



How Sweet
Peace Is

Produced, created, and
inspired by the clients and
staff of the



2020

**Please note that opinions expressed within these poems are those of the authors alone, and are not endorsed by the Cleveland Sight Center*

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Katie Daley, Shayna Sharpe, and the
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all of us.**

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Contents

The page features decorative floral illustrations. In the top right corner, there are pink and light purple blossoms with thin, dark branches. In the bottom left corner, there are larger, more detailed flowers in shades of yellow, orange, and pink, with green leaves and stems. The text is centered on the page.

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For the Stranger

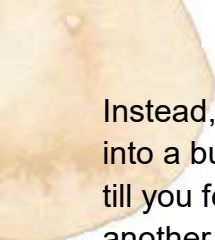
*by clients of the Cleveland Sight Center and
students of the CCF Lerner College of Medicine*

When you appear on my stoop, I hope I have it in me to
rinse away any assumptions I might harbor about you. If I
wonder anything at all, let me wonder
how the scent of jasmine on the wind
pushed you to my door. How, like magic,
the door dissolves, our hands clap, our smiles touch.

Let me remember how content I feel
drinking a warm cup of coffee in the morning
and may I strive to give you that same contentedness
inside.

Let me remember the I in thou, to re-member at-one-
ment.


No matter how busy I might think I am, I pray
I make the time to share something with you: A bowl
of freshly harvested strawberries, a dollop
of freshly whipped cream, a cup of conversation.
If the silence between us is awkward
as I bustle between stove and kitchen table,
I can always hum the tune to “We Are the World.”
Or I can simply tell you, I’m glad you came to my door.
Even if I’m not sure that what I say is true,
let me intend to make it so. And if your stress
has left you without appetite, I vow not to be offended.



Instead, I'll offer to puree your worries
into a butternut squash stew and save it in the freezer
till you feel calm enough to digest your troubles on
another day.

May I have enough curiosity to ask what brings you joy
when you first wake up. And if you have no answer for
that,
allow me to tune in to the melody of your load
so I can lift your burdens and propel your dreams.
Let me wish that you always be surrounded by the people
you love,
relishing a homemade feast around a big, long, laughing
table
not so different from the one we two will share.

I'll gather what I need now, before you come:
Something sharp and true to mince up the mistrust
between us.
Snippets of memories to paste into the scrapbook of our
talk.
A ball of soft yarn spun from milkweed
to crochet our fears into silken webs
that get blown loose and harmless into the breeze.
And, finally, the invitation to let loose
your own personal yodel into the prevailing winds
so the village will know you have arrived.



Postcard from an Interlude

by Honey Massey

Can we go back again? Some cautioned never,
others took up that seemingly futile journey.
Lush meadow of purple posies
growing wild in rich damp earth,
chortling brook with swirling eddies—dip muddy toes
Metallic blast from jazz sax- an interlude
of urban blues competing with the pastoral buzz and chirp
Unpeeling rays of sunshine brush bare skin
veins pulsing with life's blood
Lie down, cool green grasses prove to be a blanket-
moist blades tickling sultry limbs, caress once again.
Wooden basket- cascading herbs, wild mushrooms
and greens, munch, munch
Yell nay! to negative soothsayers, reality overcame
virtual in those years—70 long years ago,
the time that vanished in the twinkling of an eye



Some of My Favorite Things on a Cold, Cold, Dreary Day:

by CSC poetry group 2020

Hot chocolate - packet Hot chocolate – water (with)

Marshmallows

Hot tea – Any kind (lemon zinger of course)

Hot chocolate – dark chocolate

Tomato soup – The Campbell's we all know and love

Chicken and rice, chicken noodle (what about the one with the stars)

Chicken pea noodle soup

Beef vegetable soup (also with noodles)

Chili – every way

Chicken & dumplings with biscuits (yum)

Hot apple cider - mulled

Cornbread goes with all of it.

