creating a laboratory monster and that's been good for her. Robert Louis Stevenson dreamed up Jekyll and Hyde and E.B. White took twenty years to develop his dream of a talking mouse into Stuart Little. More recently, Steven King on a flight to London, dreamed about a crazy woman who kidnapped her favorite writer and tortured him. His dream became Misery. So, stick around. I'm just waiting for the heavy-duty PPE I've ordered. I'll survive this and publish my thriller.

Ron Lauderbach

POEMS

Collection of submitted poems in response to
prompt 1.

COVID-19 DAYS OF SECLUSION

Seclusion is both ordinary and extraordinary
condition.

By nature, family live together as a
commune.

Strength the effect of unison.
Universal as it is shall go on.

Dark are days of sickness.
Calm means motionless.
Heart and mind at times restless.
Man creates own blessedness.

State of fundamental darkness cramped
everyone.
Education and technology treat a community
and love ones.
How could we be lost when confusion
is gone.

Some dreams are negative.
Others are positive.
Great thinkers say: "Let's turn poison
into medicine."
Can't Corona virus gets further in.

Quarantine and social distancing are
timely basic practices.
Take sometime and we'll be at ease.
As we have been doing.
May take couple of years for the time
being.

Each morning as I wake up.
Thoroughly wash my hands and dry it up.
Being at age seventy-five.
I'll let Corona virus hit me at
Ninety-five.

A.B. Ellorin, 92139

We Are Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made On
William Shakespeare, The Tempest

Alone but not lonely,
in this strange time
where technology rules
puts us in touch with the world
friends, peers, lovers,
long forgotten relatives.

What was once a dream
floating high in the sky among the clouds,
not today's cloud
synonymous with storehouse
of thoughts, ideas, pictures, memories
but a dream cloud, amorphous, imaginative.

I zoom in on classes
dinner parties
happy hours

poetry readings
workshops
still in pajamas at six pm.

Once I dreamt
of time alone,
on a deserted island
with a pile of unread books
sleeping on the sand
walking on the shore
existing on coconut milk and fresh seafood.
This pipe dream
has faded with today's reality.

Now I dream of hugging my grandchildren
squeezing them against my breast
whispering in their ears how much I love them.
Now I dream of sitting in a room
listening to my favorite jazz guitarist
or a darkened movie theater redolent
with popcorn.
My world is full of stuff dreams are made on
and now I hope to wake to a new normal
kinder, gentler than the one before.

Janice Alper, 92037

Now I Lay Me Down to Dream COVID-19

Dreamweaver O Dreamweaver
When did you spin this web of disease?

One night I fell into a nightmarish dream from
which I cannot awaken,
Like a grade B horror movie, I cannot find the
door,
Feverish nights in sweat drenched sheets -nowhere
to run, no place to hide
Lost in the *Twilight Zone* – “Worldwide Pandemic
COVID-19”

Earth day 2020, what was the vision? No planet B.
Precursor of a utopian dream.
I daydream of life before N95 masks, plastic gloves
and fogged over polycarbonate face shields.
Dreamcatcher memories of crowded malls, teeming
boardwalks, bare bodied bikinis on sandy beaches.
Ponies dance up and down to the sound of the
carousel,
No Clorox disinfecting wipe needed.

I wring my hands with worry, this non-GMO virus
from some Wuhan place
Not bio-engineered for extermination of the whole
human race,
Maybe, genocide of the, old, weak, and poor.
“When *E.F. Hutton* speaks, everyone turns to listen”
When I cough, every head turns to see who infects
the air?

My fingers fidget like a squirrel fondling a nut,
Yesterday, only thieves approached the 7- Eleven
with a face mask
Now everyone and their brother wears a mask.
Nose and mouth harbingers of death, must remain
covered.
Eyes, terrified, reveal outposts of fear

Social distancing, this ain't no fun, but I want to live!

Healthcare workers, first responders, food service workers,
truckers, meat packers, janitors, and stoop laborers,

Essential workers now recognized and honored for their common valor.

Were they ever paid like MVPs?

Are they destined for Elysian fields?

Dreamweaver flies me thru space and time; convenes with 1918 proud, heroic statistical souls

Today, 80,000 plus Americans dead, and rising; 26 million out of work – and counting

Food lines, now traffic lines and parking lots, 1930 plea, "hey buddy can you spare a dime?"

Taco Tuesday now giving Tuesday, lucid dream of an altruistic day.

Dreamweaver guide us to Science, the genetic code and template vaccines for COVID-19.

Nothing lasts forever. I daydream of the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.

Birds sing. Pollution gone. Nature finds its way back into the streets.

The world turned topsy-turvy.

Lay dreams upon us.

Olga Anson, 92116

Dream City

When the moon has chased the sun out of our site.
And darkness is all we know.
It's dreamtime our Native American Elders say.
And at times I look forward to not dreaming
just going to a place
where it can all be temporarily forgotten.
The pandemic, not been able to wrap my arms around
loved ones,
or light the fire for a sacred ceremony.
However
Dreamtime has its own agenda
mainly anxiety
manifested as fear
Me running from a virus
a nurse with a frightened look
you tested positive
are her words.
Dreams of a careless me
not wearing a mask or social distance
contracting covid once more.
Then an ancient voice guides me
to reinvent the dream
understanding that
fear is everywhere and I
a two-legged human is picking it all up.
This is just a dream that ancient voice says.
and from another place another set of words emerge.

You will be fine.
Fear and Anxiety is all it is.
So I change the dream to
growing wings like the monarchs
traveling to where I choose.
Only happiness as my wings flap.
Our Elders say we dream to fly
and reclaim our breath
reclaim our spirit we must.

Macedonio Arteaga Jr., 92115

March

I'm not sure what I'm doing anymore.
I wake each morning cold, reaching for you.
My bones still feel frozen, my dear,
and my heart cracks like the deep sea ice shifting.
I don't think I'll ever be free of it.
Summer no longer eases the ache in my chest
and I can't blame the asthma anymore,
it's not that. It's the hole you left in me
leaking air into my chest cavity
pressing out, expanding, squeezing my insides.
It's trying to escape; drown me in my own breath

and sometimes? I wish it could.

Quinn Atwater, 92115

Critters Creep

While Humans Sleep,
The Critters Creep,
From Canyon, Crest and Cave

'Cross Empty Streets,
They Make their Meets
Newly Bold and Brave

We Snuggle Deep
Don't make a Peep
As our Hearts Fall Through the Floor

Could This be a Dream?
It Sure Does Seem,
We've Heard a Lion's Roar.

Shannon Biggs, 92103

I wake in the middle of the night
And listen to my husband's ragged breaths,
As he sleeps restlessly.

I know that in the morning
He will tell me he had bad dreams,
Brought on by daylight thoughts
of this novel virus.

But those are not the dreams that trouble me.
Instead, I mourn the young dreams,
Hardly won and newly lost

Patricia Dunning Campbell, 92109

many whole days
of staying home.
so Different
like a day off
but really,
a Day on.

instead of a job,
a deadline,

someone else's errand or pressure,
we have hours
of time holes
and a multiple-choice
of Fillers.

In the nightwatches
the Surrender to my underthoughts
is now a conscious journey,
not a busy- sleep- dream,
but a Wandering in
what is really there
and has Forever been

Lois E. Carlson, 91901

THE WAYS of LIFE

Gravity pulls hugs down granite holes.
My breath is labored and hot.
Old friends cross the street.
Smiles are masked, invisible.

Days and nights pass.
Walks are the way of life.
But, walks show wispy clouds.
Clouds, the legends of life.

Clouds bring the warm, round moon.
It's roundness engulfs the sky.
Stars tangle in my hair.
And the sun falls in my hands.

Jo Ann Christensen, 92117

Looking Glass

Lost

Abandoned

Unknown

Free

Released to grow

Adrift

Lost in space and time

Reverberating presence

Solid , elating presence

Rocking between stillness and movement

Entropy

Mustn't physics remain?

Quiet, so quiet

Weeps into pillows

Dances revived from the forgotten

Familiar faces

Dreams only occur in restless sleep

Jubilation or fear
Stuck
Eyes glued to screens
Not wanting to close
To let go
To the mind
Returning to where it wants to be
Longing
Always longing
Never enough
Till it's enough
Tough
Familiar faces
Foreign places
I'm not where I'm meant to be
Till I fall
Asleep

Lola Claire, 92037

In The Time Of Coronavirus

Breaths are few and far between
Unconscious, eerily aware
A voice, calming, reassuring, I'm here for you
The drumbeat of a machine, giving me life
Lonely, lonely, where is everyone?

Where am I? Am I still alive? Or am I lost in the
darkness?

Voice again, scared now?, confused, then silence
A steady hum growing louder, droning on, now gone,
now gone

Where is everyone?

James Clark, 92020

The Blue Flu

I'm a little bit sad, just a little bit blue,
Enough about me, how's the pandemic hit you?
Have you food in your belly?
Do you have gas in your tank?
Do you still have a few dollars
Left in your bank?
Are you getting some exercise?
Or are you resting your bones?
Are you losing your business,
While you're taking out loans?
Are you counting your blessings,
While losing your mind?
How are you provisioned with flour,
Yeast, whiskey and wine?
Have you heard from your loved ones,
Y'all's mom'r an 'em,
I hear the beaches are now open,
Have you been for a swim?
Me? I've been out walking,
And I've been riding my bike,

I mostly keep to myself,
As I do what I like.
When bored I thrash on my old guitar strings,
When the pandemic throws pitches,
I just take a few swings.
I long for returning to whatever the new normal
will bring,
When my beautiful grandsons come back over,
And we'll run, play and swing.
I miss the song of their voices,
I miss seeing them grow,
So much happening to them
Without us, you know.
Yes, I think I miss those two critters,
Just about most of all,
And that's really,
All I wanted to say
To you all.

Be safe, be healthy and be patient.

Randy Crawford, 92115

*We loved our long life together
Time passed quickly, but even so
letting you go, when you didn't get better
What was left, we'll never know
Isolated, now alone
Your echoes still remain
we mourn for you at home.
Nothing ever will be the same.*

These Hands

These hands declared their independence
They fought for freedom to find transcendence
These hands bled so that we could be free
They endured great losses for liberty

These hands persevered to win a revolution
They debated and discussed to form our Constitution
These hands battled to see our flag wave
Over the land of the free, and the home of the
brave

These hands stretched from sea to shining sea
They explored mountains, rivers, prairies, and
trees
These hands built the Erie Canal
With good old workers and good old pals

These hands were hit with a mighty blow
They took up the charge to "Remember The Alamo"
These hands cruised our rivers aboard our grand
steamships
They traveled on the paddle wheels to take
adventure trips

These hands evoked our Native Pride
With culture and customs that never died
These hands live in harmony with Nature
They are connected with birds, bison, and glaciers

These hands mined for California gold
They dreamed of riches that they could hold
These hands blazed the Oregon Trail
They pioneered westward over hill and dale

These hands toiled in the land of cotton
Where their servitude will not be forgotten
These hands were bound and chained
They were whipped and beaten and often bloodstained

These hands fought a Civil War over slavery
An institution that was truly unsavory
These are the hands that this nation did birth
That a government for all people shall not perish
from earth

These hands built the transcontinental railroad
And hammered their way into our heart and soul
These hands also roped and tied
They rode with cowboys on cattle drives

These hands ignited some beautiful sparks
When they set aside land for national parks
These hands assembled the car
This little gadget that let us go far

These hands lived through The Great War
They continued to work, sing, dance, and roar
These hands suffered before they could quote
Finally giving women the ability to vote

These hands fumbled in a stock market session
And threw us in a Great Depression
These hands recovered and began to create
Products and services that made this land great

These hands rallied against a foreign enemy
After that day which lives in infamy
These hands sailed, stormed, and flew
They always defended the red, white, and blue

These hands held their dream to the lights
They marched until they gained Civil Rights
These hands struggled with a difficult choice
Whether to go to a war, or rebel with their voice

These hands started a technology race
They accomplished a goal to put a man into space
These hands continued to grind
They took one step for man and a leap for mankind

These hands brought computers into our homes
And the next thing we knew they were on our phones
These are the hands that with a net unfurled
Within a few years they connected the world

These hands united to ring the bell
On that September morning when our towers fell
These hands led this land on a ride
To once again feel American Pride

Now these hands must fight another wretched foe
They cannot see it, but death it does know
And although they might be weathered, calloused, or
covered with clay
I am proud that these hands are from the U. S. of
A.

Alan Dale, 92109

Dreams in April 2020

Glass house, crystals dangle
violet sparks, iris
I am blind
except for elated scent
a trail of overtone
a nuance
I catch the indigo in
a cornea by feel,
moist.

Moist like citrine
a clash of saffron
you alone
in your swayback chair
behind glass walls.

Delighted,
I knock and knock again,
knock and knock again
You stare ahead at
crystals dangling, dazzling
a fractured lens
a dilated pupil
I knock

Carrie Danielson, 92036

Sweet Peas Blooming Around Me

Gazing at sweet peas in awe;

inviting to view
perfectly beautiful
a piece of life.

Sweet peas of all hues are blooming;

dramatic pinks
dazzling purples
deep reds.

Sparkling & perfumed flowers blossom;
life continues to bloom
around me.

Rachelle Farber, 92011

To the Quaran-Teens in Love and Apart

What is the
Space Between u and me

The Space between our bodies?
An Infinity of..negative
A lack of _____
A void
Devoid of touch or taste
No hold, no kiss

No lingering fingertips on dancing hips

No dancing together
No making new shapes
No holding each other
No breathing your face

No meals together
No get togethers
No breathing the same air

No coffee shops
No late nights out
No somethings we can share

NOT going out..
No going out..
No going..anywhere

NOT being together
NO beings together
no THINGS together
Nothing together..

HAVING nothing together..
DOING nothing together..
..is NOT together

Nothing..
Nothing.. is..
Nothing is no light, no day..
Nothing is Everything far away

Your light can't be seen from that far away
Your heat can't bring comfort from that far away
Your beats can't be rhymed to from that far away

We can't.. be us tomorrow/today
We can't be us
from this far away..

A broken hazy gray that stumbles into black
In this cold nothing..
in this lack of day..
No night
No restful peace
No us
No unity..

Just you

And me

Divided.by.space

..

What is the space between two souls/Interconnected?

NOTHING in the space between
Nothing IS the space between
Nothing is the space between US

Distance is not a thing between us
Nothing is between us
Nothing is between us

Nothing but.. space.

Space for growth and the distance to see
A forest, I never knew, surrounding your tree
The beauty of you, independent of me

Not caught up and twisted by my gravity
In this distance we are free

Free from Expectations on unsteady foundations
Free from patterns of trauma below and above
Unbound by obligations to old notions of love

Free to be you
and free to be me in a new space of NO..
No fronting, no backing
No playin', jus' sayin',
No pretending to be anything but us

Nothing is between us
Nothing is the distance between us

Nothing is the stretch I reach to see your face
I press a button to see your face
I press a button.. and I feel grace
I press a button and we. make. space.
For you and me, in this new SHARED space.
We share this space. OUR place. Together.

Nothing is the distance between us.

Leonardo Francisco, 91945

Better Days

Telephone calls, lost client files, court
appearances, random e-mails,

Payroll taxes, filing fees, missing accounts
receivables,
Forgotten birthdays, elusive dates, discovery
responses due.

I cannot breathe, am I under water?

Now I start to float.

Recipes for chicken cacciatore and watermelon
martinis,
Warm Island Prime lobster bisque with a view,
Homemade pasta, spaghetti noodles, and ravioli.

Kayaking Mission Bay, Bar-b-ques, and music,
Dancing, walking, skipping, lots of feet moving
together
Laughter, crowds, Ferris wheels horses.

Animals in rainbow colors, moving up and down
Soft and furry, stretching, moving, licking a front
paw
Purring, petting, and meow. I wake with my
quarantine friend.

Miranda C. Franks, 92019

Different Sky

Under white pillow ceilings
I witness in childlike wonder
The Great King Elephant
did hide in the Clouds
with his friends
Death and Folly
Honu and Homer's heroes
Pavarti with Peacocks
and Rockhopper Penguins

The World has stopped
The Oceans
then whispered
to the Earth
The Sky overheard them
and sculpted again
with great abandon
The Earth
was tremendously overjoyed
She set upon
bolder trees and wiser deserts
And let the animals know
Flowers with unique faces
de novo in the joy of the Rain
cleansing the lonely paths of man

I beheld a Different Sky today
sweet with promise and decorum
where Clarity holds Paramount
She repeats
to those who will listen

The Sun sang his shiny song
and threw spotlights
unspoiled upon
all the Creatures of Creation
Beast and bird
synced reminiscent rhythms
Breaking through
the now ancient
Cities of Gold
Enormous flocks did crowd
the modern Sky
And the Rebirth is known
As Phoenix itself
leads the formation

Through it all
The Stars see us
more clearly now
The Moon somehow
seems moments closer
as she winks delish
and swings her sass

They each escaped
to the freshborne
Lilac Meadow
where they cajoled and rejoiced
The Wind and the Rain
teased the Clouds
The Sun begged the Moon
for this symbolic dance
The Stars waltzed
hide-and-seek
with the shrubs
and the hedges
Man was invited too.
He was warned
not to play too close
to the Fire
Again

All danced
our blessed dance
And reveled
As Yesterday's pyre
flared higher
and farther
Licking the toes
of all living things

Golden foxes
did strike fair accord
with withered sheep
and woeful jackrabbits
Truer still
The Elements
once again granted
Man humble magnificence
I stood reverently
encouraged and inspired
by this reset
Alas repurpose
Another opportunity yet
Of Nature's Last Chance
In our New World
Under a Different Sky

Keith Frantz, 92111

A Country of Uncertainty

Eerie twilight where are we
a river roars through a red-rocked gully
and all I know is the road ahead blocked by
a mass of water that heaves and bellows
carrying boulders, trees, cars that ventured too
near

I refuse to try its depths I carry passengers
in my car
I am responsible though I don't know them

What should I do go around this obstacle
a path of 500 miles or more through treacherous
mountains
and deserts Will the skies again unleash floods
that tear away the roads beneath our slender tires
this car feels unfamiliar will there be enough
gas food
how will I keep everyone safe

I slip out of the car squat in the red dirt
hug my knees tight
stare at the roiling water I don't dare enter
it's power
will sweep us away like the hollowed out rocks
surrounding us

I am traveling in a land cratered by uncertainty
will the water
recede in time will we be weeping at this
shore when daylight
cracks the dark watching the sky for thunder
clouds
to return with floods that obliterate or will
the storm decide
to abate a gold disc shine through
the road ahead become dry and clear and stable
and we can
journey out of this wilderness once again
together

Annette Friend, 92014

Leeching Dream

my Love comes
to me in the night
whisper soft touch
grazing thigh and hip
honey-kissed breath tickling
down from breast to belly to ankle
warm waves of pleasure surging, mounting
layer upon layer of sweet pressure building
cresting, I reach out for the promise of relief

The Parasite
awakens in the night
sharp jabs and nips
aching thigh and hips
fetid-short breaths
swelling breast, belly, ankle
hot waves lashing and biting
layering on pressure, stinging
cresting, I reach out for the promise of relief
longing for when
I can dream again

Jennifer Ruth Frohlich, 92064

Marking

I think the last things Dad really saw before glaucoma took his sight were swastikas graffitied on his driveway, asshole Jew keyed into his car, and I remember when I thought it could not happen in the United States, when I saw a swastika on a building in Pecs, Hungary, and I asked Dietmar if they even had Jews there—if any had survived—he just shrugged, and then I remember that I read somewhere that Polish people used to go to Auschwitz for picnics after the war, and when they were done eating, they would fold up the red and white blanket and they would go hunting for Jew gold, they would dig into the loam of the green fields, hoping to find buried treasure—some Yiddish-speaking Jew, maybe my cousin Art Friedel, wanted to use it for a bribe for another day granted alive, for an extra piece of moldy bread, and I was 24–3 years away from being brain-damaged by a stroke, and why did I even go there? I suppose I wanted to hear the ghosts, I could have gone anywhere—I had a Europass and time abroad afforded me by a cast that doctors in Hungary had put on my leg. They just started heating up dressings—I did not speak Hungarian, they did not speak English—it was not so long ago that Hungary had been a part of the Soviet Union, and they only taught Russian in schools—my right leg was so badly swollen that my ankle looked like elephant shin, and I could not go back, like the ticket said I was going to go, from Frankfurt, because I was in Budapest, and incapacitated and this pervy older guy said that he had never “done” anyone in a cast before, and I had a dream one time when I was nine that the Nazis

were going to find us--we were hiding from them in a cupboard, and they found us and threw us into a prison cell below the ground, and we were all looking up at them, with our white hands on the bars--and all I saw were a pair of jack boots kicking mud into our face and knowing, KNOWING that we were all going to die. I was the director of that dream, and all cameras focused on the jack boots, the white, white hands against the dark cell, I was so cold, being cold is my hell, and I have been cold and gotten sick, and I have walked on the freezing beach, sticking my toes into ice water, knowing that I would get back to the warmth of my car--knowing that I would survive, like the imprints on the limestone of Ocean Beach off of Del Monte where the water makes mud from sandstone for a moment, and people can carve their initials--Emil was here, Jack + Tracy.

