

## Through a Virus Lens

Plexiglas panels in all the cafes  
The banks, the food stores, even stores that sell hay  
Cashiers enduring more mouth-covered days  
And pretending to smile while enduring this craze.

A breath inside a mask  
An inhale that becomes a gasp  
A thousand blue rectangles  
That end up in the trash  
Another conversation overheard  
About how long this will last

The around-the-block line donations at Goodwill stores  
Excesses in plastic bins that fed our need for more  
Paper bags filled with outgrown pandemic jeans  
Inside our cars our patience is coming apart at the seams

Walking alongside my canine-loving friends – leashes wound  
Masks up, or half mast, and sometimes just plain down  
Each of us with 6-foot leash, to check our distance  
We keep eyeing at the ground, to see what apartness  
Feels mostly safe and sound

Dogs have no sense of what this virus hath wrought  
But they may sense our absorption in worry and thought  
An emergency pending, lung pressure descending  
Some dog parents certain the world is ending

My students look glazed  
When I ask, "How is School?"  
They stare at pixels for days  
And screens are no longer cool