Childhood, Explained

by the CSC Poetry Group 2020

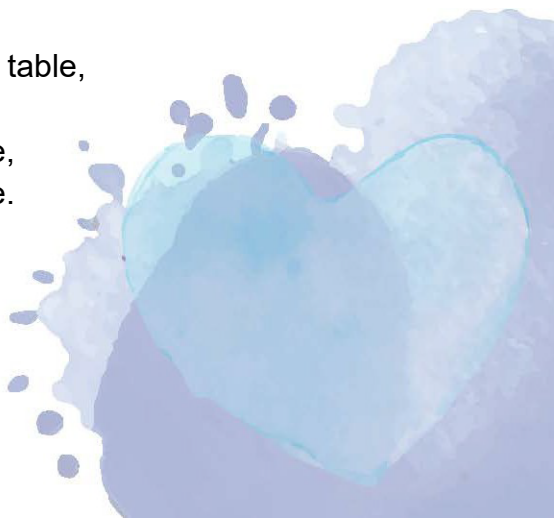
Little pans shaped like corn,
Buttering that heavenly bread;
Memories of childhood are born,
My heart and soul are fed.

Ribbon candy and the little mints,
Melting on your tongue;
Corningware bowls sticky fingerprints,
Dance with music unsung.

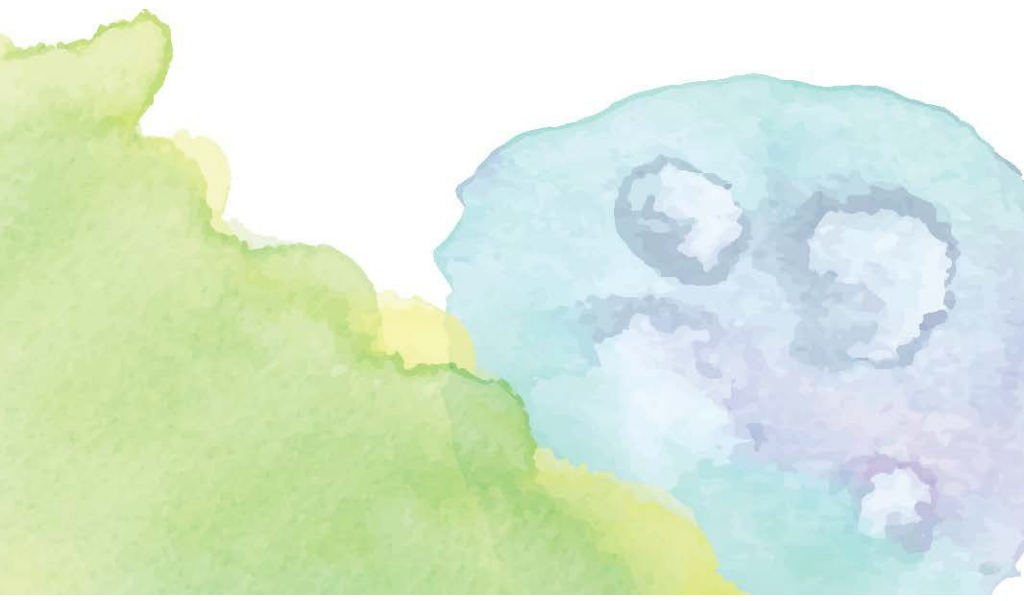
Granny, Noni, Nana, Love,
Jergen's lotion and Chapstick smell;
Blessings from the stars above,
Remember the stories she would tell.

Rubber fruit in the big brown dish,
Chlorine and the sun;
Perry Como dancing, skirts a'swish,
Chinese Checkers just for fun.

Holidays 'round the family table,
Don't forget the strays;
Camaraderie that is stable,
The familiar turn of phrase.



Interlocked and inter-threaded,
Family fabric in all the hues;
Memories good and bad are wedded,
Past and present fuse.



Postcard from Ohio in the Future


by Carol Ann Arrington

Hello from the garden of listening
where lilac bushes send their sweet aromas
into the wind without a word. Maybe
there's a jazz harp playing, maybe
I'm reading a good book or dancing
ballet in my free-flowing chiffons.
Here's what I have to say to you:
We went through all we had to go through.




