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# WEEKEND BREAK



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## POEMS OF THE PANDEMIC

By ALYSSA EVANS  
*The Astorian*

To avoid losing touch with friends, Dorothy Antilla came up with an idea in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

Antilla, a 92-year-old resident of Raymond, Washington, created a poetry challenge. She started the challenge by writing her own pandemic-themed prose, then asked her friends to mail back a response.

"Her letter included a poem written by her and a page of 'Peanuts' comics to help cheer their days," said Senja Antilla, Dorothy's daughter.

Friends from Canada, Washington and Oregon participated, creating unique poems that encapsulate their experiences during the pandemic.

### GOT MAIL?

By Beth Kandoll in Astoria

There was a young woman named Dorothy  
She was told she must stay home remotely  
Away from her friends, near where the road ends  
round the corner from county seat South Bend.  
A stranger to no one  
She took pencil and pen  
And a game she devised that would send  
A message — a greeting — a challenge — and more  
A poetry contest uniquely her own.  
Now the contest had no rules and no winners  
No prizes such as hotel stays and free dinners  
The poets were told to stay home and look inward  
so the game was afoot and the players were primed  
with a challenge to put pen or pencil to rhyme.  
And write they did with such boisterous style  
that the mail lady could not help but smile  
at the volume of mail that was postmarked remotely  
To the bend in the road  
To a young woman named Dorothy.

### A LAMENT

By Rosemarie Leclair in South Bend, Washington

"I've been too long under house arrest."  
So this is very difficult to do my best.  
How do you write about the "pandemic?"  
Especially when you are not at all academic.  
I was inspired by what Dorothy wrote.  
I am sure everyone got her note.  
You know she used to teach,  
But she was never one to "preach."  
So I will just moan and groan here at home,  
And wish that I could write a poem!

### AN UNEXPECTED ADVENTURE

By Jim and Fran Allen in Aberdeen, Washington

Starting in October 2019 for five months in a camper van we traveled.  
By March our nerves were beginning to become a bit unraveled.  
We went lots of places and saw lots of things.  
Our travel pattern was like the birds with open wings.  
Through 18 states and 10,000 miles  
Most of the time our faces were all smiles.  
Along the way we began to hear of "19."  
Our kids said "Come home," but there were places yet unseen.  
We went for toilet paper at a store in the mountains of New Mexico.  
But did we find any? Oh no!  
The place was going crazy and people were getting rough.  
So I told Fran "That's enough."  
In three days of steady driving  
We finally were at our home arriving.  
Looking forward to not being on the go.  
But what we were greeted with was quite a blow.  
Staying home took on a different meaning.  
Now we watch the birds eat and the cat slowly preening.  
When we go to town our faces are not covered with smiles, but masks.  
"How much longer is this going on?" everyone asks.  
Nobody knows the real answer.  
But all this can be a life enhancer  
To take life a little slower and observe small things, as we should.  
And always remember no matter what, life is good.

### LIFE IN COVID

By Carol and John Folk in Astoria

Life in Covid-  
Oh what fun!  
Trying not to be scathing  
about the insanity raging.  
If this is my last year here  
may it be happy, peaceful and bright  
- with blossoms and sunlight  
- with FaceTiming grandkids  
- Zooming book group  
- planting and watering garden  
- scooping up slugs  
and transporting them  
way across the yard!  
Yes, life is precious -  
Whether slug or bug  
or 90-year-old or young  
Red, Blue -  
So far no one's reported covid corpses

### PEACE AND JUSTICE

Greetings dear friends,  
Are you beginning to wonder  
When this pandemic shut-in will end?  
Oh, what to do to keep boredom at bay  
while waiting patiently to hear  
What Governor Inslee will say.  
Should we find a good book, bake,  
Cook, plant a posy  
Or walk, exercise, do a crossword to keep life rosy!  
Now that we can no longer roam  
Feed the birds, watch the hummers  
And write a poem!  
Share it with me - 360-942-3395  
Lots of Love - Dorothy

Breaking News May 4th  
Check - YouTube - RTV/CrossTalk

Support Our Post Office

One day cars stopped coming to the beach.  
Receding seas washed clean the scars even as  
wind and water reshaped the landscape into  
miniature furrows and rivulets, diminutive volca-  
noes, and tiny crusted bluffs. Whole sand dollars  
and seashell whorls washed ashore and were not  
crushed, but instead nestled safely in sculpted  
sand. At the shoreline, stream-lined birds with  
knobby knees hurried up and down, back and  
forth, their reflections scurrying with them across  
the wet sand. When they were tired, they folded  
down on spindly legs, resting peacefully in place.  
Nearby, a group of gulls also took a break on the  
dark and sparkling sands, undisturbed. An eagle  
coasted low over the water, pulling back and  
reaching out to land on a bleached and contorted  
root twisting skyward.  
Though I had been there many times, I felt as  
though I were seeing the place for the first time.  
On reflection, I never turn to the sea in search of  
yet another busy street, but in the hope of finding  
a place of peace and grounding. And now it seems  
difficult to understand how it is that we have  
mistaken such a rich and remarkable habitat for a  
state highway.

