

Poem

Here I am
talking back,
cotton mask
over mouth,
or asking
rather, did
I hear you
right—a plum
on the tongue?

This May Day
wild herring
swim up Town
Brook to spawn
then, spent, float
down to sea
'til next year
when they come,
back, we hope.

People too
swim against
brute currents:
history,
happenstance,
apathy;
language, love
and luck can
pull us through.

This town is
the echo
of words said
four hundred
years ago
over there
where you live.
I send these
to the source.

What I want
to say is

too sincere
to shatter
on accents
during plague;
poetry:
a timeless
free beacon.

Are our souls
messages
in bodies,
the bottles
we were born
inside of?
All pilgrims
want to live
the one life.

Words can be
pilgrims too
me to you
and passing
to readers
everywhere;
Mayflower's
wake ripples
widening

to our shores
on both sides
Atlantic
cables these
landlines, stout
syllables
to step on
as we leave
skull's shelter.

But let me
specify
one question:
what will we
do this year,
quarantine
every day?

You might know.
If so, say.

Stephan Delbos