

Toilet Paper

I will not write a pandemic poem
Nor fill my shopping cart with toilet paper

I can't even find any toilet paper
The local liquor store has bought it all up

A free roll with every drive-thru daiquiri
What's a recovering alcoholic to do?

It could drive a recovering alcoholic to drink
Meanwhile, bidet sales are going crazy

Someone I know once pooped in a bidet
Have you ever been crème-de-menthe drunk in Paris?

Like being drunk on fermented toothpaste
I wonder if I'll ever see Paris again

I wonder if I'll ever go anywhere again
Meanwhile I stockpile pandemic poems

Old Dog

I will not write a pandemic poem

I'll take the old dog for another walk

I'll drag poor old Vixen on another walk

Which is really more standing around & sniffing

More peeing on things & standing & sniffing

Although it's quite nice to be sniffing magnolias

Inhaling the lemony-sweet magnolias

It's rare to be out of the house unmasked

These days the masks are not symbolic

I dread being leashed to an oxygen tank

Not cute like Vixen's pink leash with rhinestones

Remember when we used to take breathing for granted?

I hope to keep breathing till funerals can happen

All the while writing non-pandemic poems

Piggly Wiggly

I will not write a pandemic poem

When I could be shopping at the Piggly Wiggly

Cruising the aisles of the Piggly Wiggly

Is the new unsafe sex, versus curbside pickup

In the good old days of unsafe sex

A southern boy told me there were Piggly Wiggles

I thought he was shitting me: Piggly Wiggles!

Then Truvy mentioned one in *Steel Magnolias*

Now I live on the stage-set of *Steel Magnolias*

I speak with a southern drawl and Boston vowels

Before I spoke “y’all” with a Boston vowel

I would have scoffed at what a crystal ball held:

Venturing masked inside a Piggly Wiggly

The main excitement of a week and poem

Baking

I will not write a pandemic poem

When all of America is busy baking

All of America is busy baking

Or watching *The Great British Baking Show*

Even the Muppets are into baking

Ernie is baking a cake and singing

A song I remember my parents singing:

If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked a cake

If I know you are coming, I won't bake a cake

I will hide with the lights out in my pajamas

I am socially isolating in my pajamas

The grocery stores are running out of yeast

What will we do when the stores run out of yeast?

Poetry can't distract us from this pandemic

Instagram

I will not write a pandemic poem

I'll see what Susan's wearing on Instagram

My sister started posting on Instagram

Wearing her own clothes, each day a new look

Each day a new look: how long till she repeats?

She's hoping to become a "brand ambassador"

Cool free stuff gets sent to brand ambassadors

She hashtags #Anthropologie a lot

Today it's a sleeveless orange polka-dot dress

Worn with an antique watch and nude ballet flats

When we were little girls in the same ballet class

She was a dainty fairy, I tripped on my feet

I stopped counting feet and Susan started posting

Somewhere in Month Five of the Great Pandemic

Pac-Man

I will not write a pandemic poem

The college kids are trickling back to town

The college kids are cruising around town

Like Pac-Man icons on a video screen

“Like Pac-Man icons on a video screen”

Which phrase reveals that I am old as dirt

I’m old as dirt and helpless as a dot

Near gaping mouths resembling pizza slices

Near unmasked mouths resembling pizza slices

My beautiful killers, so sleek and fit

They are back from their summers, sleek and fit

I too once viewed the old as creepy & annoying

Now I am old & creepy & annoying

As sophomore lit with its depressing poems

Hurricane

I will not write a pandemic poem

I'm still in trauma from the hurricane

I can't stop shaking from the hurricane

Pecan limbs crashing all around the house

Pecan limbs taking down the power lines

Sticky country music on the radio

One lone station on the radio

But still, the comfort of a human voice

The comfort of a poet's memorized voice:

On whom thy tempests fell all night

Tempests were falling on me all that night

I lay awake and hugged my teddy bear

A grown-ass woman with her teddy bear

Praying for as-yet-unwritten poems

Zombies

I will not write a pandemic poem

I'm too caught up in this zombie series

A herd of zombies has overrun D.C.

Like a mashup of *West Wing* and *The Walking Dead*

And to think I'd given up on *The Walking Dead!*

I was really pissed off when they murdered Glenn

But this spinoff is pretty damned amazing

Who's the new guy in the horns and face-paint?

It's best to paint your face with zombie guts

To pass unnoticed in the middle of a rampage

That Rick-like cop couldn't pass unnoticed

So they bashed his skull in with a fire extinguisher

The writers for this episode were really on fire!

You could almost believe in a pandemic with zombies

Shots

I will not write a pandemic poem

It's time to give the cat an insulin shot

I have measured out his life in insulin shots

(For two weeks now: I am overly dramatic)

I was very dramatic back in high school

My finest performance, in *Inherit the Wind*

That Oscar-worthy moment in *Inherit the Wind*

When I clapped my "son's" ears to muffle a curse-word

It's no use cursing at this fucking pandemic

Where the monkey-trial jurors have evolved to anti-vaxxers

Blocking the parking lots of makeshift clinics

While I'm here praying for a shot at a shot

But here, kitty kitty: it's time for your shot

And there's a fish-flavored treat at the end of this poem

Parish

I will not write a pandemic poem

I'll check out the death toll on the state's official website

Every day at noon they update the website

Today in my parish the deaths are up by one

Today in my *parish*, not today in my *county*

A lingering trace of the colonial French

A lingering trace of the colonial French

Who perished by the thousands in earlier pandemics

In puffy homespun shirts, in earlier pandemics

Hastily buried just outside the walls of the fort

Not the fake French fort with its costumed re-enactors

But the one I bought a grave plot on the former site of

I hope they find a musket ball, digging my grave plot

The day I enter history, that long pandemic poem