

## AFTER FALLING THROUGH A CLOUD

I am now living with Alzheimers disease

It is inside me            It inhabits me

I did not choose it        I do not want it

I have lived with it for three plus years

But I defy it

It cannot break me

Try as it might

I will not be defined by my diagnosis

I will live every day at a time

I will keep on keeping on

It is not the end for me

Not while I can still play the flute

Not while I can see the flowers and run with

the dogs and love and be loved

Life is a sacred gift to be treasured

And I do treasure it

with all my heart

and soul

## MY CHOICE

I have abandoned self pity

It makes me feel shitty

I'd rather laugh myself to sleep

than stay awake agonizing over "why me?"

And whichever deity tries to tag me for a chump

will find himself with a lump on the coco

when he tries to interfere

With what I'm trying to do here

which is simply to stay strong

In body and mind Even though my mind and body

are compromised

None the less

I wish more than ever to

share whatever I can about trying every day

to feel well

and to dwell on the beauty

and gift of being

## ALIVE

## SOMETIMES WE PLAY A GAME TO JOLT MY BRAIN

My husband recently retired  
after many years of extraordinary work  
in broadcasting

and although we are in the midst of the

## DREADED CORONAVIRUS

which is terrifying the entire world  
we more than ever need relief from worry  
so sometimes we play a game in the car  
to help me remember things like names  
and places and foods and dudes  
for example – while driving my husband might ask me  
“Her name rhymes with polygraph”  
“Don’t make me laugh!” I try  
“Funny!” he praises. Then, “Our favorite chef?”  
I can’t remember, try try try...Yes! It comes to me...  
Francesco!”

“YES!”

And Dopey as that sounds

It makes me feel good

that I still have a mind

that can retain

and a brain

that is

not

yet

TOTALLY

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## MAYBE THE GAME ISN'T AS DOPEY AS WE THINK

If my husband and I enjoy it  
maybe other couples – or two good friends – can have fun with it

Each person should know the other very well

it's meant to be played with  
one person who has Alzheimers  
and one who does not  
(each with a good sense of humor)

First let's give a go to

naming the game

how about –

“TAKES TWO TO TANGLE”

OR

“DOUBLE YOUR TROUBLE”

And now we need some content ---

always useful!

Let's try this:

The asker might begin with, “Did we go out yesterday  
morning?”

I would probably have to think hard

rack my brain

and answer.....”Can’t remember.”

My husband would be patient and then give me a clue

such as

“You broke something.”

my mind would be blank

“Something yellow that can’t be fixed,” he prompts

I’m still stumped

“Think yellow,” he adds.....”It involves food.....”

So I think yellow and it pops into my head

“AN EGG!” I shout! Proud of myself

“Bravo” my mate applauds

And adds-----“YOU WILL BE REWARDED

WITH MY FABULOUS

EGGS

WITH

BACON !!”

## CARETAKER AND PATIENT

When it comes to dealing with Alzheimers disease

confusion is EVERYWHERE for the patient

but the caregiver has the ability to counter with

patience

enthusiasm

honesty

and best of all –

KINDNESS

As a patient myself I am blessed with a big and loving family who can make me laugh, encourage me, be tough when toughness is called for, and in my case I'm sure I can be a pain in the posterior.

So with that awareness, I try to co-operate in these ways:

I try to figure things out before asking a question

I attempt to keep a stiff upper lip when I feel slighted

in other words I try to act like a grownup

which at the age of

SEVENTY FREAKING FIVE I SHOULD CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO DO

## LOOK IT UP YOURSELF

My husband is amazingly patient with my questions

my endless interruptions

of whatever he is doing

to answer my needy annoying irritating queries

which range from “Have you seen my large gray tee shirt?”

to a more demanding --- “Where did you put my orange jacket?”

and even when I have misplaced something really important

such as--- MY PURSE WHICH HAS MONEY IN IT!

he will stop what he’s doing to help me find the object

without saying anything nasty or derogatory

Don’t get me wrong --- he’s no saint (witness his muddy boots

with which he tromps into the kitchen)

But he’s pretty high up in the BEST GUY category

and for that very reason

I’ve decided I should attempt to pull my oar harder

because there’s a limit to my endless questions

so from now on I will attempt to

look things up myself before asking for HELP!