Questions for the Pandemic

*by the CSC Transitional Life Counseling
Group of Fall 2020*



What did I do to deserve this?
How long will this last?
When can I hug my granddaughters again?
What do I tell my family members?
Will the planes be social distanced?
When will it be over?
What is it?
How many times should I use my hand wipes?
Will life ever be the same afterward?
How many times will Netflix ask if I'm still watching?
When will have a cure for COVID-19?
Am I turning into a hermit?
Will I actually want to go out when this is over?
When can I have a party?
Is Thanksgiving going to be the same for everyone?
How can I convince others to wear masks?
How long are we going to have to wear masks?
When will we get together with friends and family like normal?
Am I going to be able to have a birthday party next year?
When will people start loving one another and stop hating one another?
If I get sick, how sick will I get?
How long would I be in the hospital?

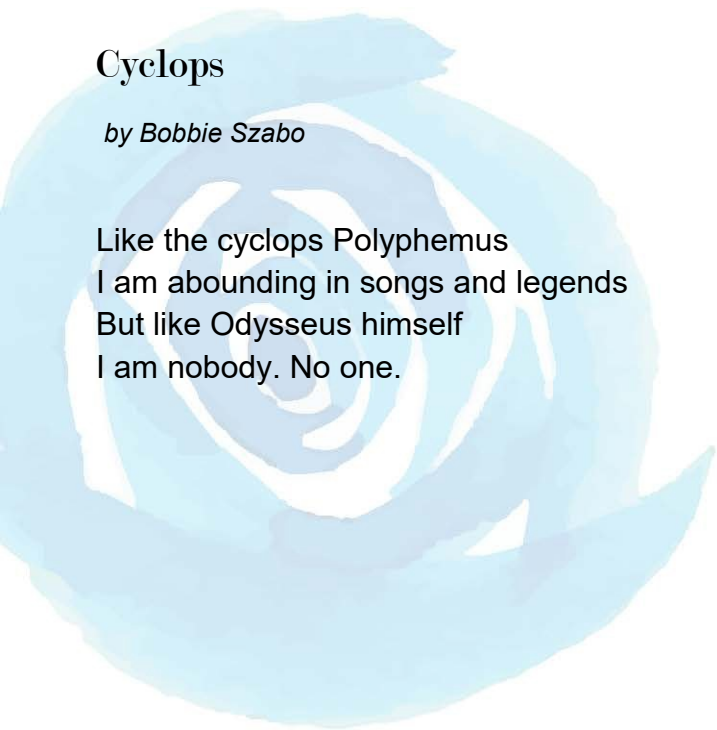
Will my insurance cover the bill if I end up in the hospital?
What will my insurance cover?
How would I be treated?
What are the long-term effects on young children who are experiencing isolation and lack of contact with their family?
Will my otherwise intelligent nephews believe the virus is real without them having to catch it?
How long will it keep going on and on and on?
How will people feel who have the virus?
How do people treat those with coronavirus?
How do I comfort my loved ones?
How do we convince people that this isn't something to play with?
Why do people have such hard heads?
What can we do to boost our immune systems?
If I got it, would I lose my sense of taste or smell?
If you live alone, what could you do for yourself?
Oh Lord, will I die alone in this house?
Who can help me?
Who can help any of us?
Why is this happening to us?
Who is to blame for all of this?
Can we blame anyone?
How did the coronavirus get here?
How long will it be here?
Will we be alright?



Cyclops

by Bobbie Szabo

Like the cyclops Polyphemus
I am abounding in songs and legends
But like Odysseus himself
I am nobody. No one.



Praise Is

by CSC Poetry Group 2020

Doing something good. To glorify it.
Verbally, through song, through action.
It's like when you say praise the Lord.
Often times praise has a religious connotation.
Something above you.

Not always.
Praise, to me, is illumination, adulation.
If it's in the religious context,
In every form,
It illuminates something.
Someone.

Praise is a double-edged sword.
As a teacher.
As a mother.
As a grandmother.
Constant praise demeans the act.
I'm reticent to praise.
I don't want to praise to get on the good side of
something.
Sometimes, failure can be a very good thing.

What do you think praise is?
If you could put a definition to it, what would it be?
It's not the effort, it's the recognition of that effort.
It comes so easily when it's sincere.



I don't think you can praise God too much.
Even in your frustration,
That is the key to getting the answer.
To ask the hard questions.
Let your higher being know that you are:
Confused
Upset
Frustrated
Wanting something different.
There's nowhere else to turn.
Here I am!
Here I stand!
I trust that my higher power has the answer. Amen.