Anna Abraham Gasaway, 92111

Graveyard of Ships

In the ruins, wrecks and rubble,
'Neath the shadowy, thorny stubble,
Around the planks that tremble not,
...Amid the rats that lay and rot,
Broken masts upon the ground;
Men had died without a sound.

The reef, outcasting of its bone,
With moss to act as lethal sheath,
Sent many vessels floating down,
With whale oil as their own black wreath.

Men that fought storms at their best,
Have gone to their eternal rest.
And now the tale is known by all,
That pride doth go before a fall.

The lightning cracked like razor whips;
I shant forget the graveyard of ships

Tom Gatch

IN CELIBATE SECLUSION

I sleep and dream
of a celestial encounter
with an angelic lady
who offers me peace & love
until I awake to a nightmare
on Sunday morning TV
where I see
Trump's viral pandemic

spreading fear and hate
across terrestrial reality

Tomas Gayton, 92104

As if I awoke from a dream, things are not the same
People all over the world can relate
Colors are rich, but not quite as they seem
And all I can do now is wait

Today is not what we expected for tomorrow
Yesterday seems so far away
Feelings of hope intertwined with sorrow
Living each moment as long as the day

So much empty space
So much beauty outside
Covered by a mask, I still wear a smiling face
Although physically apart, we're together on this
ride

Encouraging words written in chalk
Teddy bears and ribbons in windows
Consulting my thoughts as I walk
Essential workers become everyday heroes

Events cancelled and postponed that we love
Memories of the past remind me I'm still free
Taking comfort in those who look down from above
Taking comfort in knowing I am still me

As if I awoke from a dream, things will never be
the same
People all over the world can relate
Colors are rich, and will soon again be what they
seem
And all we can do now is hope and wait

Kara Glaser, 92109

DREAM

On week 12 of COVID I read the morning news:
Twelve trumpers krumping, eleven typists sniping
Ten leaders lording, nine stars romancing, eight
maids degreasing
Seven surfers surfing, six geezers dying, five
hundred rounds
Four senators, three French fries, two butterflies
and a cartridge in a coal mine
Goodnight Mrs. Calabash, wherever you are.

Richard Gleaves, 92037

All of Us

All of us and

Each of us.
Is but a droplet on the face of this world.
Wash your face and wash your hands of
Your fears of this.
We will survive
We are in this together
The enemy maybe invisible and many
But we are all of us
Surviving each of us.
We are all of us seeking refuge from catastrophe.

Igor Goldkind

Desires

I want to browse
a bookstore.

I crave avocado toast
with a vanilla chai latte
from Chi/Banyan Kitchen
at Liberty Station and to
tip my favorite server.

I want to sit in a dark
theater, laugh and weep
along with an audience.

I long to rest under
the high ceiling on a
Westminster Church
pew then stand with
our congregation to sing
my favorite hymn
"All Things Bright
and Beautiful."

I fancy a pedicure
at the Haute Spa
down the street.

Cloistered alone
at home I try to
find a new rhythm
and feel the simple
joy of small things;
soft delicate rain,
sweet peas in bloom,
a neighbor's smile
from across the street.

I want to be hugged
by a friend, know
when this lockdown
will end and if life will
ever be the same again.

THE HEART EXULTS AGAIN

We'd been in the house many weeks,
living through rectangles,
Zoom windows and TV screens
glancing forlornly from those of glass,
walking or driving the narrow corridors
around the neighborhood,
to the grocery store.

So the ordinary drive to the border
for our first social gathering,
wheeling gaily down the freeway,
opened relief beyond expectation,
wide vista on a hopeful future.

But this, no match for the surprise
of the evening walk
over miles of estuary,
verdant and packed with blooms,
birds of all feathers,
rabbits,

inexplicably empty of people.

No matter that we had to pull up our
face scarves when passing the few.
The view of the Wall
and its suffering city behind
could not diminish the
heart-swelling vault of sky
meeting breakers in the distance.

Two years our friends have lived there
extolling their walks in this glory
while we believed only what we saw
on our glowing box:
the stench of untreated sewage
draining into the sea.

We thought them grasping for beauty
in an inhospitable place,
as one finds charm in the colors of
a third-world city,
as I imagine a forest of the
few trees in my neighborhood.

And we were wrong.
And that is the greatest hope of all.

Katharine Harrison, 92105

Face Off

"What have you been doing since this COVID quarantine started?"

{glad she didn't catch me leaving my old Hillcrest studio 2 minutes ago. Now that would have been bad timing all around with social distancing and all. Okay, okay take a breath and calmly look in her green eyes. At least she can't see my mouth through this mask. Of all the people to run in to today! She knew absolutely everyone in my old building. Busybody! Stop fidgeting with this absurd rainbow scarf and take a slow breath. Can't be too careful. Gotta play the Game. But I'm so tired. Is this bad timing or just my bad luck? Every night since this fever pitch fear started my nights are a tossed and turned zombie movie. This double life and the mask I'm forced to wear is fucking exhausting...well, I signed up for it when I married that Trust Fund Parasite. Smile and breathe. What did she just say? What's going on? What's going on??}

"Not too much."

Leslie Hendrickson, 92037

Journey

I started in fear of the unknown
I moved to rage at those in the way
I hope I can achieve compassion for all those who
face the virus
Finally, we need to come to wisdom on how to
prevent this from happening again.

Bruce Higgins, 92115

Pandemic Fear

Whispered to me in dream reverie,
I cause all things on earth, yes, sickness and
death.
Satan abides not and complaint but distant thunder.
Human thoughts are spent leaves to be raked,
not to discern my ways but to live within them.

But, I mutter,
I am old and afraid and struggle to live upright,

silent while my neighbors shout in the streets,
and if my fallen thoughts are impediments,
I whisper this plea for a sign of any kind,
and a barely heard murmur eases my mind.

Lloyd Hill, 92107

Dreams

As the night grows quiet and all the wrapping is
done
Children wait with anticipation of the rising sun
Dreaming of all the gifts that lay beneath the tree
Wanting to sneak a glimpse of what they should not
see
A man carrying a bag filled with gifts to bring them
joy
For a girl he leaves a doll a truck for a boy
The memory of this man will last till the next year
A Man they call Santa Clause in a sleigh pulled by
magic reindeer

Debra Barefoot Hilterbrandt, 91942

Choose Your Dreams

Rummage in night's closet
To find the dream you want.

Coat of quilted velvet, black,
Silver-buttoned, soft,
Wraps you up in calm dreams.
Dark river moving slow,
Level as a tabletop.

Dress made of broken glass,
Laced tight with barbed wire,
Pierces you with anxious dreams.
The iron left on,
The house on fire.

Serape wove of hazy smoke,
Voile-sheer, grey as ash,
Swaddles you in dreams of death.
Loved ones in the distance wave,
Passed on, long gone.

Daylight finally, sun shines.
Toss the pillow on the floor.
Rise and close night's closet door.

Leslie Hodge, 92130

Sea Sparkle

No where to go in these days of pandemic
Our treasured evening walk to the seashore
Transcends into an experience of brilliant magic
As an effervescent turquoise wave
Thunders down in front of us
Breaking in the dark of night
Lightening our tattered souls

Caught by its enchantment
My spyglass brings it in even closer
The news of pain and suffering
Is eased from my mind
Mother Nature has cast a spell on me
The blue lights flicker as more waves
Break open my sorrow
Displaying the magnificent mysterious forces of
life

My dreams come alive in the night
The blue light is now my torch
Everything I touch
Illuminates into swirling multicolored forms
I begin to stir as my husband gently touches my
hair
"Good Morning, beautiful"
But I want to keep dreaming...

"Must remember the supernatural power in my dream."

Starved of oxygen
The red tide pulls dead fish to our beach
The smell of death overwhelms me
Suffering and scarcity fill our news pages
But unexpected magic is also there
My spyglass won't let me forget
The breaking of the turquoise waves

Renie Kelly Hunt, 92024

Haunted Loving Dreams

I have haunted loving dreams
Dreams of yesteryear
Dreams of the past
Dangling cobwebs over my head
Obstructing my mind, obstructing my view

I have haunted loving dreams
Dreams of the past
Haunting my mind

While the rest of the world
Screams and moans about

The frights of tomorrow-land

I cannot stop
The feelings of
The unresolved past
Creeping into my mind

Whispering softly into my ear
Urging me to return to it
Asking me to choose a different path

I am haunted by the ghosts of yesteryear
They say, "Ahhhh here you are at last, I've been
trying to speak to you!"

I cannot help but sit and listen
I have nowhere to go
Nowhere to run
But face my ghosts from
Days long gone

To hear them out
To soothe my soul

From all the pain I've tried
To run from

All the sorrows of yesterday

Can somehow be consoled

I have haunted loving dreams
Of days long gone

That I will hear and see
And try to resolve

And put to rest at last
My haunted loving dreams

And ghosts of yesteryear

Melissa Jamma, 92111

Is this a Dream?

First

I

walk by a hearse

Jeeze

A

swarm of bees drops from trees

Downtown

Two

Kennedy's drown

I

crack open

A
blood egg - omen
Yet
Amidst
this plague, this menace
A
jellyfish swims
through
canals of Venice

Jackie Jones, 92116

Mother's Day

Thank you Mother Earth
For absorbing the energy of my violent nature
And re-expressing my rage in the hurricane and
tornado
My anger in the volcano and earthquake
My fear in the flood
My destructive tendencies in the hailstorm
Thank you for your expression of remorse
As you shed your tears in the pouring rain
Thank you for the lessons of love expressed
In the freshness of the spring rain
The beauty of the flower garden
The gentleness of the cool summer breeze
The sweetness of your fruit

The nourishment of your vegetables
The medicinal power of your herbs
The cleansing of your pure waters
For all the wonderful sounds and smells of your
nature
Thank you for the refreshment of the fog
The lessons of the smog
For the mountain peaks above and the valleys below
Thank you for the electric moment of lightning
And the powerful boom of thunder
For the soothing sound of the mountain stream
As it winds its way to the sea
Thank you for teaching me about sexuality
As you take the energy rays of Father Sun deep into
your bosom
Giving birth to new life bursting forth in a myriad
of forms
Flowers, plants, trees, rocks and minerals
Providing sustenance for all the animals and we
people too
Most of all thank you for the great lesson of
humility
By allowing us to walk all over you
In the enactment of life in all its forms
Happy Mother's Day

Gary Kainz, 92116

Alone

A kick in the head, is how I will wake.
Kids jump in my bed, the box springs – they break.
All classrooms are closed, there's no place to be.
I roll out of bed, on goes the TV.
Breakfast is cooking, I scan the top news,
The death toll is high, some think it's a ruse.
The laptop is on, set up in my room,
One kid trudges in, not wanting to Zoom.
When his turn is done, the other comes in,
Less than a minute, her class will begin.
I can't stay and watch, my work is calling,
They need my report, their stock is falling.
I take my laptop, which makes my kid cry,
Her teacher just nods, and smiles bye-bye.
I send the report, and think that I'm done,
Little did I know, the fun's just begun.
I hear a loud bark, from out in the hall,
Our dog was locked in, and scratched up the wall.
I take the dog out, (my kid's daily task),
But soon turn around – I forgot my mask..
I walk in the door, my kid calls for me,
From in the bathroom – we're out of T.P.
I grab a fresh mask, the kids get one, too,
But stores are all out, what should I do?
The shelves are empty, not even hair dye,

Kids want to go play, I want to go cry.
It's soon dinner time, my husband is late,
The kids are hungry, I make them a plate.
They leave their dishes, stacked high in the sink,
My husband returns, and, boy, does he stink.
His scrubs and his socks, are covered in sweat,
His freshly washed hands, are still dripping wet.
He kisses hello, then falls into bed.
Too tired to talk, no need to be fed.
The kids fall asleep, face down on the floor,
I carry them up, which makes my back sore.
I crawl into bed, another day done.
Stay-at-home order, is really not fun.
At morning I wake, but something's not right,
My house is quiet, and tidy, and bright.
I look but can't find, my family, my team.
And then I realize, it was all a dream.
No kids are jumping, no spouse saying bye,
No need to share screens, no dishes stacked high.
I should be relieved, but somehow I'm not,
My dream-slash-nightmare, has left me quite
fraught.

I hear you complain, you moan and you groan,
You should be grateful, you could be alone.

Fran Kaufer Shimp, 92037

My dreams speak louder now
just when I cannot completely act on them,
when the world, the sky, the dark,
linger deep and still.

And when the churn and noise of life return
the voices in my dreams will hush
the colors will fade or darken
and sleep will submerge into quiet,
making me forget.

Lisa Kirazian, 92130

COVID-19 Haiku I Stole from My Wife

"10 in the morning
why are you people so loud?
I'm trying to sleep"

Michael Klam, 92117

THE PIXIE AND THE BEE

The morning sun was bright and warm,

The breeze barely made a sound.
The night mist fairy that spread the dew,
Was surly homeward bound.

The little pixie flew across the yard,
Straight to the flower bed.
Her specialty was making flower bloom,
In yellow and purple and red.

She had spent the winter babysitting,
A butterfly cocoon.
Finally, the butterfly was on his way.
The spring was coming soon.

Seeing a busy honey bee,
She flew over to say hello.

The bee said, "Hey there keep back 6 feet.
"Social distancing, you know."
"Oh my." She said, as the bee went on.
"Why don't you have a mask?
"The governor says to stay at home,
"Les you have an essential task.

"Don't be like that hummingbird,
"He thinks he's young and strong.
"He refuses to wear a mask at all.
"Let's hope that he's not wrong.

"You stay home like that garden spider,
"The one that's black and green.
"Though she's complaining the solons are closed,
"And her caprice has lost its sheen."

By now the gossipy honey bee,
Was really on a roll.
"Did you hear about the protest,
"Open the beaches" is its goal.

"That grasshopper and his cricket pals,
"Just want to hit the surf.
"They are marching with their signs held up,
"To "Give us back our turf."

"And the security patrol hasn't been done,
"By that Lizard and his pack.
"They all took their furlough checks,
"They're all just kicking back.

The Pixie said, "Oh my, oh my,
"This place has really gone to...well?"
The Bee said, "Yes it looks real bad,
"But there is really more to tell.

"The schools are closed, the kids are home.
"The Bunnies were frazzled the first day.

"But now they have all their classes online.
"And the Doves home school anyway.

"There's donations to the needy,
"Of food and clothes and such.
"And contactless home deliveries,
"By the Dragonflies helps so much.

"But the heroes are the Doctors,
"They still work every day.
"The Nurses, and Fire and Policemen.
"First responders lead the way.

"Well Dear, I must go back to work."
She turned to fly away.
The Pixie said, "I will go make a mask.
"We'll flatten that curve today."

Kurt Kooperman, 92131

Questions

Like cicadas emerging from their self imposed
isolation,
humans shall once again congregate

Was there metamorphosis? Will we pollinate or
devour?

Have we learned from earth's short recovery?

Do we now feel like one race?

One family?

Does the health of each become paramount?

A pandemic of caring? A universal epiphany?

Or just poets' dreams?

David Langenhorst, 92040

SESTINA: WAYS TO SHELTER

Perhaps it seems a bit benign to stay at home
In cozy bed, dreaming with a hot mug of coffee,
Later watching a hummingbird twirl, sweet surprise,
And dining al fresco by candlelight with my love.
But not if you often fall victim to nasty abuse,
Or the state decrees such a frantic stay a mandate.

If a voice from on high knells the mandate
Shelter in place, it might mean ditch or home

Seeming more and more urgent as if abuse
Is nigh. Hunker down. No time for coffee
As if a hurricane or tornado-- no force of love.
This deadly virus a most unwelcome surprise.

For those on ships, quarantine is a surly surprise.
Landing at the coast will they resist the mandate?
Vacations no more, now soaring fevers not soaring
love.

After weeks confined on land, they long for home
To savor once again their favorite wine or coffee.
Who or what is blamed for such unexpected abuse?

To be cloistered is untethered from much abuse.
Such solitude may come to some as a surprise,
Yet this refuge brings time to muse over coffee.
Finding such a haven during this hour is a mandate.
Writing and reading tether us in our monastic home,
And now gardening becomes an asylum of love.

Seclusion is a choice perhaps in this pandemic time
to love,
To be free from all sorts of Trumpian and viral
abuse,
And to create and dwell with self and loved ones at
home.
And in that chosen seclusion never any outside
surprise.

We choose for our sakes and others to accept civil mandates,

And upon waking be at peace with our favorite coffee.

But house arrest seems most apt while drinking coffee,

Like that gentleman in Moscow in the Metropol Hotel he loves

Discovers the worth of workers under that unusual mandate,

Who enrich his world and ours and banish much abuse.

And we discover in our circumscribed world to our surprise

Not chimeras but creative blooms right here at home.