## I WAKE UP CRANKY

.....but my mate hops out of bed

off to take a shower

ready for a day of his greatest delights –

WORKING OUTSIDE

with sunshine and dogs and horses

as for me I'm tired

I don't feel like practicing the flute

I take my laptop and sit at the kitchen table

open my computer

stare at the screen

but my brain seems to be on lockdown

and then something is rubbing at my leg

I look at the floor and there is LUCY my favorite dog

beaming at me with her bright eyes

head cocked

a come hither look as in "Let's go for a walk!"

and in a nanosecond I grab my jacket

and we rush outside for a lovely romp up the hill

## NEXT DAY – INSIDE AND TRYING TO ENJOY IT

We are now beginning  
phase two of the coronavirus  
lockdown

Just when we thought our period of self-quarantine

expired and we all thought

NOW WE CAN GO OUT

and take a walk in the sunshine!

But .....NOT SO FAST!

we are told it's another

MONTH OR MORE

before it will be safe to socialize .... if then...

WHAT TO DO????

I go up to my room

take out the flute

open the window

play the PANIC away

birds come to the tree branches by my window and

we create a little symphony to calm the angry gods

GRIM TOLL PROJECTED -- EVEN WITH DISTANCING  
WHAT TO DO?

Duck and cover?

Cry?

No!

I'm not a shrink or an oracle

But I'm trying to look at the up side of this downside

I call friends to ask how they are doing

Most have no good news to report

BUT

we are all in this nightmare together

so we need to help

one another

fear is an enemy

we must stay calm

for our families and kids

and we need to remember that

the flipside of terror is

possibility and concern

and

**HOPE !**

## SUNSHINE BLUE SKIES ABOVE

One would never suspect that this gorgeous day is laced with

angst and deep concern

for ourselves and our families

SHELTER IN PLACE

seems to be what we're asked to do

but in this farm area we're free to walk outdoors

alone

or in the sunshine with someone

(as long as we are six feet apart)

Ours is a small and grassroots community

and we look out for each other

there is innovation everywhere

but despite the worry

people are making music

online festivals are popping up

farmers are plowing and planting

sharing resources and ideas

and we know together we will prevail

CHILLY BREEZY

GRAY SKIES ABOVE

and gray thoughts on the ground

the papers say:

“Worldwide recovery could take years”

that doesn't help us quell our fears

but what can we do? Pull the blankets over our heads?

that's not an option

not for most of us

not for the animals whom we can't blame

which brings me to Lucy

Shelter animal   adorable   smart and cunning

not only sweet but so loving   probably about 15 years old

we noticed she had gotten skinny

and at the vet, it was the worst words to hear

CANCER   ----   INOPERABLE

she's fading daily   but sometimes up and spunky

my love for her is so great and her loss will be so deep

I hold her in my lap, stroke her head, listen to her breathe

she amazes with her composure, her gentle sighs

there will be much to learn from her noble goodbye

## SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Daffodils on the hillside

rippling stream

Forsythia

Emerald green grass

blue blue sky

and yet this perfect day

yields to a dark and troublesome night

during which I fight not to

pull the blankets over my head

I search a way to say something soothing

not to myself – but to my children and grands

and then I recall ducking under my chair in first grade

hands over heads

the Russians wanted to kill us all !!!

we were expecting the worst

and yet the drills taught us this -- be prepared to be scared ----

but remember that those who have had to stand up to terror

more often than not found a strength

they never imagined they possessed

## FORSYTHIA

Overnight

they appeared

like burning bushes

on the hills

in front of the barn

behind the house

perfect golden blossoms

balanced on the boughs, bobbing in the wind

we count on them

to announce a season of beauty and

JOY

a time for digging and planting

watching the magic of growth

And although I can feel danger everywhere

I will not close my eyes

I will bask in the glory that abounds

I will not close my eyes    do not close yours

and most of all

refuse to be afraid

## GRANDDAUGHTERS

one is six years old the other is eight  
they live far away from us and  
school is shut because of the coronavirus  
but they do school work at home with their parents  
and with their teachers via ZOOM  
a video conferencing tool.  
I chat with my grand girls on the phone and they  
attempt to teach me how to use it  
“It’s easy,” says one. “But it depends if you’re  
going to use ZOOM controls,” says one “Or,” says  
the other, “Do you want to use it for textview in android.”  
I’m silent, wondering what language they’re speaking.  
GrammE? one asks.  
I’m gobstopped. I clear my throat. “Well that sounds like fun,”  
say I for lack of any cogent answer  
The girls save me with “Gotta go! By GrammE. BYE!!!”  
“Bye!” say I, adding a pensive “Love you!” but they are racing off,  
eager to get to virtual play dates that will take the place of hanging out



