

# Three Poems by Kathleen Cook

## dear tomorrow

Dear Tomorrow, are you there?  
On your way? Just over that hill?  
Receded: promises of trips,  
Cancelled: extended visits with kin.  
Unknown: simple anticipation of a  
restaurant meal. Missing.  
I can't see you, imagine you.

Yesterday, would you step back a bit?  
All you were blinds me now with  
unbidden tears. Abandoned schoolyard,  
Shuttered storefronts, empty playgrounds.  
Yesterday, such a swift portal into fears  
known before only In collective bones:  
1918, 1950, inundating waves of terrible  
illness. Do not let me stop in shadows.

I set out to seek you in flower. In creature.  
Jasmine, oleander, homely toad stop me  
on my way. The shrub known as Yesterday,  
Today, and Tomorrow bears simultaneous  
blossoms of purple, violet and white.  
From one day to the next the petals change  
in glorious show. I beg to rest in the light.

Tomorrow, let your promise be known to us.

## A Quiet Day at Home

*Did you hear that?*

What? I didn't hear it.

Just the clock ticking.

The hour passing.

Your skin sloughing.

A kind of sh, ch, and then

aluhwuh.

*No, no, I didn't mean that.*

Maybe it's coming

from the wall. Look,

they're clearly cracking.

The foundation's skirting.

They're taking the water

from the ground. Fracking

it's called, accurate name,

what our poor walls

sound like, Fraaaaaack.

*I think you need your hearing*

*checked. It's alive,*

*plain as day.*

Well, sure, the earth's shifting.

She can't sit all those hours

without squirming a little.

And the movers and shakers

have to scramble some,

just to sit upright, catch-can,

catch-can, catch-can.

*What?*

Sometimes you can listen

to your Self, notice you're

coming a little unfrayed,

the whole cloth

unraveling.

## Quite a Read

*What are you reading?*

Novel Coronavirus, can't put it down.  
Everyone's reading it, gripping.  
New chapter daily, constant plot twist.

*Can you clarify, identify?*

No-vel Coro-na-vi-rus. Yes some just say the coronavirus, others COVID 19.  
The hip just call it Rona.

*Who's the author?*

Author unknown, but ethnicity widely rumored by xenophobes, sinophobes, phobicphobes, perhaps funded by Dolphins for Clean Venetian Canals.

*So tell me the plot.*

Well, there's this evil and seems at first only fells the old and just the unfirm-old, so big deal but turns out it's not so selective and when it causes businesses to close and markets to crash, whoo-ee boy!

*Where does it happen, the setting, I mean?*

Just everywhere but that's not clear early on, turn another page and it's all over the place, from Turin to Timbuktu and Tallahassee.

*When and how does it end?*

Well no spoiler alert needed cause nobody the heck knows. New episodes daily like the ones that came via ship in Victorian times. Dickensian this, but moment by moment in unreal time.

*What's your favorite part?*

I love the nurses, the docs, the grocery store workers, Dr. Gucci, the Marx brothers, the artists. Not so crazy about the length of the novel. Most writers don't know when to quit.

*Earlier you mentioned the evil. Does it have a face or name?*

Looked like a soccer ball with protrusions, first red, but now sometimes green. Pretty in a way, seen at a distance. New age Christmas ornament.

Sometimes the evil appears as agents that look like doofuses with AR-15s. Sometimes looks like the politicians who gave unneeded assistance to the rich. Poor people just go to Dickens.

*In this novel, who's going to save the day?*

Well, not the dear leader who advises the peons to inject bleach. Not the ones who preach come on in here, God will take care of us.

Maybe it'll be the worker bees, maybe those who stay home reading, the scientists most likely, but really the ending is not in sight.