And so this federal, state, and local mandate was not meant to be abuse.

And let's hope the pandemic virus sputters and dies, no deadly surprise

For those we love. For now we sip hot coffee in our dream choked home

JoAnne Lanouette, 92104

Wait for an Eternity

During the pandemic, my waiting begins...
for people to get healthy again
to celebrate family members' birthdays
like I normally would during this time of the year
to go outside and to go on trips
like cars are waiting to "exercise" with its owner
once again
for my dad to get back home from work safely
finally, I wait for what it seems to be an eternity
for the pandemic and the sadness to be over

Amy Le

Something New

Do I want to wake up?

My eyes closed to dream of you.

You can decide for us.

On my couch, TV as background.

Neither of us needed a sound.

A moment, waiting to be found.

I think I saw you blush.

Our instincts were to trust.

A thought, we didn't overthink.

Neither of us wanted to blink.
On your face, a smile and wink.
I can decide for us.

My eyes opened to dream with you.
Do I need to wake up?

Juan J. Larios Jr., 92108

When Dreams Aren't Boring

I'm called to the bay window
by heavy construction noise.
Next door the pet-cemetery walls
are being bulldozed. I open
my door for a better view.

A rush of zebras, monkeys
and pandas run
into my front yard, suddenly free
after years of confinement
in small dark spaces.

A young antelope dashes

between my legs, lifts me off my feet
takes me for a ride. I must
close the front door or creatures
will soon fill my living room.

Jumping off the antelope's back
I slam the door. My large
Cheshire cat races down the stairs, jumps
on the couch and peers out the window.
Eyes wide with wonder, she hisses.

Seretta Martin, 92071

Burning Leaves

(Inspired by Kim Downey's childhood in Nazi
Germany)

The stench of burning leaves
plagues my memories
scars, unlike the ones you can see.
My mom told me that the odor
came from the campground
down the road
and I believed her,
but one day Mr. Rosenberg and his family
went camping and never came back.
As a child, I was afraid to go camping
but I know the difference now.

The Greatest Gift Of All

(Inspired by William Shakespeare and Alexander Pope)

A broken heart is like a wilted rose
whose destiny was cursed to feel the shame
of transformation--as from verse to prose
an altered accent, beauty not the same.

But broken hearts mend, wilted roses die
and beauty is judged by the viewer's eye.

When love is lost, of course there'll be sorrow
and the past will be painful to recall.
But it's worth looking for love tomorrow
because love is life's greatest gift of all.

Ricardo S. Martinez

Joy

(In memory of Joy Robinson, 1964-2008)

There is no Joy at CDG,
she left to join God's company.

I used to tease her about her name
but without her here, it's not the same.

She was a very good friend indeed,
now rest dear Joy and Godspeed.

And though I miss her very much,
through my prayers, we keep in touch.

Ricardo S. Martinez

Favorable Winds

I lay in bed—thoughts
hissing like serpents, fangs
filled with a new, incurable
venom. I imagine a bird swept
in, carried my worries away
because now...dreaming...

I'm alone on a mooring ball
in a rough, cold bay—
uncertain if my tenuous grip
will last, unsure how high
the tide will rise. Then...

my life raft breaks away
and I drift with a warm
breeze toward a rainbow
over a beautiful island

filled with fearless hugs.

Richard L Matta, 92103

Dreams We Hear

IMAGINE A PLACE
WHERE VISIONS CAN'T BE SEEN,
AND WORDS HAVE NO SOUND,
A WORLD WHERE OUR VISIONS OF TECHNOLOGY
ARE BURIED IN THE GROUND

HEAR THE SOUND?
HEAR IT LOUD AND HEAR IT CLEAR,
IT'S LIKE A SKY,
BLUE SKIES THAT ARE SO CLEAR
HEAR THE SOUNDS,
THE VISIONS IN OUR HEAD,
THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT
THE POETS WORDS ARE LOST,
AND WE DON'T REMEMBER WHAT WAS SAID

FROM WITHIN, ALL AROUND, YET SO NEAR
IMAGINATIONS BECOME THE IDEAS,
THE CREATIONS BECOME SO CLEAR

HEAR THE SOUNDS,
VISIONS IN OUR HEADS,
ITS THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT,
THIS IS WHAT IT SAYS.

I HEAR THIS IN MY HEAD,

I DREAM THAT TECHNOLOGY IS DEAD
I HEAR THIS IN MY HEAD
IT'S WHAT WE ALL DREAD
I AM ALL OF THIS,
AND EVERYTHING HAS BEEN SAID

HEAR THE SOUNDS
THE VISIONS IN OUR HEADS,
THE WORLDS' SPINNING AROUND,
THIS IS WHAT IT SAYS
YEA, THE SOUNDS ARE IN MY HEAD.

Frank McKenna, 92109

Fortuitous

How lucky am I to have been forewarned
Of times of trouble, anger, scorn,
When leaders fear and mothers mourn
While crowded nations' brothers war;

Of skies ope'd wide, air so thin,
Sun-seared cancers upon the skin,
The desirous devil lurking deep within,
Marring good hearts with worldly din;

Of plagues, disease, strong minds gone amok
In places where brave banners flown were sunk,
Condemned souls wading thru mire and muck

To escape the graves their fathers dug;

Of accomplishments, through battles fought
With striving efforts, achieved for naught –
The fate of our world be long ago bought
By the One we once nailed upon a cross.

The onset of Armageddon I see
As clouds roll red against the seas.
To November leaves cling ev'ry tree,
Preparing for God's eternity.

As that time too soon draws near,
I'll shed not grief nor drop of tear,
I will not run, nor hide, nor fear,
But wait with patient heart of cheer;

For Jesus to claim His earthly throne,
Keep good His promise to make us His own,
To live in such peace as we've never known,
Saved by the grace of His thorny crown

Brian (Bj) Mingus, 92019

Just a Dream

I see icy clouds racing through darkened skies,
Fierce, cold winds aching through every smallest
crevice –

It seems but a dream.

Coming and going, I see street dwellers persist,
Braving their charges with courage sublime –

It seems but a dream.

I see life passing, then stopping, as time marches
its pride,

Counting unmercifully my steps as I try to keep up
It seems but a dream.

To find what is missing, only to lose what was
here,

The remarkable entrapment of thoughts unconvicted.

Escaping the tomb is nigh impossible,

But it's the attempts at return that hurt so
deeply.

Away to the grave with the presence of myself,

As my body waits behind and waves farewell –

It seems but a dream.

I awaken in dampened, peaceful fear,

Reaching out toward another thankful day.

It seemed but just... a dream?

Brian (Bj) Mingus, 92019

The Dark

It is so dark, I see myself
 reflecting in my own eyes.
My thoughts are reeling, unbalanced and scattered,
 my whole sense of being is interrupted and
untied.

 All from the tormenting darkness.

Get me out of here! Save my soul!
 Unlock the doors and shed some light!
Quit stabbing my body with daggers of fear,
 and leave me in peace, O dreadful night!

Soon I awake, all torture gone –
 all unwanted fears have fled from me.
I lay staring weakly, yet so happily, at the
stillness of sunshine,
 and wonder why darkness has to be.

And although the glittering rays of sunny delight
 dance gayly around my mind and my room,
I die, joyously, in the light of day,
 though now in the midst of eternal gloom.

I am afraid no more – the darkness can no longer
hurt me.
 My soul is free – I can shine light for myself
now.
The dreams I've feared can no longer press me
inward,
 though asleep now forever I can no longer grow.

I know there is darkness –

the darkness is night.
It will always be there –
beyond the light.

Why am I still so frightened of the night?

Brian (Bj) Mingus, 92019

Mire

Siggy and I tire
of circumventing oily mud pits
so we trudge and slog right
through them- up to my knees
He's on his strong blue leash, or
me carrying him when it's too deep
As we cross the hilly campus at night
stars out, odors of oil , aroma of cut grass...
But, then, as dreams go, my father's
caretaker has the day off,
so I take over, with him bundled
in a wheelchair, me pushing
It's light out, bright
and we take to the sidewalks
The locals come out to greet
him, high-fives, big smiles,

lady tailor offering to make free
alterations for him
But then I'm walking alone,
and I've forgotten my facemask,
panic spreading from my heart.

Susan Minnicks, 92109

Pandemic in America?

free-
force
pangolin or snake

Imprisoned in the land of the
riddled with fear of an invisible
smaller than a grain of sand
that leaped from a bat to a
and then found its way into man.

This must be a horrible dream
that will disappear when I awake.
This can't be in America!
This must be some mistake!

Italy and Spain
with thousands

Just two weeks ago in Florida
I saw in the news lock downs in
and a Grand Princess cruise ship

quarantined on board
In a Twilight Zone world gone
insane.

I pitied all who were suffering
and wondered how they'd survive-
and those poor Chinese peasants
in wet markets
dripping in filth who'd eat most
anything
to stay alive.

Yet I took comfort in knowing
soon I'd be home,
far away from the madness
that locked down foreign worlds,
far from dwindling supplies,
banned human closeness
and closings of places that bring
so much joy.

Elaine Moore, 92122

Boxed In

Mom called to ask if I'd accept a package sent in a cardboard box. Why wouldn't I? I'd never dream she'd ask such a silly question.

Pre-Corona I wouldn't think twice about it.

Mom has always sent packages with Halloween candy, Easter candy and certainly Valentine's Day candy;

Her love and affection. Sent in a cardboard box.

Things I never thought about before, normal things like sending me a package in the mail has changed because of the (Cor) 'Rona.

Mom asks if I'd accept her package this Easter. Why wouldn't I?

Sent in a cardboard box.

Mom has information that 'Rona lives on cardboard and breathes until its death. Death comes after 3 days, so "they" say.

Feeling uneasy to refuse a gift, I happily accept it.

Sent in a cardboard box.

I think of a time when I haven't wished for a quick death of the 'Rona. And for now, I cherish my Family's love.

Sent in a cardboard box.

I wish for a quick death of the 'Rona.

Megan Moore, 92109

Alone

That August day, without my eighth-grade chums beside me on my sun-warmed porch, I could enjoy LIFE, the magazine, in lazy solitude, my skinned knees folded into the rosy tent of my ruffled skirt.

Each page of black-and-white
photographs was like a room
that I had never opened before,
filled with adults in wrinkled suits,
one lonely author at his solemn desk.

But when I turned the page to
Naked at Bergdorf's,
I stepped right into that empty
store,
poured my 13-year-old's
unremarkable body
into the shimmering shoulders
of a nearly-naked model
who glided past a silent jungle
of crocodile skin handbags
and
muffled taffeta gowns.

Alone
came to me
one page
at a time.

Regina Morin, 92107

Darkness Falls

Black and grey splatters
Subconscious paint trickles down

Floods my dreams with fear.

Elizabeth Nash, 92014

STAKING A CLAIM

I have been working my whole life
to stake a claim in this world.
I have framed my hand in
ochre on the cave wall,
and left an echo
in the waves
of the sea.

Because I know tomorrow is coming,
and I am called by destiny to visit
territories not yet on the map.
I will be moving to a new
country, charted only
in dreams of love
not forgotten.

So, I dig deep into the fertile ground of
my own feral and restless musings.
Though I thought myself alone,
since you were not with me.
I spent my lifetime trying
to make friends
with myself.

Now, in the twilight of my days, I know
you are at my side. My dear friend...
You will always be my comfort
and my recompense for
the loneliness I carry
with me because
it's mine.

Chris Ernest Nelson, 92102

Peace Dream

My dream for you is to feel light as air
No more pain, no more despair

To not be bound by a halting gait,
Tied to this Earth as we both wait

We are surrounded in an isolated shell,
a safe cocoon, with parts of Hell

My dream for you is to find your peace,
Let your heart rejoice in its release

I watch you struggle, I offer help
but you resist and battle on,
your earthly strength is almost gone

We are together, we are alone,
Yet we are thankful we are home

My dream for you is to feel safe and loved,
as you reach out to that light above

You will forget why it is so,
I will remember, as I let you go

My dream for you is to have no fear,
My dream for me is to hold you near

I love you Mom, our dream is won

Stephanie Nelson, 92117

The Face of Pain

When you can't awake from the nightmare
No matter how fast you run,
the pain overtakes you
Stop
and turn toward her.
What do you see in her face?
What anguish lies in her troubled eyes?
Has she been following you all along
yet only now you are taking notice?
A drowning death.
A family's gaping loss.
Fear, want, hunger, isolation, desperation.
Her faces have been with us
but most of us could look away.
Now they are too numerous.
We can no longer turn from them.
So face the pain.
She is not as frightening as she seemed.

Beneath her sadness is beauty.
She carries with her a message of change and hope,
of unity.
She wants us to have more compassion,
leading to a better world.
Embrace her.
Take her into your arms.
And ask simply,
"What can I give you?"

Kari Nogle, 92024

The Twilight Between

in the cognitive twilight between consciousness and
sleep
thoughts dip their toes in bioluminescent waves of
dream
lost between what's known and the way that what is
known does seem
discarding too much to understand that which dreams
do keep
not alone, but no one here affirms my true
existence
try to speak, I strain and I slur and failing, I
repeat
they don't respond, too far away, the space between
complete
voices, yes, but comprehension fails because of
distance

the dream is gone, it disappears and none of it is
kept
in the cognitive twilight between sleep and
consciousness
I slowly wake into awareness spurred by
restlessness
glad to have had this nightmare, for it proves that
I have slept

Berkeley O'Brien, 92123

Cyclical Dreams

Back again, but different.
Cycles, cycling 'round,
Maturing trees in the ground.
Same dreams, new perspective.
Half-moon growing, showing
To lead the future
With an eagle eye,
And a butterfly touch.

This slowdown is a show-down
With my reckoning past.
Time to let go.
Strengthen the body,

Lighten the load.
An invisible road beckons,
It starts where it started.
There's power in the pause.

Andrew Oster, 92107

The OMDC Dream

In sleep my mind returns to the place it knows,
but my body cannot know now.
I dream of the Otay Mesa Detention Center (OMDC)
where I spent my days among the hills, the haze of
East Tijuana, high above,
Border Patrol watched, their trucks on red dirt
paths, slicing the green mountain
back and forth along her sides.
Below I walked the parking lot in my black suit, to
the gate where a voice with no body, asked for my
contraband—noweapons, electronics, lighters, or
tobacco products?
I disappeared in the high metal gates, and inside
life disappears too.
Spent my days knowing souls, sleepless, sleeping
alone, no sleeping in, in prison.

You dream what you fear, what you remember, what
you long for.
I reminisce over prison doors that slam behind me,
longing to be in the walls, under the forced air,
fluorescent lights,

to fight among the living, to live among the
fighting once more.

I want to return to the prison, which was our ship,
where we were trying to get to the other side.
I call to them through the current, let the current
crash around me,
where I too drown with them.
Want them to see,
I would betray most on the outside for those on the
inside.
In the OMDC dream, I call to those detained,
let them follow me down my dream path, a clear path
from them to city,
where we can dance in the red-orange and green glow
of streetlights,
cruise in black cars covered in dust
to revisit freeways, or see them for the first
time.

Harper Otawka, 92102

Silent Angels

You see their wings in the currents of air,
Left behind, as they move thru the damp morning air

You feel their glow in the warmth that they bring
Seeing to our needs, on the silence of wings.

You smell their sweet fragrance lingering about,
Reminding us of deeds done with nary a whisper or
shout

You touch their gifts given for no purpose but its
own

Like a shoulder to lean on, when feeling alone

Silent angels are found in the hugs of a friend
Giving us comfort, helping us mend

You find silent angels in the community of man
Quietly, altruistically helping whenever they can.

A touch, a smile, a holding of a door
Or maybe something bigger maybe something more

Whatever the gift, let us give what we can
For we can all be silent angels in the community of
man.

Penelope Parker, 92028

curiosity and fancy

Amid a fit burden -- coarse habits of

complaint, fleeting from parodies to
low apprehension. Some people weave
their appraisals with rather gifted
senses of self-help.

They familiarize us to the novel
sequence of bloating affection which
breeds prosperity, un-even self-esteem.

Our eyes and hearts wander as our
wills roam about, durably committed to
uplift -- evolution.

Solutions soar forth with songs of
common sense. Meanwhile wisps of
instinct supply tremulous strengths --
designed, and propelled, much as needed.

Pulling us, with innate eagerness,
through curiosity and fancy..to kind

sanctuary with enduring pleasures that
provoke--then enchant destination.
resistance and revelation

Some leaders are involved in spreading
pledges for human wellness, and/or the
maintenance of nature. Whereas others
drag us into serious wrinkles of resolve --
since un-preferable, by means kept unseen.

Such tentacle talents spindle and
drift headway to success, blooming
atmospheres of confusion amidst mild to
rude whisk of ill-will.

Some people are nurturing fantastic
profit, with rather flocking effects

that largely unbalance...reserve.

Such paths and paces of human conduct
may be submerged amid unjust clauses.

Many efforts of resistance and revelation,

though mighty, are hard to align.
Through wide-spread dexterity upheld in
time they intrude...rumbling a muss,
and consecutive renovations.

Tony Raczka, 92116

*Look Within, Where else is it worth
looking?*

Look at the pretty sky,
Look how the birds just fly!
Look how the flowers bloom,
Look how the stars twinkle under the moon!
Look how the water flows,
Look how the pebbles show!
Feel the wind and fresh air,
Feel the breeze go right through your hair!
Look at the mountain peaks,
Look how the reflection under the water seeks!
Look how the sun just shines,
Look within the rainbow lines!
Look within yourself and more,

Look within the shining shore!
Everything you see,
Everything you hear,
Everything you feel,
Look Within!!!
Where else is it worth looking?

Aditi Ramakrishnan, 92130

Stay Aware, Stay Safe, Stay Positive!

Viruses are bad, Viruses make me mad;
Viruses cause lockdowns,
People had to stay home all over the town;
Viruses make people sick,
But if you stay healthy, you will heal quick!
Viruses are in different shapes and forms,
From a tail to a crown of different norms!
Sanity keeps us pure,
And kills the Virus for sure!
Stay Aware; Stay Safe; Stay Positive!!

Aditi Ramakrishnan, 92130

Hope

Up the stairs of man's dark ages,
Comes the night in deadly stages.
Through the black of devil's glory,
Can be seen the morning story.

From the depths of night did come,
A figure of the morning sun.
Its light was bright, its depth was dark,
But upon its fire, truth did mark.

In the core of man's own thought,
Dwells this truth often sought.
Showering love it moves the night,
And Heaven is filled with its light.

Judith (Judy) M. Rapp, 92011

Sweet Listless Lot,

Solipsistic thoughts, which disavow the know. I'd
have you here for wine & fare, but you'd prefer to
remain there; where naught exist nor grow. I fret,
this setting is for two. And though you fast, beset
by love, you think there less than few. Your eyes,

a vacant well; a vast and empty space, across which stars are strewn. The table I've prepared for us is Siskiyou in bloom; painted in the Sun's embrace, at night framed by the Moon. Sinews of your somber state are prison to us both. No warden, but belief. No pardon, only grief. Here Mourning Bourn, where lonely spawn and swim downstream to feed.