MONDAY APRIL 6 2020

Today marks the day, so they say, that this  
is the most dangerous moment in our part of the woods  
for a virulent uptick in getting sick!  
and yet the sun shines, and the dogs run  
and the horses bask in the sun  
and hikers walk on the trails and paths  
six feet apart of course  
calling out to each other in lieu of gentle discourse  
I sense that my beloved dog Lucy is up for a walk  
but probably a short one  
given that her energy is limited ---  
yet once outside she looks up  
lifts a leg at the base of a tree  
then tears off up the hill like a young pup  
cocks her head and seems to smile at me as if to say  
NOT YET -- MY NUMBER'S NOT UP !!!!!

## PASSOVER

Scattered

from the West Coast to Tel Aviv

We assembled REMOTELY

VIA THE MAGIC OF

ZOOM !!

our mixed families of more than twenty something  
gawking into our computers as faces popped up

on our screens

and squeals of “There’s Johnny!” “Who’s that?”

“Oh my god you’re so grown up!”

Such fun! Much laughter!

and when we settled into an attempt to read

The Four Questions (God’s supposed request to tell the

Story over and over for future generations, lest we forget)

The little ones took their turns

and were applauded by the listeners and hopefully, because it

has never been more needed, by the BIG GUY IN THE SKY!

## RAINY DAY

Three dogs in beds

Three dogs asleep

Raindrops tapping at the windows

While my husband and I sit at the table

reading the newspapers

which surprisingly is looking

A BIT BETTER

There are flickers of optimism

talk of some kind of vaccine for the coronavirus

Let's be cautious before celebration

Yet I've put my raincoat on

and I'm singing in rain

climbing the hill to gaze at the daffodils then looking up

because to look down is to miss the beauty and promise

of clearing clouds

and sunshine      close behind!

**YOU PRAYED FOR A LOVELY DAY-----  
TOO BAD!**

So here are tips for staying positive on a rainy day --

First of all, avoid looking in the mirror

(your hair will scare you and don't touch the scissors

that are balanced on the windowsill)

Get into the shower and pretend you are in Hawaii

under a waterfall

gazing at the lush flora and fauna

TEMPERATURE IS

PERFECT

Close your eyes and imagine you have all the time in

the world to bask and splash -----

attempt to say a prayer to the sky spirits

although nothing comes to mind

OK so just stand there

just stand

Then slowly open your eyes and when you see

the large spider                      on your arm

scream and run and you will have lost five pounds without even trying

**ARE YOU KIDDING ME??**

It's the tenth of April

and what's that all over the lawn?

Not again!

But yes!

unfortunate yet true

**SNOW!!!!**

The dogs seem delighted

they're having a ball

Rolling in it

skidding down the driveway

chasing whatever small creatures

cross their paths

and by afternoon when the snow is gone and the SUN

bestows its golden light on our lovely landscape

I apologize for maligning this marvelous magnanimous

**GIFT**

## MORE THAN A LITTLE BREEZE

High winds

Temps in the sixties    warnings abound

go outside at your own risk

or

stay in bed with the book

you've been attempting to read for a month

husband is out

dogs are under the table

warnings are all over the news

what to do?

Lights are flickering

and I'm alone here with the pups

our basement is a spider's paradise

not to mention other assorted muck down there

am I scared?

you betcha!

But when my man returns I'll pretend

I didn't worry a bit not for a nano second  
when in fact I'm trying to decide which room in the house  
will be the safest to huddle in  
on the other hand, I'm amazed at the bending twisting trees –

NATURE

IN ITS

**FURY**

HAS

AN

AWESOME

**BEAUTY**

OF

ITS

OWN

## CARETAKER AND PATIENT

When it comes to dealing with Alzheimers Disease

confusion is everywhere for the patient

but the caregiver has the ability to counter with

PATIENCE

ENTHUSIASM

HONESTY

AND BEST OF ALL ---

**KINDNESS**

As a patient myself I am blessed with a big and loving family who

can make me laugh, encourage me, be tough when toughness

is called for. And in my case, I'm sure I can be a pain in the posterior.