Praise is lifting something up.
Like God.
You praise God.
We praise God.
All of my praise is connected to that source.
I can't disconnect the two.



A Doctor's Summons to His Patients

by CSC Writing Group (Year Unknown)

Keep me from acting too cool, or if I act too cool,
keep me from being cruel. If there is ice between us,
remind me that it's ours to break together.
If I forget to offer you my hand, offer yours.
Take mine and shake it. Say my name. Say yours.

Does my voice sound glacial? Then tell me a joke.
Make me laugh. Tell me how handsome I look
in my baby blue scrubs. Remind me that you and I both
stand
in the same slow thaw of becoming human.

We don't have much time, so tell me your story.
Make sure I hear every nuance, every twist.
Insist I use all my senses, not just these statistics blinking
on my screen. Then, teach me how to reach you. Invite
me to turn from this computer and face you.
Make me wise with your wisdom.

Know this about me: I am here because I had a dream
to bring new life into the old world, to heal one person at
a time,
to staunch the blood and release the pain.
Know that the narrow, sleepless path from there to here
might have hazed and hardened me. Know that in this
maze
of data input, time limits, litigations and bottom lines,

I might forget you are a mother, a worker, a sister, a citizen.

In the climate of my own forgetfulness, you, too, might forget I am a son, a husband, a brother, a believer.

So let us remind one another. Then, help me lighten this load.

Confirm that all this sickness and death is not my fault. Assure me you understand how life-gutting it is for me to give you the life-gutting news. Remind me we are both tethered to the same pain. Remind me there are things other than our bodies here to be healed. This vacancy between us, for instance. Persuade me. Remember that I, like you, am human enough to be persuaded.



Postcard from the Porch

by Oreen Anthony

Greetings from the porch of peace.
We're settled on the swing,
swaying slowly, back and forth,
nighttime, daybreak, the end of the day,
the momentum carrying itself perpetually
like a pendulum, backwards
to gather up the past, forward to bring hope.
The air is just right—not too tart
and not too sweet. We are humming
because we can, because this
is how it feels when we are unafraid
and without threat, the lever with which we
stake a claim or move mountains
no sharper than a lap, no heavier than breath.



To Be Grown Up

by CSC Poetry Group 2020

Ballerina (too bad I can't dance)

Writer

Pediatrician

Nurse

On Broadway (singing and dancing, of course)

Work with Braille

Mother (It wasn't glamorous)

Nursery School Teacher

Nightclub Singer (on the piano in the slinky dress)

Braille Teacher



Praise Is II

by CSC Poetry Group 2020

Praise is not presents, it's your presence.
All of our praise is connected to one another.



Instead

*by clients of the Cleveland Sight Center and
students of the CCF Lerner College of Medicine*

Take your bloated, tumor-filled fish gasping for oxygen
and give us crystal-clear waterfalls sparkling in the sun
Give us a school of whales frolicking in the ocean
a rainbow of salmon striving upstream

Take your dumpsters stinking of trash
and your cars coughing exhaust fumes
and give us the aroma of lilacs blooming up the walkway

Unstrap the savage smoke of AK-47s
and leave the children a clear note of peace

Take the suits of armor that muffle thunderous shouts of
clashing swords
and give us whispered rumblings of lion and lamb
entwined

Take your glorified hymn to country and empty pledge to
flags
and rejoice together in the gospel of tolerance, patience
and love

Take this acid thrown in the face of women
who disobey husbands they didn't choose
and the school doors locked against girls who want to
learn
and give praise to our first teachers, the mothers

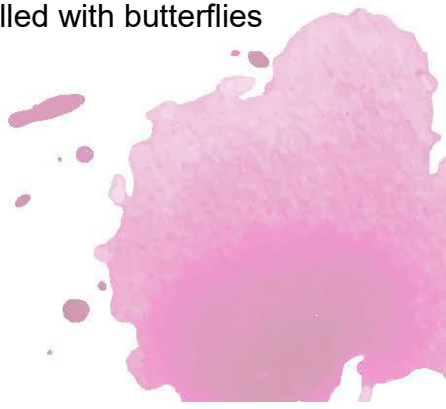
Take the sarcasm out of your voice when you speak to
women
and give us a new president
who respects every gender, every person

