

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.