What then am I to you? A figment? A bedraggled hue. "Nothing"—this for sure. For either you and I exist or this a narcissistic fit; one stirred, and one secure. Belief as Maldives sea: sunken treasure, coveted, precious clarity. To find such understanding, but to have lost all sight of me. So, I bereft, 'til death do part, to love one such as you; unless retained, as day did start, a 'know' thought disavowed. The unrequited love I yearn, and solipsistic thoughts I scorn, a conflagration of the soul, a spirit here in pitch-and-roll, and burning 'midst the storm. A maelstrom of mind so torn, forthwith this memo born!

So then, to whom is this addressed? So listless have I been?! A self-absorbed abhorrent fjord across which thoughts have swept. To me this letter's sent; my deplorable ascent. I've wept this pool. A lonely fool. How long here have I dreamt?

Resignedly,
The Spent

Albert Osborn Reed, 92127

A GLIMPSE WITHIN

I'm grateful for this time we've had
I've seen such good amidst the bad
Compassion sprung from hearts of many
Where once I thought there wasn't any

I learned that silence knows me well
It beckoned me to sit a spell
We shared such stories, grand and small
And I the star within them all

Through loving eyes I saw myself
For once, I came down off the shelf
I dusted off this weathered face
So lost to work and hectic pace

I marveled at the world I've missed
A flower that the dew hath kissed
A morning bird, so sweet its song
I've missed such beauty all along

So long forgotten, this childlike heart
Given new promise, new life, a fresh start
So grateful for all things this crisis has shown
I am stronger a person for being alone

Although my impatience keeps seeking an end

Within the long quiet, I found my best friend
We will suffer our losses and cradle our sorrows
Lift our prayers to the heavens for brighter
tomorrows

As we move to reopen, to resume that pace
With "new normal" rules for the whole human race
Take a moment, one minute, to see where you've been
You owe all you are to the "person within"

Mary Rivera, 92082

Saying Goodbye

In the hospital struggling to breathe hoping to get a ventilator. Breathing, an every day function we take for granted. Until that day you can not breathe on your own. People dying alone in the hospital with the Corona Virus because their family isn't allowed to go in and hold their hand. No more funerals to say goodbye to your loved ones. No more get togethers with friends and family. Businesses closing their doors, kids being home schooled, Birthdays celebrated alone. News reporting the death tolls are rising. Parks, trails and beaches were closed. I realized how much the normal every day things we used to do and loved are a things of the past. All the things people took for granted. Goodbye Easter dinner with family. Goodbye Cinco De Mayo celebrations. Goodbye Comic Con, San Diego Fair and Forth of July fireworks. Hello to seeing

everyone wear a mask. This is a nightmare that came to life.

Ruby Ruscilli, 92129

POEM:

Life has not been kind to us as of late. It's been a year since we've kissed, All we can do now is wait... The unknown looms over it all. Next thing we know- Spring, summer and we fall.

Jacqueline Schliapnik, 92119

A Night's Dream

In quiet hours late at night
with eyelids' weary weight in sight
and sleep filling my head,
I crept around the baseboard
and clambered into bed.

On the window, the golden glow
from auspicious streetlight below
shone through droplets—misty
fog a tempest in had blown.
Going on night sixty.

Airy spirits cast it near us—
the omniscient eye of the storm.
I lied semiconscious
in my bed—ignorant—warm
while outside devils swarm.

And while I dreamed, around me schemed
a demon who came in as steam
through slightest crack in window pane
and rolled in along the floorboards,
his corporeal form in tie and gaudy cane.

He laughed and sat in my blue chair.
He lit his pipe and smoked it there.
And as he did, the torrent of rain
swelled to the form of an ocean past
which rose in tides to lap on the glass.

Out tossing on currents churning
my future—my destiny—sailed
on a ship whose masts were burning.
I dreamed of lightning applauding that deck,
and foaming brine overtaking the wreck.

Emily Morgan Scott, 91910

PASSERS BY MY WINDOW

WELCOME TO MY WINDOW, STRANGER
IT SEEMS "LA VIE EN ROSE" FROM OUTSIDE
FRESHNESS OF THE BLOOM OF PLASTIC
WITH DOUBLE BARS INPRISONED IS MY HEART
A GATE TO FREEDOM OR A MIRAGE OF DESERT ?
DILUSSION OR ILLUSION ?..I BURN FROM INSIDE OUT
I SENSE MY MOUTH SCREAM ROARING ECHOES
YOU WALK BY ME ...I? ...ENCAGED IN SOUNDPROOF
FATE...

Iolanda Scripca, 92084

PROOF OF LIVE BIRTH

I've been expelled from the everyday life
by clocks' ticking
I keep on waking up enclosed in an expensive box..
. On bare walls I hang up my imagination It's
unframed and wild
- A bitter-sweet Freedom keeps haunting me:
to FLY with a family of pelicans to the unknown
or to DIE all alone under a freeway overpass
I see my fingerprints disappear one-by-one...

I am writing this as PROOF that
I existed in a World where
ink is Invisible and echoes are Mute

Iolanda Scripca, 92084

The Rhythm Of Me

How can I tell you about my heart ...?
it aches...it's fragile...
it runs with the Wild looking for Freedom...
Have you ever closed your eyes and turned the
desert into an ocean?
...just like that!!!
tears turn into a Tsunami
there is no beach to anchor...
I ride on killer whales to the infinite
I let my hair loose in the dusk
I ride with wild horses before they disappear...
What can I tell you about my heart?
Just close your eyes and...listen...

Iolanda Scripca, 92084

What shall I dream about tonight?

I ask while falling into the empty arms of
sleep hoping to feel them close around me

I would dream of walking naked on a crowded beach
and that's alright, we're all undressed, smiling,
waving

I would dream of cutting up bright colored cloth
to sew flowers for my hair held on with elastic
bands

I would dream of walking down the street
holding hands with someone I just met

Instead I dream of an explosion that wakes me a
t 4 a.m. I don't know if it's real or hallucination

I dream my son says "Good Morning" but it's not
it's the middle of the night

Joanne Sharp, 92014

The Mirror

I look in the mirror, and I just see me
Nothing behind, and nothing in front
The dust has been cleaned, nothing to see
I can't find a tell with my eyes on the hunt

So what makes this mirror a mirror, I think
No scratch or smudge to put my mind at ease
I can't move a muscle, my mind's on the brink
The eyes that I see hit me like a disease

How can I find the reflection at all
I see me as equal though I am not real
The world starts to quiver, the sky starts to fall
And I start to wonder if I can reveal

Like clockwork my hand starts to raise just like
mine

I see in my eyes that my hand I will take
The fingers they touch and they hold so divine
A glimpse of nirvana before I awake

Tanner Shimp, 92037

A Whole Different Now

Minutes seem like hours, thoughts swimming in my head

Things left undone, it isn't much fun, awaiting tomorrow's dread

Hours seem like days, trying to quiet my mind

Lying awake, hoping sleep will take, before I go back to the grind

Nights seem like forever, a subtler form of abuse

The alarm has been set, but the best sleep I get, is just after I have pressed snooze

A dream has many meanings, both figurative and literal

If ones that scare you, keep coming true, you won't want to dream them at all

A dream has many facets, whether nighttime or during the day

Sometimes confusing, sometimes amusing, and some of a land far away

We dream for many reasons, to plan or for our mental health

From our subconscious, some make you cautious, and some can help you attract wealth

Now I have no job to speak of, no more lists of tasks left to do

Life is less hectic, no frustrating traffic, more time to be creative too

Now I have no place to go to, a calmer and more peaceful night

More distance learning, no tossing and turning, no
waking as if we'd a fight

Sorry for those who are hurting, wondering when we
will open and how

No need to be hateful, it feels better grateful,
waking in a whole different now

Daughn Stombaugh, 9/19/20

Dear G-d,

A few short months ago our lives
changed forever. One day a virus showed up on our
doorstep. Some got sick,
some died while others spread the virus
unknowingly.

It took the last breath of young and
old, people of different cultures, both men and
women , boys and girls. it spread
to countries around the globe.

Covid 19 left a trail of
devastation, families were ripped apart, people
lost their jobs, their homes, others lost their
lives. Our hope, our dreams vanished before our
eyes. Our personal core shattered and reduced to
rubble.

The Virus never cared , it just
infected Police officers, Firefighters, Doctors,
Nurses, healthcare workers , military,
grocery store workers, and delivery workers. There
were Mom's, Dad's, son's, daughters , grandparents,

rich, poor, homeless and the undocumented. There was no discrimination.

Stay at home orders and social distancing became the new adjustment. I had wondered if we were already doing that in a different way. Were we guilty of having a better relationship with our phones? Could it have been more meaningful to hear the human voice instead of texting? Could we actually make time out of our "already-too-busy" schedules to have breakfast with family and friends? Was this a bitter wakeup call for us when the world seemed invisible at times and taken for granted?

Now we have become primitive, reduced to standing in lines for the basics of food, water and rolls of toilet paper.

We are made to stand 6 feet apart as we cover our faces to hide from the virus and the fear.

Perhaps we felt socially distant from G-d before the virus. Did we pray from the heart? How often did we really pray? Did we remember to say 'thank you' for all our blessings ? Did we even pray at all ??

Without notice our life clock stopped ticking. Time seemed to stand still. A time to pause, contemplate and see where I can do things differently, perhaps with more love. A smile for a stranger, help for the homeless, sharing the food I have and hugging my animals a little bit more.

It is with gratitude that my heart has been opened , my values reset. My path more defined.

With Love,

Rachel Rose Swankoski, 92021

Dreaming of Rain

I dreamed of rain. Accompanied
by the pitter patters against the pavement,
the rain sings.

A rare yet dim streetlight near
a bus stop tempts me, persuades me
to jump on.
I wish I could
hop on a bus,
take it straight to Old Town.
Ride that green line Trolley,
walk to Linda Vista, slightly buzzed
(because everything feels warmer
when your cheeks are red,
your thoughts are fuzzy, and the moon
greet's hello.)
to knock on your door. That's when you'd tell me
"You're so stupid for not wearing a hood."
You're not wrong. By that point, my caramel
gradient
curls will be dried, and the rain will still croon.
I'll want to stay in the rain
because it reminds me of home.
Reminds me
of gray skies perfect for coffee shops. Reminds me
of short urban adventures in dirty white Doc

Martens boots. Reminds me
of trails I took for granted. But the rain croons,
and it'll ring
against your door. I'll plaster on a grin, remind
myself
that telling you about the rain songs
will wash away my denial. The rain will reveal my
11:11 wishes,
falling stars, and drunken impulses.
They should be waterproof.
I dreamed of rain, but really, I dream of you, and
the rain
sings my confession.

Alissa Tu, 92122

the monk dream

Leave the confines of skin:
Fly outward to the thought of you:
No more pain in the happy rain:
There is plenty and it gives and gives:
And you smile alone forever:
So it is the day is open :
You are you and you are:
It is meant to be this freedom:
Leave the confines of dreams
And find eternity.

Gilbert Valadez, 92104

The Best Comes Last

I am wishing you the very best, the best that life can bring.

There is someone who cares for you, who graciously gives you everything.

When you hear the church bells ring, open your heart and let it sing.

Sing praises to God in whom you find rest; God is giving you the very best.

Ilsa Vetter, 91911

You Are Never Far Away

Thank you Father God for in Luke 8:50 you teach us,
"Do not be afraid; only believe."

When my spirit fails me, my heart ever fearful be.
You are never far away from me.

You catch every tear that falls and cradled
tenderly my heart.

You see every shadow and black cloud that follows
me.

In haste you drape your love, like a rainbow around
the black clouds that choke my heart.

You are never far away from me.

Your Holy Spirit covers me, as the night in silence passes by.

You have kept me safe and always with me.

I never walk alone no matter how dark the night appears.

Joy flows in with morning light; the day returns with sunshine bright while the birds serenade us with their happy songs.

You are never far away.

For God our Father never let us walk alone.

Ilsa Vetter, 91911

NIGHT

This is a poem about night

About how we put on the record player

Slip into our suits, sip wine and taste fruit

This is a poem about midnight dance parties

Blasting music to drone out the day

Night in our house is all about play

If you come over you can wear something fancy

Embroidered glittered labeled sparkly

Put jewels in your eyes and a cube in your cup

Night in our house is never enough

Outside the garden plays its own tune

The bats fly overhead under the moon

Flapping their wings looking for rats
Inviting lightning bugs, and stray grey cats
To join the party, kick back and relax
Move a little and shake those hips
Night in our house is all about lips
Kissing and moving like lovers reunited
Days of seclusion, but now we're ignited
Immortal in a court of dreams, surrounded
By coconut palms and shimmering grass
The sound of Balboa Park's underpass
At our desks we work like hogs, trying to write
But we both know that all changes at night
At night we're knighted like the King and Queen
Breathing heavy in the moonlight like we're
eighteen

Lauren Villa, 92109

THE SKY IS MY PLACE

The sky is my place.
I can touch the earth
in a thousand places
darting from clouds to blue,
green, red. Reflections
on my wings, in the air
the eye cannot see.
I bathe in the rain,
race with the wind.

Greet brother thunder.
With flashes of fire.
Beware.
The sky is my place.

Lolalee Walker Hirschbein, 92101

The world can be a better place if kindness was the
key,
fill the hearts with joy and love
and watch and you will see,
share a smile with passer's by and look how they
react,
what you give is what you get
trust me. that's a fact,
people sacrifice themselves
to put a stranger first,
a paramedic, a first respondera doctor or a nurse,
tornadoes, floods, or coronavirus keeps the world
in fear,
but hand in hand, across this land from our
balconies we will cheer, together we will overcome
it starts with you and me,
the world can be a better place
if kindness was the key.

Michael A Watkins, 92115

Not Yet

On wilding green
amid the blades,
the white-corona scouts advance.

No plucking hands
or puckered lips
send wishes dancing on their down.

Dreams lodged in heads
await the breath
to fly unfettered, but
not yet.

Libby Weber, 92111

I'm not surprised
At some youth of today
No regard for my life
"Your half dead anyway "

"It's a hoax, it's a Flu "
"So why u all "trippin"
" must go out, must be seen"
"My social life's slipping"

"I am gonna go crazy"

"I must go out and play "
"Can't do this any longer "
"I don't care what you say"

Yes, my body is aging,
But my mind? Oh, hell no!
I'm just hitting my prime
Got a LONG way to go.

You've got Tik Tok and Facebook
And Snapchat and more
Please don't count me out yet
PLEASE DON'T GO OUT THAT DOOR!

Save my life, save your life
This won't last much longer
In the end we survive
We will all be much stronger

Patricia Wojciechowski

Masquerade Queries/Woods

What's behind your mask? I ask

Do you hide, reveal
just how you might feel

Leer or sneer
fallen tear

Sideways grin
hair on chin?

What's behind your mask? I ask

What lurks there behind
the voice of your mind

Curl of lip
muttered quip

Muted snort
crumbs from torte?

What's behind your mask? I ask

A curse from your mouth
under nose due south

Safe from spit
hiding a zit

Tune you hum
wad of gum?

What's behind your mask? I ask

We're told mask a must
think it good or unjust

Black, grey, blue

or colorful hue

Mark of fashion
sterile passion?

What's behind your mask? I ask

Do you speak soft prayer
behind mask you wear

Hard to smell
or orate well

Your eyes smile
hang in a-while?

What's behind your mask, I ask

Hope for swift ending
mysterious date pending

Cover your face
obey with grace

We'll get by
did you just sigh?

What's behind your mask? I ask.

Marilyn Woods, 92103

The New Normal

A sea of blank faces
hiding behind a mask,
feelings denied but
betrayed by their eyes.

The mighty leader
caught off guard,
fending the worst in denial
and just counting the loss.

A sea of blank faces
hiding behind a mask,
uncertain how to react
whether to fear or to fight.

The enemy lurks about
leaving death in its path,
cover your face or hide
lock down, go out of sight.

With trips of road abandoned
the wild beasts go out of hiding,
the grass turned greener
the river reflects bluer skies.

Should we fear the new enemy
or appreciate the new normal,
nature's beauty is returning,
as we go about social distancing.

Virgilio S Yalong, 92114

Lockdown

I peer down pathways
In search of activity, in search of freedom
Streets turn to stairways
Increasingly narrow

The authorities
They are following me, I know
Just out of sight, but ever close, closing in
Like a noose tightening around my neck

Someone forces me inside
Onto a couch
In swoops a bat
Although flying parallel to me, it is coming for
me, I know
It turns, flying menacingly, heading towards me

I scream
I flinch
I attempt to cover myself with my hands
As if a single umbrella could cover the world in a
raging storm

The bat has landed
Upon me
Before jolting awake in fear, my panicked thoughts:

Now I must get a rabies shot for protection
But will any medical facility even see me?
Will anyone be there for me?
Can I be saved?

Tracy Zetko-White, 92021

PROMPT 2

WAITING: HOW HAS THE CONCEPT OF WAITING CHANGED FOR YOU? FOR ME, WAITING HAS BEEN, MOSTLY A MERE STEP TO SOME END THAT WE ANTICIPATE: WAITING FOR THE MAIL TO COME, THE BUS TO COME. FOR ME, THIS WAITING NOW SEEMS SO DIFFERENT BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT END IS OR WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS. HOW ARE YOU AFFECTED BY THIS WAITING?

We are all waiting...

At 10:15 this morning, any morning now, we are waiting...

The door to the little patio is open so I can see rain dribbling puddles on the patio, the air waltzing in cooler and cooler.

We are waiting...

Not the waiting like before; on the bench at Voltaire and Sunset Cliffs. Where is the 52 bus? No schedule to check so we don't know if it's late or even running. Waiting for the Christmas amaryllis from your ex's aunt who can't remember what happened, to blossom. Some years only some waiting is filled with little hammers, but now...

for the bioluminescence, exact high tide, check from the guy, to measure only twice before cutting, to figure any jumble, a skate board, for the girl in the black halter to run by at 4:30, and wave. For AAA to arrive with the gas, for poetry to mean...

Waiting; all that plaque between want and does...

But not today. This waiting is shapeless, the unsettling, nothing outside on the wet lawn, the no-end perhaps, no idea what after feels like. That waiting...

Ron Salisbury, San Diego Poet Laureate

SELECTED POEMS

From the submission to each prompt, Poet Laureate, Ron Salisbury selected 3 works to be featured along with his poem.

1.

May moon melon-full

Above the dark pine needles

Distant sirens wail

2.

Crow tilts his head

Yellow tape on the swing set

Just right for my nest

Susan Smith

Oh, Covid-19,

How considerate of you to cover

the world, allow Planet Earth to heal. Oh, lethal

bat-birthered bane, imprison us at home, until

greenhouse gas emissions go the way of the dodo.

You show us, oh powerful pathogen, how to drop

pollution levels with ease of coconuts from palms.