Phase out your media dramatization
and serve us an open dialogue over a supper of rice and
beans

Take this empty plate
and fill the banquet tables
with bananas, oranges, strawberries and watermelons

Take your social injustice
and let flow the air, blood and water that make no
distinctions
the river of life that keeps on nourishing us
no matter if we're left or right, black or white

Take the Confederate flag decals off your hubcaps and
give us Harriet Tubman's shoes filled with butterflies



Wipe out your electoral college
and give us one person, one vote

Take your double standards and ostracizing
and give us an even keel

Dissolve your judgments
and let us value each other as we are

Blow out these clouds of depression suspended over our
thoughts
so the light from the stars, moon and sun can find its way
into our minds

Take this festering, oozing hatred and give us love with
no barriers
the kind of love that takes time
love you can smell in the flowers blooming
and the grass sprouting up from the earth



Writing Exercise

by CSC Poetry Group 2020

Peepers, beep, bee, keep, eponymous, epilogue

Hippopotamus, hypotheses, cheese, wheeze, easy

Encyclopedia, cyclops, psycho, science, cyclones

Restaurant, restore, raconteur, tonal, nods, tortoise

Electricity, trickle, pickle, elevator, elevate, elaborate

Clouds, loud, allow, plow, owl

Keyboard, keystone, stop, post, possible

Outreach, teach, cherries, cheap, chunk

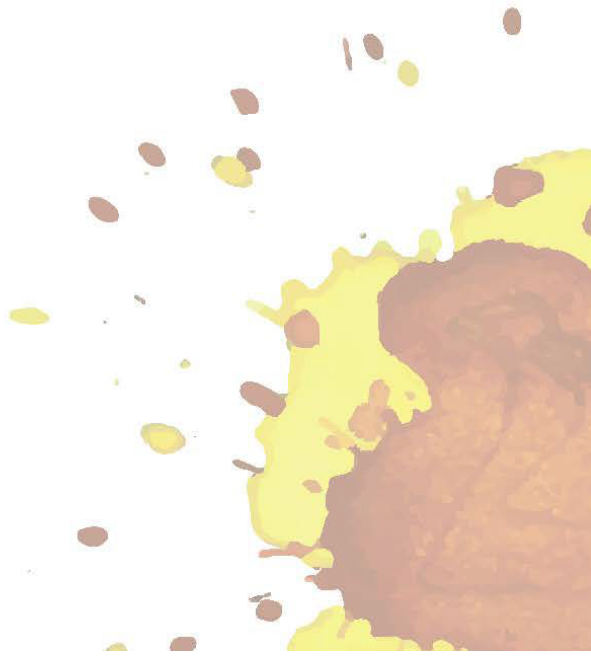
Questions for the Pandemic II

by CSC Poetry Group 2020

Why is this happening to us?
Who is safe to be around?
How do we stay safe?
What do we have to do to stay safe?
What should I do to protect myself from the pandemic?
What's open and what's not?
Is anything ever going to get back to normal?
Is this the new normal?
Whose fault is this?
Is there anyone to blame?
Is this gonna happen to me?
Where do I get accurate information?
What should I believe?
Who can I trust?
What is the right answer?
What should I do if I get the symptoms?
Will the election fix this?
How many movies have I watched?
When will I get out of this house?
How many episodes of the Andy Griffith's show can I
watch in a lifetime?
Will Netflix ever stop asking me if I'm still watching?
How many zoom meetings
can one be in?
Am I a zoom expert now?
Aren't we all zoom
experts now?

What are the good things to have come from this?
How will I know if everyone else is wearing their mask?
Don't we appreciate being with other people more now?
Doesn't this make our relationships more special?
Don't we take less for granted now?
Aren't we becoming more creative?
Are some aspects of life better now?
When will we get a vaccine?
Will it actually work?
Who will have access to it?
How expensive will it be?
Will our insurance cover it?
Does our insurance cover covid?
How will this affect my income?
Do I qualify for unemployment?
When can I go back to work?
Who can help us?
Can anyone help?

