

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Into the Unknown

A month ago

Elsa awakened elemental spirits.

I watched with my daughters on the big screen.

Snuggled close. Scooched in. No hands washed. No sanitizer. Snacking on popcorn, licking butter off fingers, sharing water bottles, savouring sour cherries.

Today, Into the Unknown plays as I drive to work, like an anthem calling me; an echo off houses that shudder with silence.

A blue mask, gloves and yellow gown, passengers to my stethoscope.

As spring awakens

the playgrounds are wrapped in a yellow bow

not a gift, but barriers.

Eliot did say April is the cruelest month, mixing memory and desire.

The thought of children laughing, the wish to see them playing.

The bright sun rises over hoodoos as it did once for dinosaurs,
now extinct.

A sun that sparks fears of crowds who don't believe this is happening.

Human beings forget how bodies are fallible until disease stops the
easy rhythm of doing things over and over and
over again.

Bring on Elsa's winter. Snowstorms now welcomed weather,

the whited hills cleaner, the river stiff with ice.

Delaying travel, shutting friends out, a forced pause in time
stopping the spread.

Because this isn't a Disney movie.

Nobody will ride a mythical water spirit or shield our town from an inevitable threat.

The cough will come and ring until they stop breathing.

When faced with the unknown,

we will don our masks, if we have some. Put on our gloves, if they can be found.
Change into gowns, if they aren't gone.

And ignore the voice yelling hope is gone.

We'll rise and quite simply do the next right thing.

Then one day

we'll reconvene and recollect, how something intangible, something so small

became so big, and ensured that life would never be

quite the same ever

again.