Oh, queen of contagion, choke poacher's breath,

keep coal in their fracked holes, shutter factories
and slaughterhouses. I bow to your potent power,
wear facemasks to lesson your infection
and gloves to keep at bay your bacillus.

You, a mighty microbe of mass murder, and yet,
oh, social spreader of sickness, you mend our
planet.

We are mere mortals waiting for your pox to pass.

Oh, toxic troubadour, who has escorted dolphins
to Venice's canals, coaxed wildlife to venture out,
siphoned chemicals from the seas, before we destroy
you, I beseech you: make us mind the earth.

Joan Gerstein, 92058

American Goldfinch

Despertar otro día

a una nueva realidad,
por segunda vez

soy inmigrante.

La incertidumbre
es como piel quemada,
sin saber cuán profunda
será la llaga.

Las noticias
son catastróficas,
el afán por leerlas
son como una droga
que calman el miedo.

Antes de empezar
la nueva rutina laboral,
desde casa,
camino al jardín.

Dos migrantes nuevos,
de pecho amarillo,
con pico y cola negra
vuelan de palmera

en palmera.

Forman círculos por el cielo
cantando una balada,
de sonidos indescifrables
pero divinos.

American Goldfinches,
indica una pesquisa.
Jilgueros norteamericanos.

Continúo a la espera,
quizás a una sociedad
más justa, más humana..
No lo sé.

Se escucha otro sonido
al caer dos nísperos.
El jardín susurra,
susurra una verdad,
vale la pena vivir.

Romina Espinosa de los Monteros, 92115

POEMS

Collection of submitted poems for prompt 2.

The World Came Too

Who knew
it would take a pandemic
to quiet my restlessness
and reset my soul
I don't wait for the next
news story or time lost
wondering
how long, what next
or why
I wake slowly to the
lightening sky, a cat's purr
and a new sense of awe
My breath doesn't rise in
deepening gasps worrying
if I will have enough time
but sighs along with the bird songs
I didn't hear before
When waiting meant
anxiously counting down
from one moment to the next
one appointment, one task, one meal,
one meeting
Never actually owning that one moment
but always
on to the next
I don't wait for the next
anything now
The moments are mine
as I travel from room to room
inside and outside discovering
the crooked frames on the walls
spider webs gleaning life in the corners
tiny grass stems pushing through

the cracks in my pavers
My world is larger now
then before the pandemic
I don't wait to travel
the world
My restless soul
has moved inside
and the world came too

Lauriel Adsit, 92117

Long distance dating

The chimes beckon me out on to the balcony.
I sit at the bistro set which implies a place for
you.
I feel the breeze, still sounding the chimes, cool
across my face.
I shift my position.
I put my book, the third one this week, in my lap.
I hold my chin in the palm of my hand and I think
of you.

We have chatted sitting in our cars across 6 feet.
We have hiked through the parks wearing masks.
We have sat on separate rocks to watch the sunset.
We leave food and gifts at each other's door.
We text, we FaceTime, we Zoom.

When will we hold hands, my Love? When will I fold

into your arms?

Ann M. Alves, 92103

Hacia Dónde Mirar?

Hacia dónde mirar,
cuando todo ha desaparecido?

Hacia dónde ir,
cuando todo lugar está vacío?

Hasta cuándo esperar,
cuando no se ve el final?

A qué equipo apoyar,
cuando los juegos se han cancelado?
A qué restaurante acudir,
cuando todos han cerrado?

A quién se puede amar?
A nuestras parejas, que aún están a nuestro lado.

Con quién se puede contar?
Con nuestras familias y amigos, que siguen
luchando.

A quién se puede ayudar?
A todo el que lo necesite.

Hacia dónde se puede escuchar?
Hacia nuestras respiraciones.

Hacia dónde debemos regresar?
Hacia nuestros sentimientos.

Hacia dónde mirar?
Hacia nuestros propios corazones.

José Aroeste, 92122

Waiting is an Art Form.

Waiting.

In rush hour traffic on the 405,
on the other end of a risky text.
On the warm side of a king size bed.

Waiting.

For an acceptance letter, the culminating of your
life's work, your value.

Waiting for the hum of E43 at the DMV.

Waiting

For the light to change, the sun to rise, the dust
to settle.

Waiting for signs of aging, time to heal, moments
to turn to memories.

Waiting

For your turn to respond, amidst heated dialogue.

For the timer to go off on the microwave.

For an apology that's long overdue.

Waiting for the bus to come take you to a place you
dread, but it is mandatory.

Waiting for the phone to ring

Waiting for the hour to change so you can clock
out, the weekend.

Is that all we do, is wait?

If waiting was a sport, then there'd
be something I'm finally good at.

If waiting were a language,
I'd always know just what to say.

If waiting were timeless,
then maybe, time wouldn't cost you.

Waiting is chaos.

Insanity in its purest form

The art of sitting up straight, Legs
crossed, hands folded

Like a good little girl, Awaiting the
inevitable. Waiting, is surrender.

It's deciding that maybe those
Things they say about you are true,
That society will always limit
who You can be & what You can do.

Waiting needs no face covering, Open casket.
For the 6 ft distance they keep referencing isn't
something new,

it reflects the space between ground level and the
base of a burial plot.

So climb right in, and let's wait.

Nicole Avila, 91950

Haiku on Waiting

Wait to be inspired;
breathless, the stillness of dawn
initiates me.

Jobina C. Avonley, 92109

Covid-19

She woke at night
 In the dark forest
Black wings beating
Sending waves to see her prey
Her mortal shell could die
 Yet she would live
Grow legs
Walk the entire earth
Find those strong enough to carry her
 To incubate her young
Felling the climate changers
Ever adapting
Until in glorious victory
She and the cockroach she rides
 Survive and thrive!

Gay Ayers, 92057

The space in between

Here I sit
Just another day
Another day of many it seems

Waiting in the abyss
The in between space
Cannot go back cannot move forward

How did I get here?
Stuck in this place
And so I wait

What was, is no longer
What had been was it even real?
An illusion perhaps

I do not know
I will not know
So I wait

I cry for guidance as I lay my head down each night
Waiting for a sign it will be ok
No answers

Morning rises
My routine begins
Maybe today I pray

What lies before me, I do not know
Will I be alone in this world for perpetuity?
I do not know

Another day closes the sun sets

Maybe tomorrow I will know
So I wait

What am I waiting for?
I wait for something but there is nothing
So I pray

Tara Bacon, 92117

Quarantine with You

My only gift in quarantine's
This song for you, when you awaken from your dream
I couldn't find a better friend
To spend indoors with you, my love, all through the
end

Day and night, we pass the time
Cooking meals and rolling dice
As we sip red wine

While we survive another week
I learned from you a couple words I'll try to speak
"Este gringo aprendiendo
Mas o menos un poco Espanol"

And maybe in a dozen years
We'll look back, we'll laugh and cry
How together we fought our fears

I never thought when I met you a year ago
We'd have a home together
Rationing our toilet paper with your cat Bobo
I'm glad I'm not solo

I love you more as each day goes by
One last thing I'll try to say
"Estamos unidos para siempre"

Al Barnes, 92116

Beware the Covidiot's;
they don't know what they are doing
or not doing
Wait for the herd
and immunity

Beward the Covidiot's;
they think they are immune with
secret parties by the Big Harbor
and lack of distance in PB

and leaving unessentially

Beware the Covidiot;
wait
until we know
 until we change
 everything
The beach is worth the wait.

Dolores C. de Baca, 91945

Awaiting

Awaiting Sleep
Eyes Closed
Body Still

Friends and Relatives Visit
Mind-Traveling Distances Near and Far

Present in Spirit
Waiting to Touch Again

CEBreeze, 92102

Waiting

for dawn
for the music to begin
for a walk
for the fog to lift
from the top of San Miguel
for the cat to wake up, or go back to sleep
for something to happen
for some feeling
of accomplishment, however small
for the phone call with the news
you've been expecting
for it to be teatime, to learn
how the story ends, or happy hour
to touch the life of an old friend
for dinnertime, for bedtime
waiting for sleep to come
for the dreams you know
are waiting to be dreamed
of being lost in a labyrinth
with no exit, or on a path
without end, or of discovering
a room in your house
you never knew was there
waiting for something to happen

for the music to end
for someone you know to die

Barbara Carlton

UNEMPLOYMENT

Did I want you?
unemployment
No!

You are the un to my employment.
Yet I am so attached to you.

The un to my day.
Especially since you are not like the sun that
rises.

You have yet to arrive.
Why is it so complicated?
Safety first.
Un.

I need you but I can't have you.
I could keep you but where are your?
It hurts to need you
You un un employment.
But my pocket needs you if
tomorrow I can wear pockets.

Unemployment I have bills.

I guess I will survive somehow to wear pockets to
fill once you unemployment
becomes safe employment

Unemployment you are everywhere but nowhere.

Tomorrow the un will be gone. Tomorrow though un
near will
leave my pockets filled.
Right now the un is un sickness
That's the importance
Unemployment you worry me but
I want my love ones around and I will wait.
Unemployment you wont be late.
Though invisible you are here some way or another
The un is leaving someday.
Love stays

AC

Waiting For the Time of Renewal

Time is subjective.
The old notion of waiting for a pre-planned event
to transpire
Is meaningless now. Wait for what?
The Pandemic has given us the gift (or curse to
some)
Of being in the present moment
We have the time for self- reflection and
contemplation

Previously unavailable to stressed - out, busy
people, otherwise occupied.
With time, I can see their true nature beginning to
emerge
When and if you are able to look around
Kindness and generosity abound
When danger threatens us
The best of human nature rises up
Like cream rises to the top.
We're remembering how good it feels to cooperate
with the group
In helping others, we help ourselves. A timeless
rule.
We see the disparity between the haves and have
not,
Who is stricken and dies and who carries on
Calm, social responsibility and childish open up
now.
If crisis brings opportunity, then I can only wait
for the time of renewal.
We have the opportunity to change our world view
using sharing and caring
As the tool to expand it equally to all. With our
eyes open to what is truly valuable, could we break
the links that lead us to disparity?
Maybe, in the time of renewal.
I'm waiting for the time of renewal.

Mary Cash, 92123

Crickets

In this pandemic,
I wonder,
could crickets be the new
groundhogs?

Around the time
the waves pulled back
before the coming crash of now
I heard a cricket in the
heating duct, heralding
I knew not what.

Last night, I spied
it hopping along the baseboard.
I nudged and followed
until I trapped it under a cup,
pausing to admire its icky oily head
and bee-striped body
before I set it free outside.
A Jerusalem cricket, I think,
which, actually, is neither
cricket nor from that
Holy Land. Instead
some friar confused Navajo
"skull insect" for "Skull Hill"
the crucifixion site.
My prophetic insect
misnamed for the ages.

This morning, Palm Sunday morning,
in fact,
I hear chirping, still.
Same bug crawled back in

or another one, anewed,
six feet from my dining table?

Resurrection or
six more weeks of
shelter in place?

Who knows, but
God willing,
we'll find out.

Sophy Chaffee, 92024

The Quarantine Blues

I've been in my house
Waiting for days
A week or two
More than a few
Rent is a month overdue
When seeing people
Stay six feet apart
Or be six feet under
Now life is in plunder
Masking your frustration
My liberty refused
Pass the time
With beer, wine, or booze
The quarantine blues

Every day is like Sunday
Not always a fun day

After all the binging
Of tv and food
No sports to watch
Boredom settles in
Children are crying, fighting
Frustration of teaching
And everyone is banned from
Proms and graduations
The kids are confused
It's a dire situation
The quarantine blues

Lazy on command
Stir crazy by demand
Waiting on the next hand
Reading another book
Watching that series
Yelling at the kids
While working from home
Or losing your job
Running out of toilet paper
People are buying guns
It's that serious
Can't have a short fuse
Foregoing solitude
No one leaves the house
As they say on the news
We are in this together
The quarantine blue

Deidre Anders Christensen, 92054

" Who Got The Keys"

Who got the keys?..

To the City?

To the Economy?

To our Freedom?

I see protesters protesting to end the lockdown/
but isn't that a slap in the face to every health
care worker risking their lives on the front line/
who to believe/ the President or the Governors/ who
has the best action plan?/ Numerous states asking
the Federal Government to invest in/ so they can do
more testing. They say it's a process/slow and
steady/ Florida why did you open your beaches/ I
get it trying to get back to normal/ but what about
the elderly dying daily . Who's Hungry?/ the supply
low/ the demand high / mobile food banks feeding
250k Americans a week. There's a difference between
fed and fed up/ a full stomach and the anger
knowing that a stimulus check won't last a month.
Who got the keys ? ... to these restraints /...to
set us free?

Allen Coleman, 92102

Waiting? For what?

For life to resume?

For crowds to gather?

For joy to come back?

For an embrace?

Waiting
For children to run free
For couples to kiss
For an embrace
Waiting

Jose Corral, 92154

I am waiting

I am waiting, I am waiting to cry
For the owner of the comic book shop
His lifelong dream collapsing and dying
I am waiting to cry, for a Motel
Over its large and wanting parking lot
A sign reads: Our Rooms Sanitized Daily
I am waiting to cry for that old couple
in masks and glasses with sox on their hands
I am waiting to cry for the locked doors
I am waiting to cry for those shut out
shut in, the lonely, unemployed, cash strapped
the broke, the broken, the ventilated
those already dead, and those who will die
And those they love, in worry and in grief
I am waiting to cry, at the daily
histrionics, and politics it plays
I am ready to cry for heroics,
doctor, nurse, farm workers, drivers, and friends
I am ready to cry out for science
tenacity, patience, logic and math
I'm waiting to be told, "it is okay
to remove your mask." Then like a baby...

...unapologetically, I will cry
But until that time, I will bank my tears
With telling welling in each eye, Knowing
I might wait months or even years

Ted Crittenden, 92103

Waiting passionately, pensively
Everlong understandably
A life's work challenged
Awaiting feverishly
Filling time
Dreams I swallow
Meet the days challenges
Time occupied, none wallowed
I wait for you
To bring you into this world
Due May 30th
But take your time
Earth is still spinning
Politics must unwind
A search for a cure
Till then only rules galore
No one will reach for you
Only eyes will adore
Unfortunate are the ones
Whose clocks tick without order
Waiting for you
Gives me something to do
A light in this tunnel of uncertainty
A righteous objective
One that remains true

Honest about my mindset
Corona who?

Lea Currier, 92117

Silent Spring - A Reflection

This morning as I woke, a strange and different
day;
There's something bad throughout air, all the
doctors seem to say.

Stay home, be safe, only social with some distance;
Some did, others not, many scoffed with much
resistance.

Weeks passed, stores closed, more noticed as stocks
fell;
Maybe this is getting serious, but how bad, none
can tell.

The unknown creates fear, hunker down, shelter
inside;
How many we all know, may fall ill, may even die.

But before all lose hope, hear these words and feel
despair;
Please take pause, wipe your tear, take a breath,
and let's be fair.

We are stronger than we think, more resilient than
we know;
Together through connection, we have love to fight

this foe.

Stay apart, six feet space, may be prudent, no
magic wand;
Six degrees of separation, will prevail, eternal
bond.

We are all on this earth-ship, for this ride, for
this time;
Help your brother, help your sister, sing a song,
make a rhyme.

Take a moment, count your blessings, we don't know
how long we're here;
But while we are, just remember, we are family, far
and near.

The news will come, the news will pass, some is
good, most is not;
Never mind the gloom and doom, we have a larger
course to plot.

Look beyond the short-term pain, the loss of fun,
someone to blame;
Think instead this time we have, may change for
good the cosmic game.

What if all this virus scare, was meant to be, to
teach us all;
The precious gift, to fully live, show our love,
heed the call.

Perhaps we'll learn, around world, from this pain
and shared ordeal;
We are one, all connected, our fragile lives in
full reveal.

We need each other, young and old, from every
corner of every place;
The test is now, can we thrive, a single goal for
human race.

We have the science, we have the skills, combined
together with collective will;
The challenge now is pull together, don't give up,
let's take that hill.

With deepest love, my heartfelt joy, to know so
many, blessed be;
Stay strong and brave, keep the faith, soon will
return a calmer sea.

Jim Day, 92024

My Home

So many weeks
With nothing to do
Meet Covid 19
2020's Black Flu

Wearing a mask 24/7
Or being stuck in my home
So when this quarantine ends
I'll be more than ready to roam

Can't wait to get behind the wheel
Driving down the Golden Coast
I've been in cities all over the country

But I love driving in San Diego the most

Windows down and radio blasting
Big Mountain, P.O.D. and Blink 182
Sun shinning, got my Ray Bans on
Atop Mt Soledad and soaking in the view

The beautiful blues of the ocean
The cool breeze on the beach
Calling Zonies and other tourist
The warmth of Pacific well in their reach

Law St, Tourmaline and the OB Pier
The locals come and shred the shores
IB, PB, Coronado and Mission
Long, short or boogie, go grab your boards

Balboa Park, Cabrillo, the SD Zoo
Living life the San Diego way
75 degree weather all year round
Mexican food from Lucha Libre

Padre fans, surfers, and Comic Con
Culture, arts and the military
Just a few of so many things
That makes us Americas Finest City

Sun now setting, bonfire lit
A micro brew in hand
How to best end this day
With family, friends and a tan

The skyline and it's majesty
The beautiful sights I've been shown
No other city can compare
To San Diego, My City, My Home

The Waiting Game

Before the pandemic, we waited for
Spring, and flowers to bloom
Sundays to relax and unwind
New love, or a sign it was soon to come
Upcoming trips, months in the making
Latest restaurants to indulge in
Family events to hear the children's laughter

Now, we wait for
Numbers to see if the curve has flattened
Guidance on social distancing and quarantine
Tests and vaccines
Stores to restock their shelves
Fear and anxiety to dissolve
Life to feel normal again

What happens when we run out of things to wait for?
Will we wait to see what to wait for next?
What if we choose to stop waiting?
And, instead turn waiting into *Being*

Being Still

Being Present

Being Kind

Being Compassionate

These are things we don't have to wait for
They are here now, and are ours for the taking
No longer at the mercy of waiting
We can end the Waiting Game

A CALL TO ACTION

Marking time when waiting is merely an option, a
choice,
a thought, a desire, a measure to fritter away with
no voice,
hoping for an elusive vaccine or promise of a cure,
wishing for world peace and a future that is secure

Waiting implies patience but patience has thin
armament
while action quells the boredom, induces
accomplishment.
We can embrace this together and can make dreams
come true,
mighty gifts of initiation and positive resolution
will come through

Creative juices and inventions flow spurred by
necessity,
constructive thoughts tumbling with no heed for
brevity.
We may wait, we may bide time, we may fuss and
stew.
As for me, this is a time to be productive and to
renew.

Diane Fennel, 92069

A Girl

I waited
by the cool bathroom sink
as she applied pancake makeup
and her mouth opened
like a fish's when she coated her lashes black;

to grow up and be beautiful
like her.

Then we ran
from her fears, from voices
in her head.