How do we move forward from here?



Recipe for the Browns Winning the Superbowl

by Virtual Halloween at Highbrook Campers

Definitely pumpkin puree

Some chocolate and fruit—like the Aldi's bars

Vanilla and cream

Bat ears for good hearing

Lizard legs for moving quickly

Spiders

Eye of newt for good vision—to keep their eyes on the prize

Wings to make a move

Fairy dust for luck

Salad and croutons for good health

A dash of spice

Make sure it's cheesy

Tomatoes

Pinch of salt

Stir

And...nothing happens

Better luck next year



Poem from the Whole

by Sandra Krems

Wish you were here where wellness arises from
wholeness.

Connection. Acceptance. Polarity vanished.

We gathered by the river for the festival

In the place where the river now rushes through the
broken earthen dam.

Sunlight refracted in the spray and a rainbow appeared.

This place is warm and friendly, with the sweet smell of
the forest,

the mingling of pine and earth and rain.

There is a faint melody in the air that sounds like
grandma's music box.

The children crowded around the table to watch the cook

Whisk the ingredients. Blending. Emulsifying.

The slight hints of taste and nuanced seasonings created
a full-flavored treat.

We hope one day you can discard duality and join us
here where differences enhance one another and
combine to create a whole that is greater than the parts.



Postcard

by Cheryl Fields

Hi, it's been a long time since I last wrote
but the evolution kept me busy.
Everything is ready and waiting for you.

When you arrive, Trauma nor Stress will struggle
to choke your mind and body.
You are welcomed with fresh wisdom.

Every morning we lift our heads to the sun's gentle heat
and the light scent of lavender under our feet.

We are one. Children's alto and soprano,
mother's contralto and father's baritone mingle.
It's what we call jazz piano skipping
and running on the wind.
Big Mama and Nanna lock hands
with Poppy and Granddad, patting and humming,
waiting for you. They croon old melodies
with new harmonies in your honor.

Incredible recipies start with the trinity—
celery, onion, green pepper with a little something
extra, garlic. Tender herbs are sprinkled and hush the
birds.

I lift my spoon and stir. The aroma of peace and love
wave and linger for a moment. Catching the wind
they rush out to touch all. Inhaling to accept this gift,
it settles in the soul.

You will be so surprised to know
how in a world free of hate
color is transparent, money is nonexistent
and the nations are healed.

I know this is beyond your understanding and
imagination.

I found it amazing too. I leave you with only warning:
Pay attention today because it really does
make a difference tomorrow. Sending you
blessings of Peace, Love and Joy from 2040, Lovey



Praise Is III

by CSC Poetry Group 2020

How does nature praise us?
It is the wind caressing our smiling cheeks,
Praising us,
The sunshine kissing our faces.
The leaves don't change colors for their own benefit,
They praise us with their beautiful hues and crunchy leaves.

Nature really does praise us,
It gives us the air to breathe,
The flowers to brush against our legs in the meadow,
The dew in the grass to wet our toes in the morning.
There's no way to falsify that praise,
To negate it and throw it away.
I praise waking up to the birds singing,
They never fail me.

Thank you to the huge deer in the backyard,
To the groundhog that is wreaking havoc,
To the mosquito buzzing around my ear.
The sun coming through the trees looks like a heart,
Wrapped up in love,
And praise.



Fish on the Hook

by CSC Poetry Group (Year Unknown)

Dear Body,

Thank you for not quitting when you could have,
for protecting me from myself,
for making it possible for my fingers to type these
words

Thank you for letting me feel the love in me,
all the squeezes and hugs I get, that complete, warm
stretch
that doesn't cut off at the breaking point.

Thank you for working in tandem with my mind
so I can hear my grandchildren giggle and laugh myself
awake.
You let me know I have the fish on the hook even when
it slips away.

Thanks to my spine for dialing up my thighs
so I can climb a steep hill without taking a spill.

Thanks to my fingertips for showing me the differences
between the shell stitch, the popcorn, and a single
crochet--
for giving me a way to feel this creation in such a
sensation.

