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POETRY | FALL 2021

## Plague Doctors

By Carla Barkman

The Trout Quintet plays first modern, then Schumann,  
outstaying their welcome.  
Wind and rain lash the trees about  
beyond the lace curtains of Government House.  
Get deeper,

deeper. A gap:  
create one.

Ride north, out past the ridge,  
to that place that exists only  
in REM sleep, beyond the outpost store.  
Beyond the iceberg.

Beyond the eightieth year,  
driving alone to Sunday afternoon symphonies,  
tea and biscuits, raisin scones. A tall London Fog  
with soy milk for tonight, for you  
a small Americano,

on call tomorrow,  
planning to dress like ghosts or,  
if our masks arrive, like plague doctors  
to hand out treats on Halloween.

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**Carla Barkman is a family physician based out of Regina, Saskatchewan, practicing in the north. Her poetry has appeared in *Vallum*, *Grain*, *NeWest Review*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *prairie fire*, *Stanzas* and other literary journals and was included in the anthologies *apart - a year of pandemic poetry and prose* (Saskatchewan Writers Guild) and *Line Dance* (Burton Books). She recently completed a BA (English) at the University of Regina.**

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