So with that awareness, I try to co-operate in these ways:

I try to figure things out before asking a question

I attempt to keep a stiff upper lip when I feel slighted

In other words I try to act like a grown-up

which at the age of

SEVENTY FREAKING FIVE

I should certainly be able to do



## LOOK IT UP YOURSELF

My husband is amazingly patient with my questions

My endless interruptions

of whatever he is doing

to answer my needy annoying irritating queries --

which range from "Have you seen my large Gray Tee Shirt?"

to a more demanding ...."Where did you put my orange jacket!?"

And even when I have misplaced something really important

such as **MY PURSE WHICH HAS MONEY IN IT**  
he will always

stop to help me find the object

without saying anything nasty or derogatory

But don't get me wrong --- HE'S NO SAINT ( witness his muddy boots with

which he tromps into the kitchen)

BUT HE'S PRETTY HIGH UP IN THE **BEST GUY** CATEGORY

and for that very reason

I've decided I should attempt to pull my oar harder

because there's a limit to my endless question

so from now on I will attempt to

Look things up myself before asking for HELP!

## I WAKE UP CRANKY

My mate wakes up happy, off to take a shower

Ready for a day of his greatest delights

WORKING OUTSIDE

With sunshine and dogs and horses

As for me, I'm tired

I don't feel like practicing the flute

I take my laptop and sit at the kitchen

open my computer

stare at the screen

But my brain seems to be in lockdown

and then something is rubbing at my leg

I look down and there's my Lucy my favorite dog

looking at me with her bright eyes

head cocked

A come hither look as in "LET'S GO FOR A WALK!"

And in a nano second I grab her leash

And we rush outside

FOR A LOVELY

ROMP UP THE HILL

**NEXT DAY ---INSIDE AND TRYING TO ENJOY IT**

We are now beginning

phase two of the coronavirus

LOCKDOWN

Just when we thought our period of

SELF QUARANTINE

EXPIRED AND WE ALL THOUGHT

**NOW WE CAN GO OUT**

**AND TAKE A WALK IN THE SUNSHINE!**

BUT ..... NOT SO FAST

we are told it is another

**MONTH OR MORE**

BEFORE IT WILL BE SAFE TO SOCIALIZE...IF THEN

**WHAT TO DO?????**

I GO UP TO MY ROOM

TAKE OUT THE FLUTE

OPEN MY WINDOW

PLAY THE PANIC AWAY

BIRDS COME TO THE TREE BRANCHES BY MY WINDOW

We create a little symphony

SENDING OUT SOUNDS to calm the angry gods

**GRIM TOLL PROJECTED – EVEN WITH DISTANCING  
WHAT TO DO????**

DUCK AND COVER?

CRY?

NO !

I'M NOT A SHRINK OR AN ORACLE

**BUT I'M TRYING TO LOOK AT THE UP SIDE OF THIS DOWNSIDE**

I call friends to ask how they are doing

Most have no good news to report

BUT

We are all in this nightmare together

So we need to help

one another

fear is an enemy

WE MUST STAY CALM

AND STAY STRONG FOR OUR FAMILIES AND KIDS

AND WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT

THE FLIP SIDE OF FEAR

IS

POSSIBILITY AND

**HOPE**

## SUNSHINE BLUE SKIES ABOVE

One would never suspect that this gorgeous day is laced with

angst and deep concern

for ourselves and our families

shelter in place seems to be what we're asked to do

but in this farm area we're free

to walk outdoors

alone or in the sunshine with someone

(AS LONG AS WE ARE SIX FEET APART)

I'm walking with my musician daughter Natalia who lives nearby

discussing how surreal our situation seems

AND I PRAISE HER FOR HAVING STARTED A MUSIC FESTIVAL CALLED

### SHUT IN & SING

AS NATALIA SAYS:

“Ours is a small and grassroots community. We take care of each

other in the good times and in the challenging times.

The online concert world is about to explode with innovation.

It's a chance to discover new music, and even one

new person listening makes a difference!”

CHILLY BREEZY      GRAY SKIES ABOVE

And gray thoughts on the ground

THE PAPERS SAY:

“WORLDWIDE RECOVERY COULD TAKE YEARS”

That doesn't help us quell our fears

BUT

WHAT CAN WE DO? PULL THE BLANKETS OVER OUR HEADS?

That's not an option                      Not for most of us

Not for the animals whom we can't blame

which brings me to LUCY

Shelter animal      adorable      smart and cunning

not only sweet but also loving

Probably about 15 years old

we noticed she had gotten skinny

And at the vet, it was the worst news to get ---

CANCER      ----- INOPERABLE

She's fading daily      but sometimes up and spunky

My love for her is so great and her loss will be so deep

Holding her in my lap, I stroke her head, and listen to her breathe...

