

The Present Will Soon Pass

As I walk out this morning, face covered and gloves on,
I see a stranger at the end of the alley, waving to me.
I wave back, feeling togetherness, despite the unknown.
My glasses fog up as I breath into my mask.
These are not normal times.
The present will soon pass.

I look up at the sky, and see black clouds looming ahead.
The wind picks up with strong gusts.
My hat blows off, and I run to catch it.
Drops of rain begin to fall.

I see two men on the steps of their house, bending over, stroking their golden Labrador.
I hear words of love and happiness.
They look up and say "Hello".
In that moment, I feel embraced by the encounter, not wanting to move on.
The present will soon pass.

I keep on walking to the village, where I hear strange voices.
I see a young couple sitting close together on the flatbed of their truck.
They are looking towards the sea.
There is a storm on the horizon, under an overcast sky.
A man approaches them, warning that they could be fined for congregating.
They are not six feet apart.
I stop to chat with them.
Both are out of work, but try to stay positive, saying
"This will soon pass".

I turn and walk to the seashore.
The tide is out.
Dozens of sanderlings are gathered together, running towards the ebbing waves.
Nature still goes on, knowing nothing of social distancing,
Nor human suffering around the world.
The present will soon pass.

I walk back and enter an alley.
I see two children playing ball ahead of me.
I turn around and walk the other way, back on to the street.
I see a strange neighbor walking towards me, face masked.
I feel safer.
The neighbor passes on the other side of the street.
We greet each other and wave.
The present will soon pass.

I stop to take photographs of a neighbor's flowers, their beauty embracing me.
I reach my tiny garden, filled with Spring flowers I planted.
Freesias, gladiolas, orchids have become my friends, as I tended them.
I feel free to touch them, to nurture them, Nature having no barriers.

The rose bushes now have blooms – red, yellow, pink.
I cut some, before the storm blows all their petals away.
Happily, I fill a vase, knowing
The present will soon pass.

Gabrielle O'Flaherty, 7 April 2020