To my brain: Please don't lose track of my memories:
The girlish lilt in my mother's 86 year-old voice;
Papa Ed with his sweet potatoes and nectarines,
also known as The Professor and His Green Thumb;

The birth beginnings of all my children,
their warm, new bodies on my belly--each of them a little
me.

That magical afternoon I sat with daughter Dejza on my
knee,
the sun's rays suddenly capturing her green eyes,
the two of us still in this world, but everything else faded
away.

Moving Forward

*by the members of the Transitional
Life Counseling group of Fall 2020*



I'm hoping for good health

I look forward to sitting around a very large table with my
entire family

To playing board games

Meeting my friends at different restaurants

Continuing to watch my grandchildren grow up

Witnessing what my family does and accomplishes

Being with my family over the holidays

Seeing my grandkids and my daughters

Winter hasn't even started, but I'm already looking
forward to summer

I can't wait to hug whomever I want

I'm looking forward to winning a million dollars

Getting a new microwave

To vacation and travelling

Going out of state

Visiting relatives

Travelling to North Carolina

To acting on my love

For the election to be over (we're always waiting for
elections to be over)

To spend time with my mother and siblings and cousins
and friends

To taking a nice long walk in nature

To breathing a sigh of relief when this is all over

Postcard #1

by anonymous CSC clients

The parks have been reclaimed.
The cool April breeze
is thick with the tang of grass
and thrumming with faint footfalls,
music, deep breaths.
No one here feels in danger
for taking their health into their hands.
We so wish you were here.



Postcard #2

Greetings from the place and time
where health disparities have been conquered.
The villagers here are as joyous as birds in springtime,
singing without caution about their freedom,
their inner wings flapping in synch
with the breaking of the waves of the sea.
Our breaths are clear and calm,
majestic whispers on snow-capped mountains.

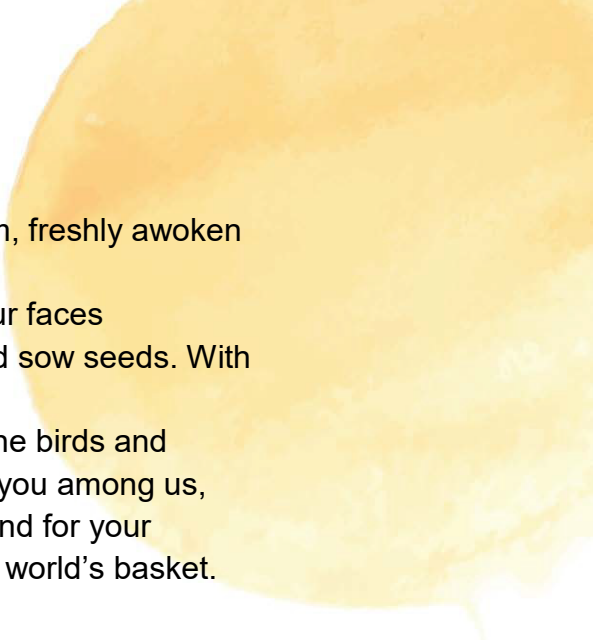


Postcard #3

Hope you are well.

We are here at the farm, freshly awoken
and ready for the land.

The sunrise brushes our faces
as we break up soil and sow seeds. With
breakfast in our bellies
we whistle along with the birds and
shade our eyes to find you among us,
harvesting the fruit bound for your
basket, our basket, the world's basket.



Postcard #4

I can breathe again.
My lungs fill without complaint
no matter where I stand on earth.
No brown cloud of pollution
hangs over the city, no smoke puffs up
from the power plant in the distance.
Instead of coal, we use uranium now—fear
transformed into hope, a weapon of the past
used to fuel the future. Kids whiz past
on bicycles, singing as they ride, their voices
unmarred by inhaled particles. We did this.
Together. We forced governments
to take the planet's breath into account.
We broke down our bombs to bring peace
to our bodies, our dreams, our children.



How Sweet Peace Is

by Barbara Baughs

In this sanctuary, we treat others
as we want to be treated. We breathe
in the aroma of jasmine before
we speak, we smile as broadly
as concert grand pianos
when we invite you to dance,
and before we flip you into the air
with our spatulas of joy,
we ask if you prefer to go over easy
or stay sunny side up.