I waited to return
to the place of breathing
where she laughed
in little trills at my silly dance,
to the place of softness
where she smoothed back my hair
and I curled into the comfort of her
protection.

When we slept in parks
I waited out the cold, wet night
as if a compassionate sun might
guide her
away from psychosis
and back to me.

I became literary to release old fantasy;
learned pathetic fallacy only lives in songs,
stories,
poems and in this unmasked dream

where waiting is
a word
in
progress
blossoming in spring, a fragile,
memorable moment of heart-heated hope
balancing on a leaf
in storm of possibility.

Leslie Ferguson, 92025

Waiting

Loud barking dog at 2:30am
disturbs our quiet neighborhood
put pillow over my head
wait for it to stop, it doesn't
get up, look out second story
window, someone sitting on curb
sipping from a cup
barking continues
open balcony door
she stands up, tall slim woman
in casual clothing
we exchange glances
neither of us speak.
I retreat and wait
she sits back down, lights up
smokes, stamps out butt
looks at cell, waits.
barking gets louder
where is the dog?
she puts her head down

after 20 minutes she walks away
barking stops
I lay down, wait to fall
asleep, but wonder if she is
depressed, in distress, been
abused. What effect does
shelter-in-place have on those
in my own neighborhood?
how long will she have to wait?

Nancy Foley, 92109

Waiting for War

The turmoil of these times
brings me back to childhood
my parents having escaped
the nightmare of Nazi Germany
overflowed their pantry with fears
of Soviets invading California in 1962
soup cans piled high
like sentinels ready to be launched
when Cuban Missiles would start to fly
boxes of rice and beans
stood straight and tall
grouped like soldiers to be deployed
when the roar of enemy planes
reached the beaches of Los Angeles

black braids neatly bowed
I sat hands folded
on the living room couch

peering out a picture window
through swaying palms
waiting for the war to arrive
imagined I could watch the soldiers march by
as if they couldn't bring me harm
here in the warmth of my parents' arms
with a pantry stocked full of love and food

remembering that child
as I shelter in place
almost 60 years later
I fill my pantry to the brim
peer through my window
where a new enemy invades my street
an invisible army, a virus marches
over deserted sidewalks, flowing creeks,
no missiles or guns to see
but on the TV another window
displays the ugly statistics of this war
footage of hospitals deluged with the sick
doctors weeping for the dead
and from lack of sleep

I find no comfort
as I wait within my walls
for I'm the parent now
and know despite full pantries
how easily
this slender barrier of home
can be breached
and fall.

Annette Friend, 92014

"Waiting for answers, re-openings and vaccines"

Waiting for answers
Answers from distant leaders
With skepticism and hope for good decisions

Waiting for re-openings
Slower than closings
Events cancelled or postponed
Businesses surviving or not.

Waiting for vaccines,
A cure for the coronavirus,
the common cold, and seasonal flu.

Waiting temporarily is a delay.
But waiting without action is lost time.
Patience is positive
Idleness is negative.

Daphne Galang, 91977

Waiting

There's no rush, you've got to wait. Soon you'll be able to celebrate
There's no rush, take it in, Soon you'll find you can smile and grin
There no rush but it can be tough, Soon you'll find yourself with a load of stuff.
When this pandemic ends, You'll be with all your friends
You're waiting, waiting, waiting, And just like that it ends!

It's 3 a.m. and my thoughts won't let me sleep
Can't seem to hide from the dreams that I keep
I wish I could find a way just to let them go
But the sun's light will burn those dreams made of
snow

Another long night and my bed is cold
How long will I have to pay for the conscience that
I sold?
I heard once that it's the truth that lies within
But it's like trying to paint a picture of a place
I've never been

Searching for something to try and ease the pain
A storm is brewing
It feels like acid rain

The man in the morning is sorry for his sin
The man at night breath smells of Gin

Waiting for Pants

Schools closed, children home
running, screaming, crying loud.
Not them, I meant me.

The store shelves are bare.
Has bath tissue turned to gold?
That would be painful.
Working hard from home.
Crossword puzzles, Sudoku.
I really should rest.
Busy day writing,
coming up with words that
rhyme with quarantine.
Still working from home—
When's the last time I showered?
Is today Friday?
Spring's high throne and crown
has been overthrown this year.
Blossoms fall like tears.
I bet you ten bucks
no one on this Zoom call knows
I'm not wearing pants
Jaiden Garlit
Waiting for Pants
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Jaiden Garlit

Intermission

At first the break was so welcome, rising and
stretching my back
and reaching for a pastry with the coffee, even the
historic nature
of the situation made watching the pandemic news
oddly exciting.

The brunt of the situation came fast though, and
being older with
certain conditions made hope harder, the length of
time extending
in my mind, the wait seemed to gain its own weight,
unlike all

the times when I took refuge in my home and made it
a sanctuary
when I could not cope. I made a sacred space for
meditation, placed
a Buddha fountain and rested on my patio that
overlooks the valley.

Interlude of hawk on the fence watching,
intermittent breeze, then

howl of breath, red-shaded pale moon rocks our
world until the
clouds mask the sky and hide the last super moon
for years.

Now the white wildflowers seem to form an ankle
bracelet on
my legs as I walk the hills, the space of my realm
shrinking,
the world that was mine through research and
writing my memoir.

I was eager to network again since it had been two
years of cancer
treatment for MS, so now as I watch the sun also
sink into the haze
I am in a place that is neither life nor death, my
work to improve

my health tepid and slow; I stopped writing,
started again now,
waiting for my friends that are not near, visible
only on the screen,
their voices scant comfort during the isolation. A
spirit intervenes

and the play resumes, the cast of characters are
alive, and I remember
how life is good, and I decide to finish my work
this year and publish.
I can hear my voice as I write bounce off the quiet
walls, I can hear

oboe sounds mark my breath. Dragon tear peel the
lens of my old blue eye,

I forgot that poetry is my life's blood, the
waiting erased, that one solace
of my temporary life, the one counselor of both
reality and redemption.

Kathleen Guilfoyle, 92124

While We Wait

We find ourselves waiting in this drama called
'Life'
A drama we have written and continue to write
No 'misfortune' or happenstance but a world of our
own making
Not powerless pawns but the 'authors' of the book.

A time to contemplate the characters we have
created
The personalities we wear and 'believe' to be true
Principles, morals, likes, dislikes, opinions,
'strong' opinions, all proudly displayed
Divided by our 'uniqueness'
The True self observes.

A time to contemplate our deeds, 'good' and 'bad'
Have we given comfort and joy
Have we greeted the world with Love
Have we shown humanity not to raise ourselves but
to raise another in need
Have we been respectful of Life
The True self observes.

Have we caused pain
Have we caused sadness
Have we disrespected others and in doing so
disrespected Ourselves
Have we met cries for help with indifference
The True self observes.

A time to contemplate the next chapter to be
written
The path tomorrow taken
A world of our creation
The 'authors' of the book
The True self observes.

Kevin Halbritter, 92056

Earth's Song

I've lived near Ramona on Mussey Grade for over 20 years and love the natural beauty and tranquility of this mountain oasis. I'm an ecologist, botanist, and single mom. My son is 16 and will just be entering his senior year of high school. I have loved sharing my home through Airbnb with others who appreciate and enjoy getting out into nature and who need an escape from the city. I love hiking, gardening, being immersed in nature, music, going on new adventures and discovering small places. I love connecting and laughing with people, dancing and music, caring for animals and protecting and restoring native habitats. I feel grateful to be able to work in nature as a consulting ecologist, and to share my home with

other travel and nature enthusiasts. Most of all
I'm grateful for my wonderful family and friends.

"At the height of laughter, the universe is flung
into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities"! Jean
Houston

Bonnie Hendricks, 92065

Stand and Wait

We're waiting for the end to come
While for some it's all to near
Loss of living, loss of life
We have so much to fear.

What can we do when there's no cure
And we've forgotten how to pray?
What does it mean to just endure
If there is no other way?

Now's our chance to serve our country
In the only way we can,
By holding ourselves back from it,
By washing our cracked hands.

Now we summon quiet courage
The kind our forebears taught
To give our time to those who need it
To pay for what cannot be bought.

Quin Herron, 91941

At Sea

I walk Sunset Cliffs for the first time since
shutdown. Signs warn me
to stay back from cliff edges. A Navy man fell in
the surf here yesterday
and had to be rescued by lifeguards. He'd just been
released from
the hospital after a coronavirus infection. Hope he
has some lives left.
How many lives do any of us have left?

I so looked forward to 2020. A booming economy and
the Super Bowl
got the year going. March Madness, Padre Baseball,
and my granddaughter's
high school graduation all coming up when a rogue
virus quickly spread
around the world and everything was cancelled and
shut down. Dire reports
issued hourly, daily, monthly, and we waited; for
what?

Maybe a stimulus check, maybe a miracle. Survival
tops all concerns.
Looking over our horizon of boredom, grief, fear--
How long before I drown?
We float on rafts in the open sea waiting for some
wind or current
to take us to shore, knowing it won't be where we
left off
but anxious to put our feet on solid ground again.

Lloyd Hill, 92107

WAITING TO KNOW WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

Waiting not to die is like waiting to live; huddled
in this cave

like Plato envisioned years ago. But our reality
is not shadows

on a stone wall. Instead talking heads read death
facts from

teleprompts as if the numbers make it ok. What of
the human tragedy?

Do we really see what is out there as we wait to
discover if we will

join the parade of sheet covered bodies silently
moving to mortuaries.

There was a time when people died in the arms of
loved ones who waited

not to die. Again and again the church bells
tolled the sad song of more

lost souls. Bodies floated down canals, rested
along the streets,

rode in wagons to the end. Nobody suspected fleas
from rats,

or germs from unwashed hands. The plague was a
mystery waiting

to be solved. We solved it. What about now? Do we
know anything

that will stop the waiting? We know that babies
will not wait.

They join parents when ready. But now babies wait
for vaccinations

because parents are afraid to take them for
medicine they need

to protect them from the terror of diseases that
will sicken, kill and maim.

What about the children waiting for schools to
reopen? How long must
they wait for the gift of knowledge at their
important learning time?
Locked in our homes do we see people waiting for
paychecks
that will not arrive because their jobs are gone?
Do we see families
with no money waiting to buy food? Yet, do we see
people afraid
to buy food because death might be waiting in the
air, and on anything
that is touched or can be touched. What of people
waiting to retire
but can't stop working because stock market crashes
pulverized
carefully saved dollars meant for well deserved
leisure. What about
sick people in sterile hospital beds waiting alone
for precious air
to make the journey through exhausted lungs till
they lose the fight
and care givers gently cover them. What of
exhausted care givers
waiting for never ending shifts to end? Waiting to
go home,
but afraid that the disease will follow them into
the arms
of loved ones. What of people locked in nursing
homes waiting
for a touch from loved ones who must silently
gesture through
a pane of glass. Know that if they must fight
death it will be alone
with no loving relatives to hold hands till the
end, no last hugs.

What of people who die? There will be no last
visit from loved ones,
no memorial services, no flowers, flags or
eulogies. The thunk of dirt
on coffins will be their last tribute. And now we
wait for medicine
that will protect and cure. Know that we are in
this together.
While we wait sing, dance, listen to music, binge
watch TV,
watch a butterfly, bake bread, read, listen to
birds, write
a poem, share kind deeds, solve puzzles, hug a
loved one.
Do whatever it takes to escape the pain of this
waiting

Lolalee Walker Hirschbein, 92101

Waiting for Hugs

I'm good at pretending to be patient
But I'm not
I'm good at pretending that I'm in control of my
life
But I'm not
I had plans
But now I don't
What's next?
Who knows?
My brain is alive with what ifs, maybes and so, so
much more
But time has slowed

Waiting
To plan and pretend again
Me with more patience, less urgency, clarity
And hugs, more hugs.

Betty Hofman Lay, 92056

Waiting

Waiting, 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4
Waiting 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4
What am I waiting 3, 3-2-3, 4?

My friend to return,
My children to call,
The pandemic to, to what? What happens next? What
will be the new normal?
What is normal?

Waiting, 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4
Waiting 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4
What am I waiting 3, 3-2-3, 4?

To finish brushing my teeth,
To finish washing my hands,
Organize . . . organize the moments to fill the
hours that build that mountain of time that looms
before me.
When will it end?

Waiting, 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4
Waiting 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4

What am I waiting 3, 3-2-3, 4?

It's a waltz,

It's a waltz!

1-2-3, 2-2-3, I hear a waltz, time is a waltz, it's
circular . . . round and round, up and then down.

Unending, and yet . . .

Waiting, 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4

Waiting 1-2-3, 2-2-3, 3-2-3, 4

What am I waiting 3, 3-2-3, 4?

This, will end, there will be good guys and there
will be bad guys and life will go on with or
without us . . .

Life will twist and turn and bob and weave, advance
and retreat and it is all good, isn't it! Isn't it?

Nanci Hunter, 92122

We are Waiting

With cardboard boxes sanitizing in the sun
we are waiting

With stockpiles of flour and toilet paper
we are waiting

With a wave at the walkers through the window
with thumbs tired of scrolling

impatient with the impatient
we are waiting

With car batteries dying
 we are waiting
With masks that fog glasses
 we are waiting
With news feeding our anxiety
 we are waiting
With fear of not filling every moment
time that speeds up and suspends
zooming through days and hugging pillows at night
 we are waiting

At the beginnings and endings of life
 we are waiting
Becoming gardeners and cooks
missing grandchildren's hugs
contributing when we can
With gratitude for life
 we are waiting

Barbara Huntington, 91913

Waiting to Reconnect

I dreamed of you
from long ago
but it was now
it was us
together again
Against all of what we know
It was me and you
Familiar but new

Unknown but the same
Taller and older
yet younger somehow
We knew
We felt
We kissed
I awoke surprised
Warmed heart
And then you messaged me
from nine thousand miles away or more
The day you were on my mind
and in my heart
How I wish, how I wish you were here.

Natalie J., 92122

Normalcy on Pause

Morning's arrival
Announces itself
Warmly
Through half open windows,
As evening's cool air
Is chased away
By bright sunlight.
Doves cooing
In the trees outside
Compete

With leafblowers
To declare their love
To a waking world,
Sleepily beginning
To rise
To the challenge
Of another day
With normalcy
On pause.

Timothy Vance Jackson, 92103

Improvised Caution

Outside
My second story window,
A new type
Of world
Passes by
Within view and earshot,
Muffled
By masks
And improvised caution.
Each new today

Is a clone
Of yesterday,
Wrapped in varying
Hopes and fears and anxieties and dreams
That could all
Become some kind
Of reality.

Timothy Vance Jackson, 92103

Did I shower Today?

Space
Is confined
And time is
Blurring endlessly
Into a horizon
That moves
Further away
With a mysterious speed
That is relentlessly slow
And faster
Than mythical broadband speeds—
Mornings creep
Into the blur

Of afternoon
And the hurried rush
Of dinner,
And the bedtime ritual
Of wondering
"Did I shower today?"

Timothy Vance Jackson, 92103

The Current of Default

Night arrives
Quietly
In the cover
Of darkness
Further blanketing
The unseasonable
Quiet
That has become
The current default.
Tranquility
Is now
An uneasy and unusual
Partner of confinement,

Growing
Increasingly unwelcome.

Timothy Vance Jackson, 92103

Sterilized Sanctuary

A cool dry wind
Blows in
Through the open window
While I watch
The southern California palms
Sway
Back and forth
In the bright daylight
That calls to me,
Promising escape
From the anxieties
Inside
My sterilized sanctuary
Of safety,
Filled
With frustrated desire
For a cure.

Succumbing

Mornings arrive
Almost reluctantly,
Seemingly apologetically,
Well aware of the repetition-
The only variation
Being
Sunlight and clouds.
Afternoons lazily blur
Into evening
Without notice or fanfare,
Succumbing
To darkness
And even more
Stillness
Outside,
As sleeplessness
Readies itself
To return.

Unwanted Quiet

Restlessness
Is a permanent
Companion
Of the stillness
And unwanted
Quiet
That ticks along
At an unending
Glacial pace-
Each breath
Moving
Like shadows
Growing longer
Across the floor
To eventually disappear
Into darkness.

Timothy Vance Jackson, 92103

It Feels like Cheating

It feels

Like Cheating
With the window open,
Attempting to create
A crosswind,
To at least
Get the warm air moving-
Yet the paranoia
Quietly worries
About the unseen
Moving with the warmth,
Wondering
If it is safer
To simply suffer
With the sweat
And wait
For nightfall
To bring relief.

Timothy Vance Jackson, 92103

Crumb Trail

Yesterday
Rolled into
Today,

Stumbling
Into and through
The darkness and confusion,
Leaving
A crumb trail
For tomorrow
To answer
The riddle
Of today's
Restless disquiet.

Timothy Vance Jackson, 92103

Waiting...for my life to start

I'm still waiting for my life to start
I'm still waiting for the love of my life

I'm still waiting for my life to start
I wonder when it will be my turn

I'm still sitting by the windowpane
I'm still listening to all the love birds sing

I'm still hoping that one day it will be
My turn

Us drinking tea

Watching cars go by
Me lovingly being with you

I'm still waiting for this happy time
I'm still hoping one day I'll fit in

I'm still waiting for my heart to sing
I'm still hoping one day it will be me

I'm still waiting for my life to start
I'm still hoping that I'll find a way

I'm still loving even though life's hard
I'm still smiling although I want to cry

I'm still sitting by the windowsill
I'm still watching the world go by

Singing this same song over the years

It seems
it never stops

Melissa Jamma, 92111

Waiting

Four tires sleeping on asphalt
An old Ford mustang, comfortable, worn in like a
bed
Memories, safely held in steel and leather

Waiting to be remembered, relived
It is the stillness and nostalgia that suggests
safety
But it is that tiny snake, nestled against the
front tire that bites
And whose venom sharpens the picture from black and
white to black and blue.

Kim Janatpour, 92057

*The
Waiting*

I'm
waiting on my phone
What
will this day be like?
Someday
my prince will come

I'm
waiting on Lou Reed
Someday
my prince will come
I'm
waiting on my phone

What
will this day be like?
I'm
waiting for my prince
I'm

phoning on my wait

I'm
waiting to get sick
The
waiting has begun
I'm
waiting on my phone

Someday
my prince will come
Will
he be worth the wait?
I'm
waiting for the son

I'm
waiting for the man
I'm
waiting on my phone
The
phoning has begun

How
long can we all wait?
The
prince may never come
The
prince may never come

Jackie Jones, 92116

AAir

There's something in the air—
we're told that we can't go out there.

Our collective hearts agape---
currently for the 88---
as we wait.

We listen, we watch and we stream---
the official policy schemes.

Binging on the news until we get the blues---
about what's to be—

While wearing a mask—
it's hard to breathe---

I find myself looking into others eyes---
to see if I recognize---
fear or illness, I'm attentive to each's demise.

Don't pick up the stuff by the dumpster "I
say"---

it may be that death has crossed this way.

Near poverty has been my norm---
now I'm rich on EDD and the stimulus storm.

