

The Cuervo Gold and Clorox Blues

by Joanne Jagoda

It's not a good sign when you're
mesmerized by the Westminster dog show.
Got to get out of this place.
Yes, even a well-planned foray
to Safeway will suffice.
I know I shouldn't go, but I can't relinquish
this last vestige of my old life.

Grocery list clutched in my gloved hand,
mask in place, fogging my glasses,
cart wiped down.
I try to keep myself from weeping.
We are all actors in a bad dream,
that doesn't go away in the morning.

Will we ever get back to before?
Oh, the little joys I took for granted,
like my grandsons sleeping over.
I'm frenetic, rushing through the aisles,
cowering behind my mask.
I don't look anyone in the eye.

I score a big win, paper towels.
But do I really need four more cans
of tomato bisque soup?
The masked man in red sweatpants
joyfully unloads big bottles
of Cuervo Gold and Clorox on to the belt.
He makes me smile.

