



The Pandemic Did Not Go As Planned

We had expectations. Chaos, blood coughs, gas  
masks at dinner parties. We were prepared

for a cinematic finale.

Priests told a story to us—

fire-rain, earthquakes. Unbearable light.

Every morning I took a walk in streets,

still like the middle

of the night, on the yellow stripe.

Part of me wanted sirens, volcanoes.

Part of me wanted to ride my bike to Canada,

but that was not our kind of revelation.

Ours was a waiting-out.

The rivers did not fill with blood

so we had to ease the narrative.

What we did not envision was the flood  
of art and song, the music unending.

The body of the world suddenly  
thrown open.

The principal clarinetist in his living room  
playing America the Beautiful in its parallel minor

his lips paradoxically tight  
but soft around the reed, pressing

his breath, the same air we all own,  
pressing his breath through tremolo

into signal, which rode from machine to machine,  
until that rapture song found me, first

weeping in my own kitchen,  
then, quiet.

— Lynne Ellis

*Drawing by Felicia Rice. Designed at Moving Parts Press  
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