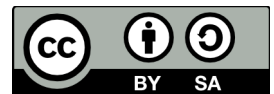


Rachel West
30 Poems
April 2020
Quarantine Edition



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

Table Of Contents

1 April 2020	"My body is an airline diagram."	
2 April 2020	"We will emerge"	
3 April 2020	"Took a break from working,"	
4 April 2020	"the best thing right now"	
5 April 2020	"It's very Victorian how I sit all day"	
6 April 2020	"Like a hermit crab entering a new shell,"	
7 April 2020	"Onions in a big jar"	
8 April 2020	"I can't give up and I don't have time"	
9 April 2020	"I wrap myself in a blanket,"	
10 April 2020	"Bird like ink on grey"	
11 April 2020	"My back hurts. I feel bad about my own pain"	
12 April 2020	"To my west-facing window"	(Easter Sunday)
13 April 2020	"I am all notifications."	
14 April 2020	"Oh. How I long to share"	
15 April 2020	"I listen to drones and dream"	
16 April 2020	"I curl up like a seed pod"	
17 April 2020	"The world is a sticky mess, but don't worry."	(Mom's Birthday)
18 April 2020	"bird noises"	
19 April 2020	"Body is signal."	
20 April 2020	"I placed some new jade plants"	
21 April 2020	"Each day like a feather"	
22 April 2020	Left out bc I don't know how to do documentation for a parody of a licensed work.	
23 April 2020	"I'm in space,"	
24 April 2020	"Rain on my umbrella."	
25 April 2020	"My noble nature says:"	
26 April 2020	"Today my friend and I moved"	
27 April 2020	"M idnight"	
28 April 2020	"I predict hail."	
29 April 2020	"Drink some lemon water, dear."	
30 April 2020	"On an afternoon like today"	
	Notes	

1 April 2020

My body is an airline diagram.
A tri-fold illustration of ways out.

Out my bedroom window a perfect view
of where someone has left the lid open
on the recycling bin,
which is also full.
I wonder if they're still picking it up.
They're the only business I haven't gotten
an email from.

My neck itches.
I want to shave my head.

2 April 2020

We will emerge
Like cicadas
In the heat

I want warm rain
I want to be natural

The blooms on the tree will start over
If it snows tonight
Surrender

3 April 2020

Took a break from working,
time enough to notice once again
that I don't feel well,

want to melt into a snake shape
and find a place I fit,
go even further away.

Every poem this week is about want.
How do I get to the surrender?

Shape, conform.
Cloud, rise.

Your contents are for the future.
This moment is nothing.

4 April 2020

the best thing right now
is a painting of a frog
a long extended leg pointing
the way between light water
and dark water

have you seen the moon
still floating
in a distance that is like
a clean brush
sweeping closed eyelids

dark cool water
fills all distance
still
like writing in reverse
the slender arc of stars across
a surface of dark water

5 April 2020

It's very Victorian how I sit all day
with my careful nosegay and my amulet,

thinking about death while doing nothing,
even writing a few words about it.

If mercy is a surgery and must be bought,
perhaps I'm not as grateful as I thought.

6 April 2020

Like a hermit crab entering a new shell,

I tried out an Android phone today.

Exporting arcane diaries
that should have been burnt long ago,

I sought in vain the absolution of ocean air.

7 April 2020

Onions in a big jar
Potatoes
Ham from my employer
An Easter gift

Here I am in my kitchen
All gloves and knives

Here I am carrying the trash out

Here I am wiping surfaces
Washing my hands

I pulled up to receive my ham
From a woman in a pink dress

My hair up like I'd been in a
Fight with it which I have

Happy Easter. You pass me a ham
In a sack like a hostage

I'm wearing a cloth mask
You're wearing a pink dress

The sun felt nice
The air felt nice

I drove away quickly.

8 April 2020

I can't give up and I don't have time
to be sad. Let my thoughts grow fins
so I can breathe in my dreams.

I'm still so in love.

Watching Doctor Who and trying
to learn right action.
We are each other's compass.

9 April 2020

I wrap myself in a blanket,
point my camera at the moon.

The smallest of three windows-
She moves around it in a slow, slow skate,

a kinetic sculpture
in long and wavering dimensions.

I hold my arms aloft and close my eyes, thinking
Alas- I can do anything
for Eros.

I am a star.
I am already loved.

10 April 2020

Bird like ink on grey
paper– Its poem
has only one word.

11 April 2020

My back hurts. I feel bad about my own pain
and my way of expressing it. I feel impatient
with myself, circle after circle- and yet
the sun on my face is intoxicating
and some part of me accepts it
without reservation.

12 April 2020 (Easter Sunday)

To my west-facing window
comes the storm that brought hail
at five AM this morning and now
just fans its veil across the sky, a screen
protecting chastity, a coolness closing eyes
for inward prayer.

Here I wait to see again the light
that opens through the blinds, a part
of the cosmos come
to me and me alone,
when sunlight meets itself within
the atoms of my skin,
a reunion.

13 April 2020

I am all notifications.
I want to be sleazier
and more beautiful.

When my friend is happy,
I am happy, I think.

I am haphazard.
To express this requires

handful after handful
of dusty moths, before there is even
moonlight enough
to float them in.

Drink, drink-
Drink your history.

When my friend is happy,
I am happy, I think.

14 April 2020

Oh. How I long to share
the worst parts of myself.
How I long to carve you all up.