She amazes with her composure, Her sweet gentle sighs

There will be much to be learned from her noble goodbye

## SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Daffodils on the hillside

Rippling

Forsythia

Emerald green grass

blue

blue

sky

And yet this lovely sky

Yields to a dark and troublesome night

in which I fight not to pull the blankets over my head

I search a way to say something

Not to myself

But to my children and grands

And then I recall ducking under my chair in first grade

HANDS OVER HEADS

The Russians wanted to kill us all !!

We were expecting the worst

But the drills prepared us not to be afraid

and to remember that those who have had to stand up to

Terror more often than not find a strength

They never imagined they possessed

## FORSYTHIA

### OVERNIGHT

They appeared Like burning bushes

on the hills

in front of the barn

Behind the house

Perfect golden blossoms

Balanced on the boughs, bobbing in the wind

We count on them

to announce a season of beauty and

### JOY

A time for digging and planting

watching the magic

of growth

And although I can feel danger everywhere

I will not close my eyes

I will bask in the glory that abounds

I will not close my eyes          I can not close my eyes

DO NOT CLOSE YOURS



## GRANDDAUGHTERS

One is SIX years old. The other is eight

They live far away from us and

SCHOOL IS SHUT BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS

But they do school work at home with their Mom

and with their teachers with ZOOM,

A VIDEO CONFERENCING TOOL.

I chat with my grand girls on the phone and they

attempt to explain how to use it.

“It’s easy,” one says. “But it depends if you’re  
going to use ZOOM controls,” says the other.

“OR,” offers the older. “Do you want to use it  
for Textview in Android?”

I’m silent, wondering what language they’re speaking.

“GrammE?” one asks

I’m gobstopped. I clear my throat. “Well that sounds like fun,”  
say I for lack of any cogent answer.

The girls save me with “GOTTA GO, GRAMME, BYE!”

“BYE!” I say, adding a pensive, “Love you!”

But they are already racing off, eager to get to virtual play dates  
that will take the place of hanging out.....

MONDAY APRIL 6 2020

Today marks the day, so they say

that is the most dangerous moment

In our part of the woods

for a virulent uptick in getting sick

And yet the sun shines, and the dogs run

and the horses prance

And hikers walk on the trails and paths six feet apart of course

calling out to each other in lieu of gentle discourse.

I sense that my beloved dog Lucy is up for a walk

but probably a short one

given that her energy is limited

Yet once outside she looks up

Lifts a leg at the base of a tree

Then tears off up the hill like a young pup

I'm so happy to watch her romp and roll in the grass

She's acting like a spunky young pup

Cocks her head and seems to smile at me as if to say

NOT YET

MY NUMBER'S NOT UP!

## PASSOVER

Scattered

from the west coast

to Tel Aviv

WE ASSEMBLED

REMOTELY

VIA THE MAGIC OF

ZOOM !!

Our mixed families of more than twenty  
gawking into our computers as faces popped up

On our screens

and squeals of

“Who’s that?”

“Oh my god! You’re so grown up!”

Such fun! Much laughter!

And when we settled into an attempt to read

the

four questions:

(GOD'S SUPPOSED REQUEST TO TELL THE

Passover STORY OVER AND OVER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

LEST WE FORGET)

The little ones took their turns reading the blessings

And were applauded by the listeners

And hopefully

because it has never been more needed

we all prayed to be blessed

BY

THE

BIG SPIRIT

IN

THE SKY

## RAINY DAY

three dog beds

Three dogs asleep

Rain drops tapping at the windows

While husband and I sit at the table

Reading the news

Which surprisingly is looking

A bit better

There are flickers of optimism

Talk of various kinds of vaccines

Let's be cautious before celebration

Yet I've put my raincoat on

and I'm singing in the rain

Climbing the hill to gaze at the daffodils

Then looking up because to look down is to miss the

beauty

and promise of clearing clouds

and sunshine close behind

YOU PRAYED FOR A LOVELY DAY

TOO BAD

SO HERE ARE  
TIPS FOR STAYING POSITIVE ON A RAINY DAY

First of all, avoid looking in the mirror

(Your hair will scare you )

Pretend you are under a waterfall

gazing at the lush flora and

temperature is

PERFECT

Close your eyes and pretend

you have all the time in the world to

bask and splash

Attempt to say a prayer to the sky spirits

Although nothing comes to mind

so just stand there just stand

then slowly open your eyes and when you see the

large spider on your arm SCREAM and run

and you will have lost five pounds without even trying

ARE YOU KIDDING ME??