A daily  
visit for bird seed

1st prize  
Aberdeen World  
Flash Fiction Challenge

A poem

Little boy lying in the grass, study the trek of the  
beetle making its way through a miniature world.  
Someday you too, will be making your way  
through your world. But for now, the world can wait  
for little boys.  
Little boys need to lie in the grass and study the  
trek of the beetle.

Dorothy Antilla, 92, mailed a letter to friends asking them  
to send a poem inspired by the coronavirus pandemic.

Sitting at home, trying to do the right thing,  
No get together with friends, so took off my bling.  
Everythings locked down, my hair is getting grayer,  
Waiting for news from our almighty sayer,  
All the weeds pulled, and the chores are all done,  
Normally, it would be time for some fun,  
How long this virus will last is anyone's guess,  
Wondering how our world got in this mess,  
So for now, I'll just sit with my gin and tonic,  
And dream of the day I can travel somewhere exotic.

Vancouver  
resident  
Sue Tuttle's  
poem.



SUE TUTTLE

by their political bent.  
I wonder whether the graves  
speak to our stupidity.  
Black, white, Latino — Americans, all  
If you live here, you're my kin.  
So, dig up a little compost-  
Thank the little earthworms  
Water the spinach  
Treasure this one precious day.  
Life is better than NOT!

### COVID SPRING 2020

By Beth Kandoll in Astoria

I think this robin would prefer we stay inside  
Wait out this lockdown.  
For several years it has built a nest  
Close to our house.  
It paces — ever watchful.  
We dig in the dirt  
Watch seedlings grow — protect them from predators  
And inclement weather  
It paces — ever watchful.  
We prune branches of overgrown shrubs  
Pull weeds  
Create new garden beds.  
It paces — ever watchful.  
We wash cars.  
It's a yearly chore.  
Clean the moss and pollen from the crevices  
It paces — ever watchful.  
We wait for a return  
To a "new normal"  
Wait — until we can mingle without masks.  
Greet people on the sidewalk without crossing to the other side.  
We wait — ever watchful.  
We wait — somewhat hopeful.

### SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED

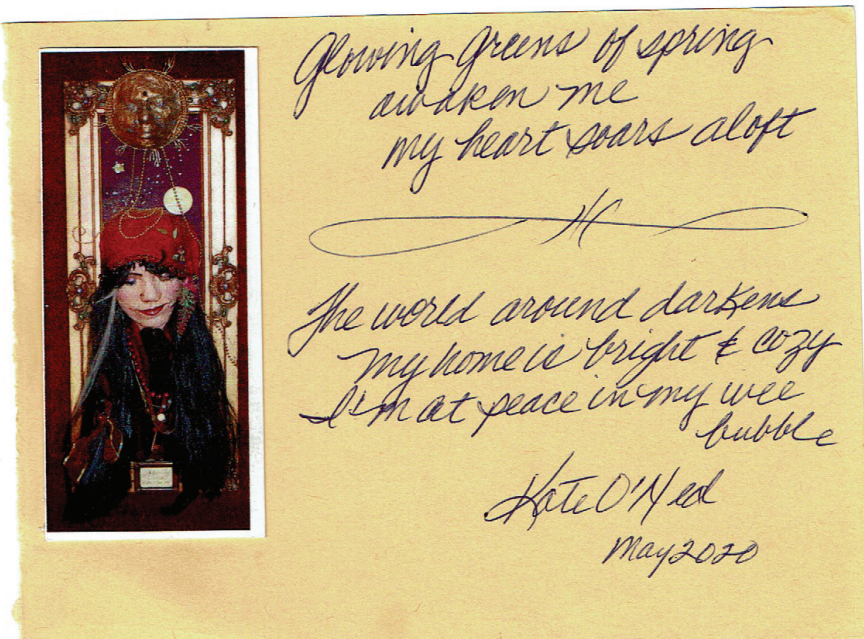
By Marcia Walker in Port Orchard, Washington

Dear Dorothy,  
Roses are red  
Violets are blue  
Many people have "Covid"  
But hopefully not YOU!

### UNTITLED

By Jill Monson in Kent, Washington

Here we are, at home with our thoughts  
Watching the rain and counting the drops.  
Even in quarantine I live in gratitude,  
always remembering it's all about attitude.  
How will this play out? We don't know.  
But on science and Dr. Fauci my hope does grow,  
that the suffering of many will soon lessen,  
and eventually there'll be a saving medicine.



Kate O'Neal, of South Bend, Washington, created this poem.