

Ode to COVID-19

People are dying
I should take this more seriously.
Should I be
fearful?
hopeful?
At this point, only exhaustion

Are you trying to break my spirit
I say to the
empty grocery shelves
blank calendar
mask hanging by the door

This must be a competition.
Every news outlet blasting statistics,
the U.S. striving for
first place

I don't want to talk to anyone today
how can I break this to my family?

Too many video chats
spent
trying to sit still
trying not to look at my face.
Am I vain or just neurotic

Wall-e not enough of a
cautionary tale
I'm still
in front of screens
long hours
food my only companion

Insert ambient noise—
water running or
footsteps in the hallway,

construction outside
a buzzing lawnmower
the TV on downstairs

The fridge beeping,
a door left open after a lazy perusal.
The dishwasher is always running
My life
Never quiet. Never still.

Parenting, like polygamy
too many
vying for my attention
too many
considering me their “one”
while I deal in multiples

(someone needs a shower
only 3 squares per wipe
you still have to brush your teeth)

When I leave the house
it's still crowded.
More people
in the open space.
Dozens of cars
at the state park.
Neighbors I didn't know I had.

Long walks
ignoring others to be alone.
I should be getting
stronger,
thinner,
instead I think I'm getting
tendinitis

And the questions:
What happened to all the forks?

Why can't I order vodka with my groceries?
When will playgrounds
not be scary,
caution tape straggling
where children should be?

I don't have answers
only more questions:
Why am I in charge?
When will this be over?

I don't want to go back to the office,
I just want to go back to the mall
or maybe the bar.
I'm probably drinking too much.