Staying at home hasn't been so bad---
I'm glad I'm not an Essential man.

Keep your distance, wash your hands---
big brothers watching, we're under command.

Loans for all, forgiven they say!
I've decided to look the other way.

I don't trust greed---
it's eyes can be mean.

The vote's just around the corner---
so is the next Corona!

He needs to be sure to sign the checks---
"It was only supposed to be just one damn lab bat".

Is this the beginning or is this the end?
I'll listen to the news again, and then---

we'll know in November---
let's pray for his surrender!

L. Kelly, 92028

Waiting

I was the summer sun, you the horizon.
You waited under a purple sky
for my evening kiss the way lovers wait
for a moment alone to say, *I love you*.
I was a factory worker waiting to punch
the timeclock while clean-handed office
staff waited their turn at the coffee machine.
Long ago, we were school children waiting
on Mother for a ride home, not unlike
a surfer waiting for a smooth-faced wave.
Once we were a couple dining out, waiting
on our waiter like bees wait for spring flowers.
We were all these and more before. Today,
I am merely a poet waiting on my muse,
waiting for words, like a rodeo cowboy
waits for that first leap of a bucking bronc.

Clifton King, 92011

Press play

School closed

Office closed

Parks closed

I thought I was waiting for it all to begin again

Was I waiting for the pandemic to end?

I was waiting for someone to press play

On our lives

I thought I was waiting for this all to go away

But the truth is I realized one day I was no longer
waiting

For anything at all.

Because no one has a crystal ball

The future can no longer be imagined in this
waiting

This waiting is not a pause like I once believed

Nor is it a waiting like we once knew in our past

But a new kind of acceptance that today is the only
thing that will truly last.

This waiting has morphed itself into quiet
acceptance

To focus only on today.

Children are good at that.

But my son asks when he can see his friends

Today? Tomorrow? Two weeks? Mommy, when?

It breaks my heart.

So I stop saying "when this is over"

And instead say "when this gets better"

And off he goes to put on his sweater.

Because he will play and laugh today.

He presses play.

Vickie Krupka, 92120

Waiting in May

Waiting is a Gordian knot for me
here in San Diego
even perhaps everywhere.
It seems never ending
even when I see
a succulent blooming
in my confined garden
I have walked round and round.
I know what is like to wait
for a call from a daughter caught in 9/11
or for MOHS surgery to be over
and the stitches to begin
along the smile lines of my left cheek.
I long to run along Silver Strand Beach
then plop on the sand not caring
if I am six feet away from a stranger.
But the waiting keeps knotting,
Or is it more a maze
I can't fathom how to escape.
Waiting is not for Godot;
it is more like No Exit.

JoAnne Lanouette, 92104

Waiting not to die

I sit in the darkness of the morning afloat amidst
the sounds of awakening birds...
The Virus not perched within our cage...

But none-the-less circling as we feel the moving
air of its beating wings
And hear the sad whisper of its strikes
By sunning dawn a clear slate is poised awaiting
the brush strokes of another unplanned day
Silent & deadly... _we sit just out of reach
No consolation in this passive dodge
The folly of questions killing a few that insist on
contradiction
Of the hard-cold numbers & innocent breaths taken
without permission.
Are we justified living another day
Juggling the hope that we are wise...
Waiting not to die.

Mara

New Teacher

Waiting makes patience improve every day.
For each day brings forth a bona fide chance
an old custom must morph into a new way.

The media show children, once happy and gay
locked up in their shelters----no place to dance.
Waiting makes patience improve every day.

Outdoors, alone there's sadness but hey,
folks learn about soils and insects and plants.
An old custom must morph into a new way.

When at last one sees light, there's another delay.

There's new information from Sweden or France.
Waiting makes patience improve every day.

Leaders make statements leaving all in dismay.
A sensible person may go into a trance.
An old custom must morph into a new way.

Today's truth by tomorrow might be wrong; just to
say
readers take caution, find out writers' slants.
Waiting makes patience improve every day.
An old custom must morph into a new way.

Ron Lauderbach

Just You Wait!

Just you wait!
As a child I was told
Just you wait and the world will be yours

But who owns the world?
The world that I was told could be mine and yours
Continues to shrink as people lay claim to our
inaction

But how do we take action?
Can I truly make a mark
In a world shut off to change

Can we ever change?

Seizing what is to be our moment
To make the difference

And when will indifference cripple our hope?
Or will it be hope
That cripples our indifferences

Perhaps I should rejoice; for I have hope!
While our world squems
For hope like a currency

I cannot wait!
My hope will be the change
Not to reshape the world

But to share in it!
Through the action of my peers
We can be the difference

Together we will change the future
Just you wait
And the world will be ours again!

Lucas Lefkowitz, 92130

OLIVER'S BIRTHDAY

We stood outside the garden door,
we watched the candles lit and more.
We sang the song and offered cheer,
distance shared by love and fear.

The world is sick and so our heart
divides us all, keeps all apart.
Frightened aged, puzzled young.
Wisdom lost, songs never sung.

Return to normal. What is that?
The world is round, the world is flat?
The truth is lost and love devoured
by humankind in this dark hour.

Love,
Grandma

Linda Lippitt, 92101

The Waiting Game

Waiting and waiting
during Coronavirus.
We wait to get our lives back.
We wait to see our friends IRL.
Skype, Google meet, Zoom.
Grandparents, uncles and friends.
The cars are like pretty rocks not being used just
waiting.
And the TV goes on and on.
We hear crickets at night instead of the sound of
cars.
Wow! The stars are so bright as we look while we
wait.
The trees are lonely without people under and
around.

We all wear masks, we don't know who we are.
Wait for it.
Life to start again.

Jacob Luft

Fog and Hold

This cool morning
Standing on this pleasant lea
Eyes drawn to my feet
Deeply reassured feet truly love the ground
Leaving love letters
Of footprints in this red/yellow/dried pine needles
earth

Fog comes now
Gossamer feathers of steel and blue
Beckoned by the growing day heat
Torrey pines surround me like
Huge bodyguards
Hunched on the bluffs of the Pacific Ocean
Waiting motionless
Scraggly arms and long grey green needles
Ache for fog food

Their hard-edged profiles
Begin to melt and fade
As the fog comes
They are well advised to relinquish
Their sharp outlines

They easily submit in dust and ashes

Unconcerned how they appear
No self-mage struggles
More like a loving
Open
Accepting

They blur into the deeper fog banks
Willingly
Their long-hollowed needles siphon fog drops
To their feet

A blessing losing shape and edge

The monk's mind wanders
Some fantastic chimera
Amygdala tantrum

He looks down at his feet, dry needles and earth
Takes a deep breath
Hears ocean wave hush below
And disappears into the fog

William C Madigan, 92007

Anticipatory Alarm

Have you ever lain in bed at night

and sensed the tremors of an earthquake?
You lie there feeling your bed dance,
your legs pulsate,
your heart quiver,
and you become susceptible to the force of a
natural calamity.

You lie there waiting,
not knowing whether to jump up or stay flat,
hoping it will subside.

You lie there knowing that the richest man may live
next door,
and he's as vulnerable as you.

The whims of Nature are great equalizers.

Neither his money nor your prayers
can suspend the catastrophic trembling issuing from
the earth's belly.

And you lie there and wait...

Nancy Martin, 92037

A Prayer During Pandemic, early 2020

We are a gathering of clouds
drifting into another year.

In the forecast of a dark curtain
we set our sights on the storm—

a downpour over the face of earth
drenching the heads of women,
men and children, cleansing gloom.

Let the deluge of rain release
the sky's looming gray, bring
wistful clouds and healing sun
as we move through days of waiting
with our pockets full of tears.

May the sick, bereft of touch
find comfort in the warmth of hope.

Keep your curtains open
to the heartbeat of the sea, the stars—
those watchful eyes of the future.

Seretta Martin, 92071

I'm Waiting

For the taste of sour spongy injera
 soaked with spicy stews
For tandoori cooked chicken
 tumeric and cumin filling my nose
For linguini covered with clams
 swimming in a pool of olive oil
For sizzling fajitas and guacamole
 splashed with tangy salsa

But most of all I'm waiting

to reach outside my circle..
in restaurants here and cities there
express experiences, care and concerns
touch and be touched
by humanity and what we've all shared.

Richard Matta, 92103

The Phases Of The Moon Coronavirus

Waiting...what a daunting task it be
The fabric cloth covers my lips
Yet my eyes can still see

No longer skimming the night sky in search for a solar eclipse

But waiting for the next phase to live my life back in bliss

Waiting for the day I no longer have to love at a distance

Waiting for the day a face mask isn't the closest thing my mouth will have to a kiss

Waiting for the day where my life is back in the comfort of consistence

When will my six feet barricade breach?

Waxing and waning of a virus so cruel...

When will caution tape no longer adorn Del Mar beach?

Will a light eventually illuminate the shadow and overrule?

If only the pandemic phases were like one of a moon
But this is a phase where we must be immune

Ally Maurer, 92130

Playing the Waiting Game

Every morning I awaken lazily,
Just to lay quietly and wait for the alarm
Which no longer has reason to chime.

Staring up at the ceiling, I wait
For the grey dawn's brightening to let me know
It is time to begrudgingly arise once again.

Tuning in to the stale pandemic news just in time
To catch yesterday's death toll while I wait
For my morning brew to drip as I tinkle.

With dismayed voices droning and coffee in hand,
I shuffle aimlessly outside to sit on the porch
And wait for El Sol to start another lengthy day.

Steadily from east to west, no slower nor faster
than before,
The ethereal minutes seem to endlessly glide by
As I wait for the shadowless arrival of lunchtime.

Then I watch television, or read, or play solitaire
with myself,
Just waiting for the dimming light of suppertime to
arrive,
Followed by the darkness which finally bids me
good-night.

Before I turn in, I leave the tube on just a few
moments longer,
Listening for any new guidelines to follow while we
wait
To see if tomorrow's the day we can finally stop
waiting.

Waiting No Longer is Waiting

One day, you wake up
And the world is in chaos
You close your eyes
And everybody tells you to wait

Every day you wake up
"Any day now" you tell yourself
As little by little the world adapts
And the abnormality
Now suddenly
Becomes the new normality

Staying at home is great and all
But humans are naturally social beings
And though told not so
They still go out and see other beings
And adapt: "social distance"

Waiting no longer is waiting
It now has a different definition
Waiting is now like wishing
And everyone is wishing
For this all to end

Alysha Montoya, 92251

This Different, Non-Boring Wait

This different wait
is not a boring wait
(At least for kids,
So they say)

No, it's more of...

SCHOOL'S OUT!!!
CELEBRATION!!!
Tears of joy
throughout the nation!

The school is down!
I repeat: the SCHOOL IS DOWN!
The kids are back
to rule the house!

This wait is like a camping trip
in which the whole world went
My parents are my fellow campers,
My home is my tent.

This wait has got
the puzzles and books,
the pillows, the flashlights,
the hide-and-seek nooks
This wait has got
the staying-up-lates,
the fun and games,
and oh! the pantry raids!

This wait's got something different
that sets this wait apart

though hard to see
through the uncertain fog -
this wait's got a heart

This wait's not bland like other waits
not one-dimensional, not two,
This waiting is different from the waiting
from the waiting that we knew

We are all waiting
But the world's not sleeping
This wait has a heart
a heart that is leaping

A word of advice though
for the parents in this wait:
You can cry all you want
but it's a fact you must face.
School's out. The kids are back.
It's best just to hibernate.

Khang Ninh Nguyen, 91914

Waiting...

I got where I am
doin' what I can
I was coddled as a boy
stepped on as a man
floated through the ether
Peter to my Pan

member of the tribe
elder of my clan
I go where I go
they say they don't know me
while saying they didn't know
how high I was headed
before finally tumbling low
I began the journey with friends
ended up with foes
waiting
 over the moon in love with you
 to regroup later at Petco
 with humility, awe and wonder
 while searchin' for another way in
waiting
 not allowing us to fade away
 for sons to son and stars to continue to play
 to wait some more, always more, evermore
 to escape through each and every front door
continuing to wait
 for beds to reopen
 for highways to reclog
 in the middle of apocalypses
 at the end of what they used to call a road
waiting
 listening to Coltrain
 fer the Holy Slow Train
 tryin' to soften the hard, hard rain
 for confirmation to somehow arrive from Maine
we wait some more
 diggin' deeper into the core
 for the great Babylonian Whore
 and the girl from the Red River Shore
 to feed themselves to the clowns and the poor

damned the furies, damned the cast
we wait with worries
but we will outlast
don't scurry
don't sail at half-mast
join the flurry
come about, hold fast
my lover had grown tired waiting for me
insurance had her down
she desired for everyone to be free
of this misery
and living in sweet golden harmony
we met at the Cliffs of Dover
and swam to the Caspian Sea

Scott Olesen, 92116

They Said

They said you couldn't be
I said just wait and see
Worked every morning noon and night
Always filling my world with a fight
Never satisfied
Never happy
Never quite right
He never wanted a ordinary life
.... just a life to prove he is extraordinary

Teem Osborn, 92105

Waiting

craving intimacy to be proximity, again.
magnets in reverse
finally pivoting back to their natural tendency.

meanwhile the fear of deafening pulse and throb
because right now it's quiet enough to hear the
unceasing intention of buds.

wanting and dreading noboundary
because the unseen order of things is malignant
suspicion
when it should be a balm of mercy.

he knocks on the door and I remember
his heart and dagger tattoo.

Lorraine A. Padden, 92104

The Bright Side of Life

When the Rainbow appears, ,
The Lake full of beautiful events,
Then all of a sudden, they disappear

Into the Darkness, waiting for
The Comeback of the Normal environment
Schools Closed, Amusement Parks closed
All of a sudden, we have to wear masks.
The Covid 19 is absorbing life on earth
While we have to fight against it.
When's everything going to go back to normal?
Even though that's happening,
There's always a bright side of life.
The Bright side of life, is the part our
Family still lives,
The Part we have health,
The Part we have hope
And the Part we have God.
That's our bright side of life.
Patience will lead us there.

Felipe Pallaviccini

Waiting

How I want waiting
To feel
Is like the space between
two lips about to kiss
I cannot wait to have
What I am about to have
I cannot wait to be given
Just a taste
Of something that I know
Will be better than the moment
I've had before.

But this waiting is not like that.
This waiting is spinning slowly
Spiraling quicker some days other days slower
No matter how much I wait
There is no reward on the other
Side
I wake up and the waiting begins
Again
Like Goundhogs Day without the limitless delicious
fattening breakfast
That leaves no mark

The waiting here leaves marks
Ones that I'm not even sure how to describe to you
I can feel these marks as I walk down the street
now
Or when I watch the news
When I wave to people behind masks
And when I wait to see
Wait to hear
Wait to plan
Wait to know
Wait wait
Wait wait

Who will reward us for all this waiting?

Maria Palumbo, 92054

Waiting

The rhythm of these days
These days that are exactly the same
Is shapeless
By now, I know the beat by heart
It's simple, slow, staccato
One word sung over and over
Wait, wait, wait
Each day a mirror of the last
Reflected on and on
I'm waiting for the song to stop
The rhythm to change
The staccato to ease
Sometimes the waiting is heavy
It's loneliness
Frayed nerves
Impatience
But. Sometimes?
It's stillness
It's calm
It's remembering that there is no waiting
Because nothing can really be still
Not the flowers
Not the clouds
The birds have woven their nests
The sun will not hold its place in the sky
So, how then can I?
I am living in this shapeless rhythm
Learning
Dancing
Not waiting
Slowly changing the beat
Writing (and rewriting) the words
I one day hope to sing

This Ocean of Wait

Dip yourself deep into the new
Live it in fully, without missing the waves
Think casually of the future
Thoughts sprinkle in and float away
Soak the mind in peace
Ripples extend to clouded ears
To burdened shoulders
To tired hands
Touch your loves and wet them calm
Be daily reminded
It is not I who wakes the sun
Reaping from the springs of its rays
Controlling close to nothing
But how to find joy
In this ocean of wait

Victoria Perez, 92102

Waiting...

I am waiting for a moment...I know it will not
arrive.
It has hibernated deep within the crevices of the
dark, foul fallen earth and soul.

Silence... invaded the soul, the air, the bank account and my son's deep mahogany eyes.

I am waiting for a moment...I pray the universe, a tea cup or a levitating Buddha will arrive and like Glenda's magical wand...would rewind us back to the mixed tape reality... Seventy days ago... the beast invaded all the hidden crevices of dark, foul, fallen earth and soul...STOP.

I am waiting for humanity...To stop SCREAMING at each other...STOP...Breathe...STOP
Red, Blue, Purple, Fuchsia, Election year...what does it matter...NOW...Red blood runs beneath all.
"One who knows does not speak, one who speaks does not know"...Political diarrhea
Poll numbers should not count more than the exquisite breathable moments of Grandma...

I am waiting for a moment...I know it will not arrive.
It will not arrive because seventy days ago...all of this discourse already existed.
It was shielded, drowned out by ceaseless busyness of lives on autopilot.

I am waiting for a moment...for my son.
To learn to listen... to the sides of which he may not agree
To learn to acknowledge... the world is not fair.
Knowing he has a responsibility to leave the world a better place because he was here.

I am waiting for a moment...the future, my son...
The seed of my hope, my peace and my worldly imprint...

I can stop waiting for my moment...it is blooming
before my eyes daily.

Katia Perhach, 92065

Learning to...

Wait (WHAT?)

Every day, about a
1000 times, I have been told
to wait. My parents tell me
"for the new life out there, after
Corona, it is a skill, I need to master."
At 7, almost 8, I do not
see the point. I want to
grow to do what I want.
Waiting is not
in my cards. My Uno just shows
animals in colors. It's for kids! But
maybe when I grow the game will differ.
For now, I learn: to wait
for my big sister to come home,
for school on Zoom,
for my friend to call,
for my dad to stop hogging the TV,
Ice cream after dinner,
for a summer with open pools,
maybe camps,
for a hug from my Mom
and an end to waiting for all these things!

Franzi Petzold, 92101

Waiting

Waiting to be me

To gather with friends
share thoughts

That can be only
done safely by
virtually meeting now

Not the same

Six feet apart
not the same

Air hugs
blown kisses
not the same

Create a new normal
learn to live in Now Normal

Both must be done

Sometimes it feels
like being in the
doctor's waiting room

The doctor is
running over time
I look at the clock on the wall

Time has
slowed

down

It has taken on an amber hue

We are now encased in it
fossilized by it
trapped like an insect
that buzzed in the
ear of a dinosaur

May we be unearthed soon
what will be waiting for us?

What things or places
ways of interacting
went way of the dinosaurs

To disappear forever
never come back
which loved ones will remain
who will depart?

