

Spring in the year of coronavirus

by [Diane G. Scholl](#) in the [May 20, 2020](#) issue

We didn't remember that shade
of green, almost translucent, rousing
the distant hills for another try.
Or the pale trillium and hepatica
emerging from underneath
dry leaves, plastic bags, and beer cans,
woods keeping their tender secrets.

We didn't remember the smell of rain
on the thawing ground, the softness
of its fall, or the sound of rushing
water once the ice had gone, laughter
heard from an open window.

When plague came to Derbyshire,
the village of Eyam hunkered down
for the long haul, steeping pots
of vinegar: the poor dead tailor
with his London patterns; the vicar's
once haughty wife; the woman in
fever who drank a pitcher of bacon
fat to quench her thirst. Day after
day they cared for their own,
took the adder to their bosom,
watched grave mounds rise,
and tried to recall the names.

Recalled too the grazing sheep
in sun and shadow, those woolly
clouds, forsythia spines and slender
willows by the brook. When they
remembered, they saw how the world

was once, but different, as through
a kaleidoscope, a magic lens that
rendered everything, earth, air,
water—even the fires of old growth
on the moor—strangely beautiful
as a loved face after an absence
so long they had almost forgotten.