

When you love someone so much

you don't visit,
keep your germs to yourself.
Kindergartners were right —
cooties are real and no, you can't see them.

You hope to live through this pandemic
long enough to hug Poppop again,
hope he stays healthy through Thanksgiving,
that he's Passedover.

What keeps you from sleeping is the endlessness,
that no one, not the authorities, not the politicians,
not the doctors or nurses, not the epidemiologists,
knows when we'll go back

to normal. When playgrounds weren't filled
with ghosts, national parks were open,
when you didn't hold your breath
in the elevator, didn't have to

cross the street to avoid
bumping into someone.
What's become clear
is who really runs

the world — grocery store workers, pharmacists,
janitors. The ones we pay so poorly,
the everyday people,
the yous and mes.