It's the tenth of April

And what's that all over the lawn?

Not again!

But yes!

Unfortunate yet true

The dogs seem delighted

They're having a ball

rolling in it

skidding down the driveway

chasing whatever small creatures

cross their paths

And by afternoon

When the snow is gone and the sun

bestows its golden light on our lovely landscape

I apologize for maligning

This      Marvelous

Magnanimous

gift

## MORE THAN A LITTLE BREEZE

High winds

Temps in the sixties    warnings abound

Go outside at your own risk

Stay in bed with the book

You've been attempting to read for a month

Husband is out

Dogs are under the table

news warnings are all over the news

what to do?

and I'm alone here with the pups

our basement is a spider's paradise

not to mention other assorted muck down there

am I scared            you betcha

on the other hand I'm amazed at the bending

twisting swaying of the trees ----

Nature in its fury has an awesome beauty of its own



## ATTEMPTS TO REMEMBER

Sometimes I forget that I have Alzheimers

But more often I remember

Since forgetting is the prompt

That makes me feel inadequate

and angry at myself

I tell myself to lighten up

and I work hard at finding words and expressions

I keep lists of phrases and ideas

Sometimes when I forget, I forgive myself

and other times I'm an adept self punisher

most of the time I manage to sound cogent

Note the smart word I have bunches of them

but I rarely remember to use them

I'm pretty good at remembering names...for a few minutes

Such as trying with a rhyme to name a flower

as in – Daffodil – Rhymes with You're-a - pill

I tell myself that forgetting isn't the opposite of

remembering-- It's a daily challenge

that keeps me struggling but hoping, always hoping...

## HOW CAN WE SAY GOODBYE?

I called her My Lucy but the family all adored her  
this bright adorable sweet dog  
a griffon mix  
of black and white, rescued in Idaho  
brought to us only two years ago  
and what a spirit. what energy, what charm and ability—  
At night slept in the house with two other dogs  
and in the day cavorted in an enclosure with our other pups.  
Lucy could leap like Barishnikov over the highest fence  
and leave us frantic, worried, vexed and then turn up unscathed  
her bright eyes twinkling, looking for more adventure  
more loving, more caressing, more more more.....  
and then the tumor appeared, and within a few months  
the mass in her abdomen invaded her until she could  
hardly move. We held her and whispered to her and tried to  
comfort her, but it was ourselves we needed to soothe.

**LIVE EVERY DAY WITH ENERGY AND HOPE**

Given a frightening diagnosis it's important to fight being  
upset and silent and self-derogatory

ERGO

I hereby swear to get over myself

There's still time to be productive

AND

to find a way to enjoy every day

The media is giving good coverage to recognizing  
the research that's hurtling ahead

at warp speed

SO

take heart be positive get off your duff

sit at the piano and tinkle the ivories

learn a second language get out of bed and bend those knees

walk fast reject negativity

be creative remain diligent

live with positivity

## EASY TO SAY

I woke up with a tremendous sense of dread  
and I don't know why or what to do  
I'm mourning the death of my dog, it's true  
and her passing leaves me bereft and blue

I pride myself with getting up fast when  
knocked to my knees  
but this is different, this is dark and painful  
like stings from a swarm of bees

I won't hear her paws tapping on the floor  
or feel her soft fur as she rubs against my leg  
or race up the hill with her.....come back, I beg!

My Lucy, my love

she's left too soon  
it just isn't fair

if there is a dog heaven  
I hope to meet you up there

MOTHER'S DAY MAY TENTH

ZUKERPALOOZA!  
SHUT IN AND SING

A time to celebrate – an online festival to stay connected

this is how it happened

NATALIA ZUKERMAN'S IDEA.....as she said:

This Sunday, Mother's Day, please join me and my family for the last Shut In & Sing! This will be the first (and maybe last) time we're all playing in the same place. Ok, so it's not really the same place but it'll have to do for now. I was the very first performer on this online festival and 176 performers and 38 shows later, I'm honored to be the last. Get your tickets here...