Harmless as a mushroom
in moss, I am. Better alone.
Oh. To be fire
enlivening the bracken.

Normally I fall silent here,
the inner landscape
cracked beneath its snow.

Inner ear, a cave, a heart,
I reach for a weapon. Oh.
I am slippery. It echoes
in its sheath.

15 April 2020

I listen to drones and dream
of burning cars.

They can see your house
but I cannot impress you.

Only in odd moments do I myself feel it,
like moss underfoot,
like air.
It is outside me somehow.

The universe is busy making and unmaking me.

I would not have you desperate;
it is always the same. I dream
of snow through an open window.
Everything is okay. How long

have I been alone?

16 April 2020

I curl up like a seed pod
and let the milk spill
from my fascia
out into the room
I float
and everywhere is snow

17 April 2020 (Mom's Birthday)

The world is a sticky mess, but don't worry.
I have coffee.

It's beyond worry;
something happening all around, like Spring-
one which invisibly strips
some things away,

one where castles bloom in our hearts
and we go there,
deep, alone,
to peer out across the green,
wondering what else is hidden.

18 April 2020

bird noises
a headful of glitter
feet of summer marble
veined and pale with a glow

I look cute today
in grey, having slept
without sickness
with dreams just passing like deer

19 April 2020

Body is signal.
Mind is noise.
What is the language?
What is the cipher?

When I left my job,
which I thought was hard,
my body entered
the rigors of stillness.
It is trapped here with me,
again.

We haven't spoken,
merely traded interruptions.

20 April 2020

I placed some new jade plants
in containers.
Imperfection is home. Welcome home.

We drove through the park.
The trees were of a familiar kind,
everything Nebraska as it is now.

Maybe when I die my body will go
to Omaha to UNMC where all this work
is being done.

Please put a pillow under her head.
Paint her nails. Speak nicely to her
when you examine her organs.

Well, for now, it's my responsibility.
Have I done all I can?
Work, games,

car rides,
freedom,
snacks.

21 April 2020

Each day like a feather
to skim length to length,
to put straight, to shine-
Self care!
Pulling threads, removing
old skin,
and how blue,
how golden we will be then!

23 April 2020

I'm in space,
learning to survive
in isolation, and
as part of something.

Today and always,
if all I can offer up
is a voice to say
I'm still here,

then I must do so,
even if I have my eyes
set on spinning orbs
in the distance,

on a thousand portents
and a thousand dials
I must read and interpret-
I'm still here.

24 April 2020

Rain on my umbrella.
Wind pulls and pushes.
The blooming pear trees.
The grass.
The sound of a cat
seeking favor
at the seat of government.

25 April 2020

My noble nature says:
don't do what you don't desire.

My dignity
has the texture of
a river stone.

Perhaps all stones
will be quarried and cut,
but nature is here, even here.

I, too, claim ownership of things.
Are they diminished?

26 April 2020

Today my friend and I moved
my website to a new server.
Now we share space
on a virtual machine.

It's kind of like they always said it'd be,
in stories-

The sun's going down now.
I meant to wash all those cups I used
for tea. I meant to make a character sheet.

At least I paid the gas bill and
did my unemployment paperwork

before the miracle
of learning something new
pulled me up and away.

27 April 2020

M idnight
I n the
S outhernmost
A lpine
N ook--
T wo birds
H ead toward a
R iver-- all is
O pen-- all the
P eople left
Y ears ago

28 April 2020

I predict hail.

All day,
wind and sunshine-- I sat facing North
and lost the time
in the fluttering of curtains.

This bounded life is not so different.
Somehow I closed my horizons
long ago, when I saw
how difficult it all was
in spite of everything I had to my name.

Now I see the clouds coming in
once again over the courthouse
and it is suddenly dark, but
this time if it's only hail
I'll be thankful.
I'll switch on my lamp.

29 April 2020

Drink some lemon water, dear.
They're smoking downstairs
as the evening settles
with a rustle of regret.

I'm tired of making shit up, I say.
I don't believe in myself right now.
All I want is to cook dinner
and have some hope.

30 April 2020

On an afternoon like today
I'll be cataloguing the attributes
of a conventional diesel truck
with a sleeper and a 5th wheel

and the sky in the background
of the photo
is just so beautiful--

Sometimes the truck is dusted
with snow; sometimes the golden
hour sun is streaming into the cab
and out of nowhere I think
of the places I've been,
and I miss my grandma,

and I miss being outside,
I suppose.

My eyes are dry and heavy now
and I'm restless cause it's gotten late
and I'm kicking myself for thinking
April was over.

Notes

I put off releasing this PDF for the whole month mostly because I always do this at the end with the notes and I get frozen because there's so much important shit to say and no matter what I say I feel mortified. So fair warning: after this year I'm going to stop pretending like I'm ever going to acknowledge my social context or the people in my life because I don't know how to do that.

The short version, I suppose, is that I am safe and being really REALLY proactive about that, not leaving my apartment for any reason including the big big protests that took place on my block just last night!

More: 1.) I mentioned filling out unemployment paperwork. I never got any compensation but have yet to file an appeal which would be the next necessary step. 2.) I mentioned donating my body to science, which I can't do because of my weight. 3.) I didn't mention it last month but yes: Black Lives Matter.

Rachel West, 31 May 2020
Lincoln, Nebraska