Sickness
Tiredness
Despair
Broken heart

Death
a vastly different way to wait

For us to be here
when they are not
will shattered oneself
to pieces that must be put back together again

Pass the broom

to the next person
waiting to sweep up
their pieces

The new normal
an empty chair
across the table

Heart & soul conversations
sent up into the air for
the person not there
to hear

Because love never dies
the heart keeps seat at the table for those who
have succumbed to the virus

Can a doctor fix a
broken heart?
one would hope
now back to the waiting room

The nurse sticks her head
out into the room

Wait longer in your home
self-quarantine
Doctor's orders
you do not need to be seen

Prescription
get a new hobby
go pull some weeds
whether they are in
your garden
or mind

Really?

ok

Understood

rather wait at home

instead of 6' under

Other times

I let my mind wander

more fun to be sitting

on a golden cloud

getting a fresh perspective

My imagination can take

me anywhere

a fun way to wait

Now it feels like the

confinement of Rapunzel

sitting in the castle tower

only now my hair is cut short

No one can come in

I cannot go out

Over time my hair

will grow back

waiting for that to happen

that is all I can do

When it does

I will braid it

climb down it to

gather with friends

when I no longer

must wait

Marjorie Pezzoli, 91977

Waiting 'Round Midnight

Waiting during quarantine is an hourglass
whose sands bind, melt molten, hoping
its seconds dry like plants who
crave moisture from
rain and staring
at the
corona
of the sun
and them plants
desire sprouting past
the fence, inching closer to clouds
grasping, opening its arms
to embrace heat, but
nothing feels certain
nor warm beyond
the shadows
nothing grows,
waiting
looks as it feels when
winds sing and leaves waltz but time
itself is a wallflower, unbothered by dancing tunes
or daily news of death or coyotes and dogs
in Chula Vista hollering alongside
sirens from the hospital
or fire station nearby,
to wait is to press
on a glass of

whiskey
chilled with a
stubborn cube of ice
that I sip as jazz hums through
the walls of my head, convincing myself
the crows outside in their tree parlors croon
'round midnight and welcome me
to listen to them live,
my sanity melts
quicker
than the ice, I wait
for the song of quarantine to end.

Krysada Phounsiri, 91911

Sunday

"Even the dead have to wait" it said in the Sunday
Times
and they aren't alone.

a chrysalis forms and i wait for the butterfly
a timer is set and i wait for the cheese to soften
and brown
the dogs sniff a tree and i wait staring at the
"blue true dream of sky"
through the palm fronds swishing above

the old man next door waits for his son, everyday,
5:15

the wrens that live in James' hedge wait for me

to fill the feeder
the doves on the wires wait
for the wrens to kick seeds down

i'm waiting for something
different

Janet Poutré, 92117

My Place In Line

The couch by the window
holds my shape
even before I arrive
even after I leave.

Alone in my perch
Roosting.
Approaching
 nesting.

The scene in the window
frozen unto itself
save for the unnatural
nature
 blossoming.

Vestiges of the past
appear in daydreams only now.
Shattered by silence.

The lawn transitioning into field

the field into forest
the forest into crystal blue sky.

A sigh of relief can be heard
for those that listen
with an exhale that extends
with each passing day.

I ride the slide
of uncertainty
grasping the board with both hands
not sure when to pop up.

Will I miss the cooker?
Ride in the soup?
Get caught inside?
Will I lose my place in line?

Mark Prebilic, 92024

Waiting.

Standing on the rivers bank
the sand beneath my feet
is washed away with all I'd known
that made me feel complete
The shore held tight by roots of trees
Of men proud full of knowing

Of things to come and things gone by of times
eternal flowing

When glacial pace and rocks gave way to waiting in
the sand

And being sure was just a way to show you were a
man.

Now doubt has brought me to this point and
stillness is required

In joy and feasting I will wait and one day I'll be
hired.

For what once was will be no more; can never be
regained

A new world dawns, its time not yet lay waiting to
be claimed.

JG Putnam, 92103

Life During Isolation

I glance at the clock on the wet bar. It reads 2
o'clock. Surely that can't be right. It must have
stopped;;must be at least 5.

I have spent many hours today checking emails, a
little texting, reading the paper and taking
special care to prepare nutritious meals. And
still much of the day ahead of me!

Tomorrow I will try to sleep in and have a shorter
day! (smile)

Jan Rochon, 92103

The In Between

Play *I Spy* I used to tell them
when we were at the doctor's office,
or on the tarmac, or in the serpentine
line at the grocery store.
There is much waiting in life, I'd say,
so learn to do it well.

I spoke from wisdom not my own - ancient,
rattling-like-old-bones sagacity - about navigating
the liminal space between now and
not yet, its underlying conviction
that the time to come hangs golden-orbed -
whole and healed - reflecting only light.

But of course I couldn't divine the future
or conceive of a world flipped inside
out and shaken; where we all wait
day after day.

Now we don't go "anywhere,"
or not much of anywhere.
A walk through the neighborhood perhaps
identifying plants along the way -
(I am homeschooling them after all)
creeping ivy, fragrant jasmine
a clump of yellow bulbine.
We could play *I Spy* for hours...

even days I suppose
now that days have become weeks have become months
filled with questions I cannot answer
while we live in this suspended pause.

As we crest the top of the final hill
a mass of red bougainvillea spills into the sun,
its petals aflame.

What's this one called? I ask,
and I am waiting, hopefully, once again.

Then my youngest slips his small hand into mine;
such a simple gesture really, but next to the
flaming vine
it feels like a signal fire and I know, with
certainty
that all will be well.

Dana Ryan, 91941

WAITING FOR IT TO BE OVER

A vile pandemic: sweeping, remorseless
Heedless of age, faith, gender, pedigree
I loathe this scourge of ghastly dark forces
Waiting, I'm shaken, angst brewing in me

Life interrupted, rituals obstructed
Destroyer of joy, marauder of glee
Not just bodies but spirits infected
Waiting, I'm battered, hurt swirling in me

Where does it get its stout, savage power?
Purveyor of pain, grief, despondency

Compelling both meek and brave to cower
Waiting, I'm daunted, fear roiling in me

Come daily squibs of wounds and deep sorrow
I crave for this curse to no longer be
But I know, too, what comes in the morrow
Waiting, I'm mournful, gloom steeping in me

Countries and states heed pleas of dire rescue
They strive, they flounder (some pay the steep
fee)

But somehow, somewhere, someone will come
through
Waiting, I'm lifted, hope springing in me

I glimpse the will of gutsy front warriors—
Nurse, doctor, grocer, valiant DMV
Bless you, thank you, brave pathogen barriers
Waiting, I'm solaced, light sparking in me

Loss right drove us to wreck and to anger
Auguring ruin of humanity
Yet we just became closer and stronger
Waiting, I'm heartened, faith kindling in me

God in Heaven, I pray for a beacon
Incandesce the path, manifest the key
Vaccine to waken, virus to weaken
Waiting, I'm strengthened, life leaping in me!

Waiting

We are all waiting for life
pre-pandemic, that is
but we are also waiting
for little things.

The hornworm caterpillar grows bigger
munching on tomato plant in my yard.
It will soon become Sphinx moth I will never see.
I am waiting to absorb every stage of this
caterpillar before it disappears.

I am waiting for crow that skips bird seed
and pokes at a pinecone instead.
Sometimes it picks up the cone gently
and hops awkwardly as if in a ritual dance.

Sometimes it uses cone as a weapon
to beat beetles, millipedes or other bugs.
A Cotton-tail rabbit comes in the evening
to pick up last bits of bird seed.

I am waiting for rays of setting sun
to hit at a certain angle so rabbit's ears are
illuminated,
its blood vessels like rivers on fire.

There is a spiderweb between Chili and Japanese
eggplant.

I am waiting for light to strike bluebottle fly in
web
so the insect scintillates,
becoming a museum artefact.

A Crane fly is also caught in web
its endless legs forming many geometric shapes I
learnt in high school.
I am waiting for wind to give insects one final
spin,
so their bodies don't forget what freedom was like.

Ravinder Sangha, 92124

Primarily I concerned myself with the things I
forgot
disorienting my ability most
to count the days

No matter . . .
Today is Tomorrow's Yesterday
is Today!

I need
a lot but I'll settle for something comforting.
I can count again

Today is Tuesday
but Yesterday was Wednesday
Foolish again, now back sliding slowly

I can wait
by Tomorrow's Tomorrow
my package will come.

Andrea Schlageter, 92107

Waiting

I am a caterpillar in the cocoon,
.....a thief hiding in the dark,
I am socks waiting for shoes,
.....a child wanting to walk,
Just starting to crawl.

Helen Shalfi, 92103

Our Present

As a child wide eyed leaning against
a wooden sill
window open as the breeze takes this morning's
fresh
linen to dance
in a frame where the outside looks in
The wind brushes fresh cheeks
examining the sun
peeking through
the endless redwoods
Innocence, naiveté
on the side of wonder
Wandering through life
free to breath
Can't imagine the world
A place
My place in the world
The redwoods now
black with burnt memories
of yesterday's normalcy

The hustle of the street,
The way the bustle buzz's
as we zoom to work and home
dreaming only
of a get away
The hustle now singing silence
ringing
through our souls
Aching to touch
Straining to see
Longing to connect
No children wandering
through life
free to breathe
The lonely wind with no cheeks to brush
The buzz of silence
The absence of souls
Lost to the coveted normalcy of yesterday
The bruised spirit of connection
No redwoods for the sun to peek through
No innocence on the side of wonder
Now we wait
now we search
now we shout
now we sing
As if someone can hear
A ballad of hope
We are all near

Jacqueline Shannon, 92040

[what clock does time tell]

Tomorrow is a new day
An aspiration and
Something now, I often say

But tomorrow is not today
Rather rocking a chair
Distant and forgot

Wanting to feel
My children's love
Today a visit can not

Supper, when and what shall it be?
Charity of others
Grateful I am to thee

Dogs bark
Birds chirp
And babies cry

The same song
Again and again
Rocking a chair, I sit by

Confined, listening
Does the phone ring?
Most days it does not

Pendulum clock tics
When will the mail arrive?
Ding dong another hour clicks by

If only today were Sunday
Fulfilled by zoom
The pastor shall tell

Faith! He proclaims
Will set us free!
Proclaimed, but today hard to see

Cast into isolation
By an enemy unseen
Hope, is waiting for tomorrow
While today's new normal becomes routine.

Christopher L Shaw, 92117

Someday...

Being raised as a "Navy Brat,"
Not sure I deserved a label like that,
Always waiting to see our new home,
Always waiting to not have to roam.

Being a sailor and shipped out to sea,
Something that I never thought that I'd be,
Always waiting to see a new place,
Always waiting to have my own space.

Becoming homeless when the steady pay ends,
Couch surfing, reliant, on the kindness of friends,
Always waiting for things to improve,
Always waiting for the next time to move.

Being a partner, helping her child grow,
Now the only father that she'll ever know,

Always waiting to show her what life's about,
Always waiting to see how she turns out.

Being a husband and homeowner now,
Even though I'm not exactly sure how,
No longer waiting, no Covidic fear,
No longer waiting 'cause someday is here.

Daughn Stombaugh, 91942

Slow Connections

Time, more relative than ever.
Sitting staring at Zoom
Wondering, watching, waiting for whether
Some invitee will appear in my Waiting Room.
A trade-off for better security, human connection
for secure internet connection
Afraid she will flit in and out like a butterfly
while I am the lonely, slow, rooted one.
Looking outside more often to see if my four-year-
old seeds have sprouted – are they even viable?
Wandering thoughts: did someone we know catch it
yet?
Are we going to lose our privacy even more?
When can I hug my loved ones again?
No one online yet. Maybe I can be productive.
Do a dish or two. Wash my hands. Check the
sourdough starter in suspension.
Trying not to let this time be a suspension of life
and progress... this yeast gets it – keep working.

I am journaling again.

Denise Thurlow, 92117

Wait For It

Rut

Furrowed, reaching long, etched and pitted
Usually narrow, winding
Gravel and sand, muddy tracking
Dirt everywhere
Can you follow it and stay clean?
Crave a sidewalk, don't we all?

City slicker, circles and winds
Back and back, never forward in
spite of motion
Keep moving, feet stepping, shuffling
Or marches, always in motion
No time to wait

Look ahead, the sidewalk is
straight
Shake off lethargy, must progress
Onward, in advance it seems
Is that the same street light?
How can you tell? One light looks the same
as the next.

Shake it off and move
Just move. Don't let it catch up
Don't wait

This is not a rut
This is life.

Path

Follow the trail, you can see it
ahead, distinct but faint
It glows greenly, dirt warm
on bare feet
Emerge from trees
sun brilliant, next plunge into
covered thicket, green sky domed above

Foot feels solid, path worn-in
smoothly unfurling, each
place the same and different
It gets dark, colder
Shrinking, there is an ache
Base of foot feels it all

Stepfall, rainfall, nightfall
Crouch and rest
stretching toes, watch them spread
Strong, toes splay and
draw closer, curl and straighten
Wait for the sun

Soon enough, the curtain parts
and sun lights on dirt, dries the mud
Ridges clear, bumps, reveal the path

Walk this way.
Feel the tug, heartfall,
Feet must obey,
Wait: don't go before then.

MOTHERSHIP

House, you are our mothership
you anchor and protect us
as the world careens and crashes beyond

You anchor and protect us
from microbes and aerosols
hurtling toward us on ocean breezes

Microbes and aerosols
hiding on surfaces searching for hands
seeking entry to noses eyes lungs

Hiding on doorknobs counters and gates
waiting to ambush if we so much as touch them
talk or sing with those who spread them

Mothership, your walls ceilings doors
encircled by a yard encircled by a fence
you are cozy safe sanitized inside

Encircled by a yard encircled by a fence
a beehive of activity within
four adults, two children, a cat and a dog

A beehive of activity within
seven-year-old Syd writing the news

describing grandpa's virtual pipe club

Ten-year-old Jake creating podcasts
video-gaming with friends
soccer practice on Zoom

Cozy safe and sanitized inside
grown-ups cleaning cooking sharing a beer
pausing periodically to scrutinize news

Grown-ups cleaning cooking sharing a beer
waiting for Covid to run its course
House, what will we find when we open your doors?

Mary Anne Trause, 92024

"Waiting to go Outside"

As I go on a walk,
Walking through this "forest",
Hearing these tall wood that have leaves whistle,
While watching these white fluffy stuff up come
closer,
As if they are watching over me,
I go closer to the "forest",
Slowly getting more and more in,
I seem to lose sight of where I came.
It starts getting darker and darker,
I don't seem to be bothered yet.
As these white fluffy clouds? Yeah clouds,
Seem to get darker,

I start to watch them crying,
While their tears fall from the sky.
I don't really know why they're crying,
It's my first time "outside",
I see a door once I reach the end of this
"outside".
I opened it, even though they said not to.
I have a question for you,
What is that glowing yellow ball in the sky,
And why does it hurt my eyes?

Leslie Velasco

Playground waiting

Last spring a greying bench at the closed off
park grew weeds and ivy all over
The daffodils bloomed and colored everything
we saw, we looked around,
but the crowds weren't there
Do you remember?

Spade knots and metal bars on the gate
kept you from entering
the children's playground, impossibly roped off to
visitors,
knifed into my forehead
each time I tried to explain to you why you
couldn't play there.
Do you remember?

As I pushed your stroller
an unnerving blistering row of air dust
sieved through my nostrils, my covered chin itched,
the scorching sun drew white freckles
on my aging arms.

Now with each sunrise the lustrous white of your
eyes renews
and you trust someone will come this summer
clang open the fence chain
sounding like church bells, dong your short legs
running...high into your swing's sky

Milagros Vilaplana, 91915

Waiting

This year i think my dog and I
will crochet a quilt,
we'll twist the ends
to attach the grey & white squares
spread across the bed

Or maybe counting days
in needlepoint seconds,

like my grandmother
I'll make stiff doilies
for people's birthdays

...I might hang the drapery
on the window upside down
to change the pattern of the
daylight patch marks
on the floor

I'll think of many ways to
pin fall and winter to the fridge
I'll rock the seasons
while I wait
yards of yarn to see you

Milagros Vilaplana, 91915

Pandemic Love Affair

In the midst of a world pandemic,
two strangers met online,

a pathway now systemic, a sign of our changing
times.

They had lost their jobs, time stood still, and
life was looking grim..

his search for love wouldn't cost him a dime,
so it totally suited him.

First they would write, then they chatted all
night, they pondered about the world.

Their views lined up fine, as their love grew
online – he had found the perfect girl.

He vowed that he never would leave her, he
longed for the day they could touch.

Then he told her he had "love fever" and he
never had felt it so much.

But the fever was more than he bargained for,
and his temperature started to rise..

she had taken his breath, he felt tight in his chest, and he couldn't keep open his eyes.

He ended up in the emergency room, she had no idea when or where...

she looked every night at her email account, and his messages just weren't there.

In the midst of a world pandemic, two strangers met online.

They never had a chance to touch...a sign of our changing times.

Arthur Wankel, 92014

Waiting.

Waiting for the moment to do that thing...all those things that I've wanted to do.

That I *want* to do.

That I've been meaning to do.

If only, I had the time.

If time, would freeze...

if time, could freeze.

I'd just touch the tips of my fingers together and pause

Everything would STOP.

So, I could find the time.

I wait for it. The moment. The permission. The
calling to do that thing. The thing I've been
wanting, hoping, aching to do..
If only, I had time.
And yet, I wait.
I'm on pause.
My fingers touch and freeze. Unmoving.
As the world stands still, I stop doing.
That want, that urge, that need for time
Disappears.
I've waited so long. I'm paralyzed because I cannot
do anything.
Stay inside, wait until it's safe,
Passing the time, *all* the while
Only now there's more of it.
I've waited so long.
Yet, instead of doing that thing, those things.
I choose to listen.
Listening to the thing inside me asking, "*why are
you waiting?*"
There is time.
So much time and nothing to do.
Nowhere to go.
The pause has happened.
It is here.
Yet I continue to wait.
This time more calmly and quietly.
Peacefully.
Catching my breath,
Slowing my pulse
Waiting,
Exhaling.
Waiting for *what?*
Normal? Waiting for normal?
Tempo change, acceleration, and Speed
Or, am I still waiting for what I always wanted?

Waiting for the time to do the thing I've always
wanted to do.
Maybe not. Maybe waiting is being.
And being is enough.

Tracy Wankner, 92008

Patience/Waiting

I feel as if I have been waiting forever,
for life to continue after the death of a loved
one,
for love to come my way again,
for purpose of life.

I know I am supposed to be patient,
the waiting for my job to come back,
the waiting for my life to mean something again,
the waiting for God to tell me where He is taking
me next.

I want to be patient and learn to accept what God
is trying to teach me,
but the death of my wife is difficult enough to
endure the waiting for guidance,
but life must continue even when I want to stop
waiting and move on,
but I must learn from this pandemic to wait and be
patient,
until God is ready for me to understand His purpose
for me in my next life.

The pandemic is teaching me to be patient, to endure loneliness without complaining.
The pandemic is changing me to wait when I don't want to wait but must.
The pandemic has changed me to understand the value of waiting when I'd rather move on.
The pandemic wants to teach me to live again even after death.

Jay Warren, 92069