

Virus Vigil

Poetry by Jim Blackburn
Art by Isabelle Scurry Chapman



Chestnut-Sided Warbler

On South Padre Island during the migration
In the Spring of 2018, it's a celebration.
The island's full of all types of warblers,
There's wonderful diversity – many travelers.

These warblers often look one like the other,
Like multiple children from the same mother,
But then my eyes found a chestnut slash,
It was as if the breast had a moustache.

The chestnut side inspired some deep thinking
About the ability to believe what you're seeing,
For the bird's name literally jumps off its breast,
Clearly distinguishing this warbler from the rest.

Now honesty and integrity are often found missing
In forked-tongued humans who seem to be hissing
Words that are said but with no conviction -
It seems that for many lying's an addiction.

As I've gotten older I value truth
To a much greater extent than in my youth,
It's the center of whom I hope to be,
It's a key aspect of my spirituality.

As I watch this virus tragedy unfold,

I seek the truth and urge leaders to be bold,
Sycophants abound that sing the false song,
And many of us just go right along.

Returning to services of the Church of the Earth,
I reach out and applaud the warbler with worth,
For the chestnut slash gave my faith a boost,
And my internal anxiety has been reduced.

It's nice when nature sends me a sign
That affirms my belief in a grand design
Of a church that connects me in ways mystical
Beyond my training in ways Biblical.

So welcome to Earth Church
Pull yourself up a pew
Pray that nature sends a message
And mystifies you.