So yes! Natalia Zukerman, her father Pinchas and his wife

Amanda, and Arianna Zukerman.....and me ----- we put on an

online show and we helped raise a lot of money for charity

most of which went to the International Rescue Committee

At this time of dread and worry

it felt so good

to hear and make music-----

The sounds of Bach and Co.

made our hearts glow

and to share the sounds with avid listeners

added to an afternoon

to truly remember

## SKIP TO MAY 19 AND A NIGHT TO TREASURE

To Boston via ZOOM to Massachusetts General Hospital

and I'm not the least bit ill

in fact I'm in the comfort of our living room in Upstate NY

where I've been invited to play my flute, read from my book

and answer questions from an audience of more than

ONE HUNDRED SIXTY

and best of all, I will be sharing the program with my great friend

the incomparable cellist

Yo-Yo Ma --- who has been my close pal for many years

AM I NERVOUS?

YOU BETCHA

But when it was my turn to talk and play, I forgot fear

and enjoyed every minute of the event.....the performance

and the reading of poetry from my book

and the Q and A from the audience

and the questions that were asked

were smart and caring

and I felt at home...the which I was and the evening ended with me

learning much from others which makes me happy as can be

## READING

We're in bed. My spouse is happily reading a book

I'm beside him, trying to read too

but I can't say I'm actually reading mine

I've flipped a few pages but I can't seem to focus

nor can I follow the story, the characters, who they are,  
how they are related, what they want, or why they are  
doing what they seem to be doing.....

I used to devour books with ease

it was a great nighttime pleasure

(accompanied with that even greater nighttime pleasure)

but now I feign fatigue before I'm even tired

and I'll grab a magazine and flip through the pages

as if absorbed with something fascinating and important

I do try to follow the story, but I find myself nodding off

and feeling fraudulent, and, worse ---dumb as a doorknob

## HOW COME I CAN WRITE IF I CAN'T READ?

Maybe the operative word is not "can't."

what if it's "won't"?

what if it's simple laziness that's making me  
not want to dig into a sentence, read it to its end  
and comprehend its meaning ?

My eyeballs seem to work well but perhaps

they are just too tired to try hard enough  
or what if I'm simply so self-involved that I imagine

I can tell the story better  
and if so that makes me take a sharp turn and attempt  
to tell it better until I realize I don't like how it's told  
and worse I'm starting to feel like a twisted narcissist

ergo I will cease

and

desist



## I'LL CALL IT THE POETRY OF AGING

I woke up from a dream

feeling great

remembering a poem I penned

about fate

which let words sing and converge

and explode against each other

in the outer space of thought

when young ideas would glide and slide

and collide between my ears

leaping faster than rabbits in my head

where magic tricks

of verse hopped onto the page

flowing and glowing

without my fretting or forgetting

and then I woke up and wrote it all down

and read it with joy --- not even a frown

HERE'S THE LESSON TO BE LEARNED

What's the point of beating myself up?

at seventy- five I'm still alive

and happy, mostly healthy, still having fun

I can read and make music and still write

I enjoy the delight

of time with my man

and visits with friends

romps with the animals and hikes through the hills

I now pledge when I get stuck with things I'd

like to improve I'll send myself a silent letter

HELLO ME:

maybe you could have done this better

but you've worked hard so cut yourself some slack

kick back take a nap

write a poem if you remember how and if not

it does not matter diddly squat

SUDDENLY.... IT'S SUMMERTIME.....

....and the livin' is easy

or should be.

The fish around here ain't jumpin'

yet I bet it will turn hot faster than

an egg sizzles in the pan

and no one planned we'd be wet with sweat

hence needing a change of clothes every half hour

Thus it has been these last few months ---

one day wicked cold rain, next ---hot and muggy

and what to wear? --- not that it matters

since

nothing flatters after weeks of covid face-stuffing

caused by nervous over-eating

hence the puffing

and to worry about it marks me as a self-absorbed

EGOTIST

## ANGER CONVULSES THE U.S. OF A

It's been troubling for weeks

bubbling for months

and it has now exploded across the country

with marches and protests

police violence

gunshots

tear gas and pepper spray

A vicious fury like a poisonous virus

has spread across our country

danger seems to be everywhere

people seethe with bitterness

and fear and worry

how will this end?

will the streets

flow with blood?

