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Stuck At Home

John Grey

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John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in *Orbis*, *Dalhousie Review*, and *Connecticut River Review*. John's latest book, *Leaves on Pages*, is available through Amazon.

Stuck At Home

One

Home is God.

These walls, floor and ceilings are America's soul.

And God says, via his agents here on Earth,

that I am at the precipice

so stay back.

For some virus has put together a war machine

that could be from a lab

or a bat,

or that same God because,

according to his televangelist disciples,

he hates homosexuals.

So if I have to be here, cocooned inside God,

I'd best start working on a Bible.

The book of Covid-19.

The book of Trump.

The book of Pence.

The book of Fox News.

And how the new Ten Commandments

was written on the brim of a MAGA hat.

Make America god-fearing again.

Huddled in our homes,
fear, fear and fear some more.

If only I had a gun.

I'd line up that virus in a rifle's sights
and blast it right between the eyes.

That's how they did it when
the country was young.
During the Revolution.
In the Civil War.

My neighbor
hung a noose
from a beam in his garage.

But he didn't go through with suicide.

He's not well
but he doesn't want to die
before he gets to eat at his favorite restaurant
one more time.

And who knows when that will happen.

Two

I envy the birds.

They don't live long enough
to die of something new.

Even the rabbits –

they look at me as if

I'm the worst thing that could happen.

They don't realize that we giants
have our own hawks and bobcats
to be concerned about.

They hide inside droplets in the air,
can strike at any time.

When you're invisible,
size is no matter.

I've seen every movie twice.

I've read the same books over and over.

My days are reruns.

The true groundhog slips into nursing homes
at night,
condemns the inmates
to an eternity of winter.

The survivors will forever see his shadow.

Some day it will all be over, so I'm told.

God will die,
his dominions collapse,
followers dissipate.

I will walk out into the world
and rediscover its magic.
Yes, that means you,
bookstores.

No one will do a Lazarus on my banking account.

But other people will look less like the enemy.

My mask can come off.

The cloth one that is.

All others will remain.

(My parents, in heaven, are missing all this.

Maybe they look down

through some kind of telescope.

Maybe they're the voices I hear.)

Three

Somebody's on tv,

declaring that they've made a complete recovery,

survived a trial by lung.

They're now free to breathe in

all those chemicals that will

ultimately kill them.

(No matter how I die,

I anticipate a tremendous path,

a billowing flow.

the power that was the heart

given over to the spirit.

In the meantime,

I could really use a week at the beach.)

The phone rings.

It's someone I haven't seen in months.

“How are you doing?” asks the voice
on the other end.

“Surviving,” I reply.

Even if I wasn’t quarantined,
I doubt I would have got together
with them anyhow.

And they would not have phoned.

So the virus has a flag I can fly
now that I am a country.

A phone call.

I open a window and it blows in the wind.