

CORONA VIRUS JOURNAL

APRIL 2020

by Kay Butzin

APRIL 1

Ron's birthday on the ninth is the only thing we know hasn't been cancelled for the next month, if not longer, as the world battles the coronavirus pandemic. Jenna on *Today*, reporting from home, called April Fool's day her "favorite holiday" but says she doesn't plan to pull any pranks this year.

APRIL 2

I have to stop and think before I write the day and date. To help me keep track of time, I decided to accept Robert Lee Brewer's *April Poem-a-Day (PAD) Challenge*.

APRIL 3

Found a pad of 4"x6" paper to print a little chapbook of my little verses.

APRIL 5

BREATHE

TV spot casts a web of fear,
reports case and death numbers spike
and things look ever more drear
from behind my doors and windows.

The bad news I hear
disturbs my peace and joy,
pierces my thoughts like a spear.
But I tell myself, "Don't let it psych
you out, my dear!"

APRIL 6

The stay-at-home order makes me feel like I'm being held hostage by an invisible army. Was this killer invasion unleashed to weaken us for the ultimate takeover? Are two-legged troops advancing while we cook and snack, getting fat and lazy in front of our tv, computer, and phone screens?

APRIL 7

LUCKY

I imagine a stay at home order
with my first college roommate
or my mother or my last disaster—
how I'd be plotting murder by now—

and

I think how fortunate
I am to be with
YOU

Here on the sofa, basking in a pool of afternoon sun, watching the red-headed woodpecker peck suet from the wire basket and a pair of robins hunt worms on the wet spring lawn.

APRIL 8

I signed the closing papers on my Texas condo yesterday. There were thirty pieces to be signed, initialed, and notarized, too many to handle through the credit union drive-up window. Since that is the only way they are conducting business, the manager came outside and we made a desk of the Lexus hood.

The media talk about a “new normal.” Does that mean being afraid to pass another person in a doorway? Wearing face masks and rubber gloves to grocery shop? No dine-in restaurants, movies, sporting events?

Parents are getting creative about how to fill the time they’re used to spending on the road from one activity to the next. When they go back to their workplaces and schools, dance lessons and softball games, will they remember to build in family time to cook together or stay up past bedtime to watch a meteor shower?

THE NEW NORMAL
The future is now—
wearing face masks at Walmart
social distancing.

My sister started making masks for her son and daughter-in-law, home health workers in Denver. When other people found out, they requested masks for their friends and relatives, too; and she has now sewn more than 120 masks at her dining area table on her portable sewing machine. The media tell me I’m doing my part by staying home. It feels like too little.

APRIL 9

RON'S BIRTHDAY

Receptionist inquires,

"Date of birth?"

He replies,

"April ninth, nineteen forty-three—

A.D."

His present, a new summer shirt I ordered on the third, didn't ship until the seventh and hasn't arrived yet. I can't treat him to dinner out because all the restaurant dining rooms are closed. So we are going to try a new recipe, Spaghetti Alla Carbonara, with our favorite food groups: pasta and bacon.

I made his card— which I usually do, anyway. But I couldn't go to Walmart to buy one if I wanted to. Well, I could. Driving to the post office and bank the other day, I saw lots of people out and about, ignoring the stay-at-home order and not wearing masks.

VIRTUAL CELEBRATION

Kids & grandkids click the link

@ 7:00 p.m. CST

& 1 poodle & 17 relatives,

some sporting festive hats,

pop up on phone & computer screens

across IL & MI to attend

Grandpa's Zoom Birthday Party.

APRIL 12

*Why do people need a monstrous disaster
to learn the meaning of being together in Spirit?*

An Easter “like no other”— cliché because it is true of everything. This is the first time in his life Ron hasn’t attended mass on Easter Sunday. His first Easter and his first birthday even fell on the same day.

I baked a quiche for brunch. After my shower, I dressed in slacks, a blouse, and real shoes instead of leggings and moccasins.

A NEW WORLD

I overhear him on the phone
telling his choir mate,
“Easter is cancelled.”

No cantoring on Good Friday
attendance at a Holy Saturday vigil
or receiving of the Eucharist.

But Easter isn’t cancelled,
mass observed on tv instead
from his recliner, dressed in pajamas.

APRIL 15

In normal times procrastinators would be hustling to get their income taxes filed before midnight tonight. This year they get an extra three months to put off the inevitable.

Monday I got a reminder on my phone about the writers group meeting that's cancelled until further notice. In a while it will remind me of the haircut I won't get today.

UNPREPARED

Who knows how many friends you may have seen
for the last time before this plague abates?

How many groups will never meet again
or if they do will gather on their screens?

Your one defense it seems is just to wait;
it feels like being caught out in the rain
without umbrella or yellow slicker.

Use Facetime and Zoom for virtual dates.

Who knows when next you'll be aboard a plane?

You can help the world not to get sicker.

Maintain!

CONTROL

I fit words

into a fixed form

to control

what I can

while the viral enemy
creates world chaos.

APRIL 20

*since kindergarten
we have known
life is but a dream
(sweetheart)*

I am so tired of the PSAs that repeat and repeat and repeat—the reason, I believe, that many people think this thing isn't as bad as the media tell us. We've been hearing the same story for weeks. I switch the channel to *Soundscares* meditation music and write morning pages.

Is the virus a weapon developed in a Chinese lab? Paranoia runs totally counter to the curriculum of *A Course In Miracles* (ACIM) I've tried to follow for the past twenty years.

LO VE
Adore Honor
Respect & Cherish—
All-encompassing
Opposite-less
Journey
Unites
US

APRIL 24

SOCIAL DISTANCING

We're all in this together
but don't get close enough
to hug me or shake my hand

We'll get through this together
as long as you stay 6' away—
or better yet

Stay Home!

Today Governor Whitmer extended Michigan's stay-at-home order to May 15. It does lift a few restrictions—Ron's lawn guy will be able to finish the leaf removal job.

Things on the calendar that are still happening: Jennifer cleans the house every other Tuesday; trash and recycling is picked up on Fridays; I mail my health insurance payment on the twenty-fifth. We took a drive to Pinconning on Tuesday when Jennifer was here and I never got out of the vehicle. Drive-thru everything.

I made goulash for dinner last night, with American cheese melted on top like my mother used to make it. When was the last time I cooked goulash? It was a success; we'll have it again. Tonight we're sautéing marinated salmon fillets. We've been doing a lot of cooking together.

May 1

From ACIM Chapter 12: *Learn to be quiet in the midst of turmoil.*