

2021 Community Poem – “I Remember”

I remember Air. Essential to Life

*Each hello, each laugh, each lament, each spoken story
passes each breath to the next*

I remember when Anita died and
How I cried.

I remember fearing even the air
miasma, “mal aria”

I remember two days of Covid
swallowing you whole – while I watched
your limp body through a window
for signs of movement.

I remember JOY – wide view, nature we adore
Humble home paid for
Clouds in all shapes, forms, sky bright then gray
then storm. I remember FEAR
Life formed inside me.

*Hey Mom, someone would soon scream
I’ll keep this sweet dream*

I remember PAIN (I was told “there’s no heartbeat)
I felt dying, indeed - Only sixteen weeks
My God, why make it so quick

I remember Grief - Virus didn’t get me
I buried my own baby - I remember DEATH

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passes each breath to the next*

I remember when we couldn't hug and kiss

I remember I finally read Leaves of Grass

I remember the daily joy and warmth
of the director and staff of the library

I remember sewing machine wars, the machine
the victor in terms of blood, our quest to mask
as many as my not-nimble-fingers could muster

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passes each breath to the next*

I remember beaches we couldn't walk on
because getting there meant crossing state lines
weeks of quarantines

I remember sunsets we didn't see over the ocean
lighthouse, sea birds, gulls

I remember games, plays, grandkids
we didn't see because there were no vaccines

I remember it all

Like it was yesterday.

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passes each breath to the next

I remember when the skies were quiet

and birds began singing again

and the roads were quiet, making room

for the wandering deer

I remember we couldn't visit each other

I remember the sameness of days

broken by sweet woods walks

with a friend, startled once by gold

white black - an eagle taking flight

from a hemlock, above our heads

I remember when a collection of things we took for granted

disappeared, ran off to hide in shadows, until the cloud

of uncertainty and panic passed over

I remember rage like lava thundering through me

whirlpool of grief spinning me, anxiety shredding

my days, astonished relief at Stay Home's purging of things

I never really loved

I remember Air. Essential to Life

*Each hello, each laugh, each lament, each spoken story
passes each breath to the next*

I remember planning a winter vacation
in a place with plenty of warmth and light
and Covid bringing a cancelled flight

I remember discovering Zoom, becoming a Zoomaholic
and finding it to be a lot more fun than other “holics”

I remember the unmasked crowds enjoying champagne
and sharing their defiance Covidly

I remember the cheerful company of birds on my new feeder
during winter’s lonely weeks

I remember stacks and stacks of books by bed and chair
the good companionship of fictional characters

I remember when my hair was short and neatly trimmed

I remember Air. Essential to Life

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passes each breath to the next

I remember her beautiful eyes, their fading light, our final tears... good-bye

I remember the dangerous dance chilling cancer fearing Covid

I remember when a collection of things we took for granted disappeared

I remember Air. Essential to Life

Respiration renews. Feeds our cells, carries life along.

Unseen, taken for granted, Air, the medium in which we live

Each hello, each laugh, each lament, each spoken story

passes each breath to the next, wide and far, around the World

The common breath of Humanity, always shared, needs care

Pandemic breath - most humbling