



## Eastern Meadowlark 2

In the spring of the virus escaping from town  
On the shore of East Bay driving around.

We're birding by Bluetooth and having a ball  
Opening the window and listening for the call  
Of the redwing blackbird sporting yellow and red,  
Or the quack of the duck with the grey-brown head.

The prairie is lovely as the grasses dance  
In the westerly wind blowing across the ranch,  
A wind that should have simply forbode  
That the bay would likely flood the rim road.

And then there's a flutter of action on the side  
And a lovely yellow bird comes up to reside  
On the fencepost where it shows us a breast of yellow  
And starts to sing – what a lovely fellow.

The sun shines bright to our delight  
Revealing a bird that makes attitudes right,  
The black clergy collar completes the look  
We know it's a meadowlark – don't need the book.

We came out today to escape Covid's virus  
To find a lift amongst reeds like papyrus  
To let nature take all our frustrations away

On the northern shore of the eastern bay.

And the meadowlark's yellow marked the event  
At the end of which there wasn't a hint  
Of the oppression we'd felt when the day began  
Thanks for coming along - let's do it again.

## Eastern Meadowlark

In the high marsh next to Mad Island Lake  
In the midst of Mad Island Christmas Bird Count.

The day is beautiful – clear, sharp, blue  
After two days of punishing wind and rain.  
The tide is high, flooding the marshes,  
Pushing wading birds out to wet pastures,  
Leaving us to search in the high marsh  
For sparrows – dark, brown, shy, brown, quick, brown,  
Frustratingly similar sparrows with their browner spots  
And browner dashes and soft eye bars and confusing calls,  
When suddenly a collective sigh comes from our group  
As the lovely larger bird with the bright yellow breast  
And the strong black neck-bib and black and brown head  
Flies to the top of a stringy marsh shrub  
And sits still for all of us to admire.

Thank God for the Eastern Meadowlark  
That allows us to regain our sanity,  
To feel collectively good about our birding ability,  
To be able to pause for a collective sigh of appreciation  
For the temple within which we worship today,  
Singing praise to the water and the earth and the sky  
And the lovely marsh plants that hide the sparrows  
That we return to pursuing  
After the gift of the presence of the Eastern Meadowlark.

A writing inspired from beside a cactus

On the highest dry spot  
On the edge of Mad Island Lake in December,  
A writing to thank Clive Runnells and his family  
And the Texas Nature Conservancy for the stewardship  
Of the Mad Island Nature Preserve  
That embraced us today.