A TROUBLED JUNE WITH  
SUBSTANTIAL VIOLENCE

We are told .....

by the government, the military, the press

to stay in place

the death of George Floyd has unleashed the kind of  
fury that has mobilized angry mobs that will cause havoc

and

to

create

positive change

we need to pay attention

to the roots of this unrest

it is a dangerous moment

and some say it could

lead to

substantial violence

But I will get into bed tonight

hoping for positive change

instead

## JUNE ELEVENTH

Half-way through the month

and much has happened

Endless protest and anger's still brewing

Across the county

fury and vitriol

is stewing

Dissent is being treated with contempt

and to control the masses

the cops are using guns and gasses

Our leaders can't seem to

calm the masses

We the people tried peaceful protest

only to be met with violence

from those who are meant to keep us safe

There must be a way to stop this insanity

before it becomes a tragic calamity

## JUNETEENTH

It's a festival held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June by African Americans  
to commemorate the emancipation from Slavery in Texas  
on that day in 1865

I am ashamed to have just now learned about this

How could I not have known?

Given all of the anger and malice and fear  
we are experiencing across the country right now  
this seemingly little known date makes me want to berate  
my lack of education

why was this never taught when I was a kid?

The answer lies in a pernicious silence  
and that is why, more than ever, it's important  
to celebrate JUNETEENTH loudly and proudly  
and to remind ourselves that was THEN and this is NOW  
and it's never too late to learn

and to celebrate the truth

## COVID-19 CONTINUES

Anyone who thinks it's over and safe

is living in never-never land

as in THIS WON'T HAPPEN TO US

But so far my husband and I have been able

to stay healthy with

a simple routine --

Get up early

feed the dogs and horses

take a morning hike

work in the garden

Open the window

play flute duets with a bird

then read the paper

but don't dwell on the bad stuff

give thanks, be strong

and stay tough



## SOMETHING THERE IS THAT LOVES A FENCE

Especially when you have never painted one before

It's a split rail fence

for which

We brought out the buckets, the brushes, the

gleaming white paint

and set out to apply it all on

without making a mess

I was shown

how to start from top to bottom --

turn the brush sideways when applying

on the narrow tops

don't slop it on but rather

use large wide strokes on the long wooden sides....

And I didn't want to stop because there is

something that loves a fence.....especially when

applying the paint with my mate -it's simply great

## THE IMMORTAL ESTHER WILLIAMS

We love our swimming pool  
Not just because it keeps us cool on a hot summer day  
but because this pool has a history ---  
built some 30 years back  
and just for fun, on one hot summer day  
while we were lolling in that pool  
we remembered something called  
“synchronized swimming”  
and the queen of that genre ---  
ESTHER WILLIAMS !!  
We wondered  
how many kids have enjoyed a dip  
in OUR ESTHER’S inviting arms  
so in her honor  
for all the many summers she’s helped kids  
learn the strokes and the tricks

she's kept us all afloat  
sometimes with a rubber boat  
sometimes just lolling on our backs  
or staring up  
into the blue

B

L

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E

SKY

We thank Esther  
without whom we'd fester  
as we jump happily  
into  
Ms. William's  
perfect  
pond

DO I LOOK FAT?

OK so I'm vain

Pre-covid

I had been maintaining my

desired weight

But then with all the angst

and worry

I'd often scurry to the fridge

just for a pick-me-up

which has now become a pig-me-up

At first I found that a bunch of grapes

was more than enough to keep me sated

for a mid-morning snack,

but then I realized I'd become addicted to

watching for the clock to hurry up to twelve

whence I felt it was safe to just take a peek without shoveling

something into my gaping maw.

I've tried hiking up the hill behind our farm

in the early brights

with an adored pup

when it's cool and comfortable...

until we'd all been warned

that bears are lurking

which worked

until I

remembered my husband's first rule of the woods ---

NEVER RUN

DOWNHILL

WITH

A

BARE

BEHIND

I WRITE THIS ON A CALM IF HOT AND DRY SATURDAY  
JULY 25, 2020

Here in upstate New York

I consider myself so lucky and truly blessed –

Yes, we badly need rain

yes we worry about wells drying

and crops dying

Yes the heat is wicked and shows no sign of abating

and YES I still have a disease that will kill me

sooner than I wish and well before I'm ready

and I'll never be ready

NEVER! EVER!

but I accept my fate

I will try to disappear gracefully

perhaps on a lovely morning with my family beside me

with birds chirping

and horses prancing

and dogs racing through the fields

across the stream and running up the hill and sending  
me off with joyful sounds and somehow

I will smile

and wave back

I will wave back

I WILL ALWAYS

WAVE BACK !







