

# An Inspiring Poem for Our Time

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April is National Poetry Month. This inspirational poem by Catherine M. O'Meara was widely shared on Social Media and it is understandable why. The sentiments are relevant and moving. The message about the arts during the coronavirus crisis that follows the poem is written by Joanne Wible Kant, Easton Arts Council president.

## In the Time of Pandemic

And people stayed home

and read books and listened

and rested and exercised

and made art and played

and learned new ways of being

and were still

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It is certainly fitting for our time, as we sit in our homes and try to make sense out of all of this. The very thing that keeps us human, socialization, is forbidden; we must distance ourselves from those we love and the things we love to do.

Art is an integral part of the human experience; there are almost no human cultures which do not have art. We in Easton are very lucky to have a vibrant art scene filled with so many talented artists. But the central part of art is in the experiencing and the viewing of it as a community.

We cannot do that now in person, but thanks to technology, there are so many ways we can experience art. Many of the local musical organizations such as the Bridgeport Symphony, Stamford Symphony and Quick Center for the Arts are giving online concerts and lectures.

Unfortunately, the Westport Playhouse has just cancelled its season but will be having online events. There are live concerts being streamed on YouTube and FaceBook. Virtual music and arts classes are being taught online.

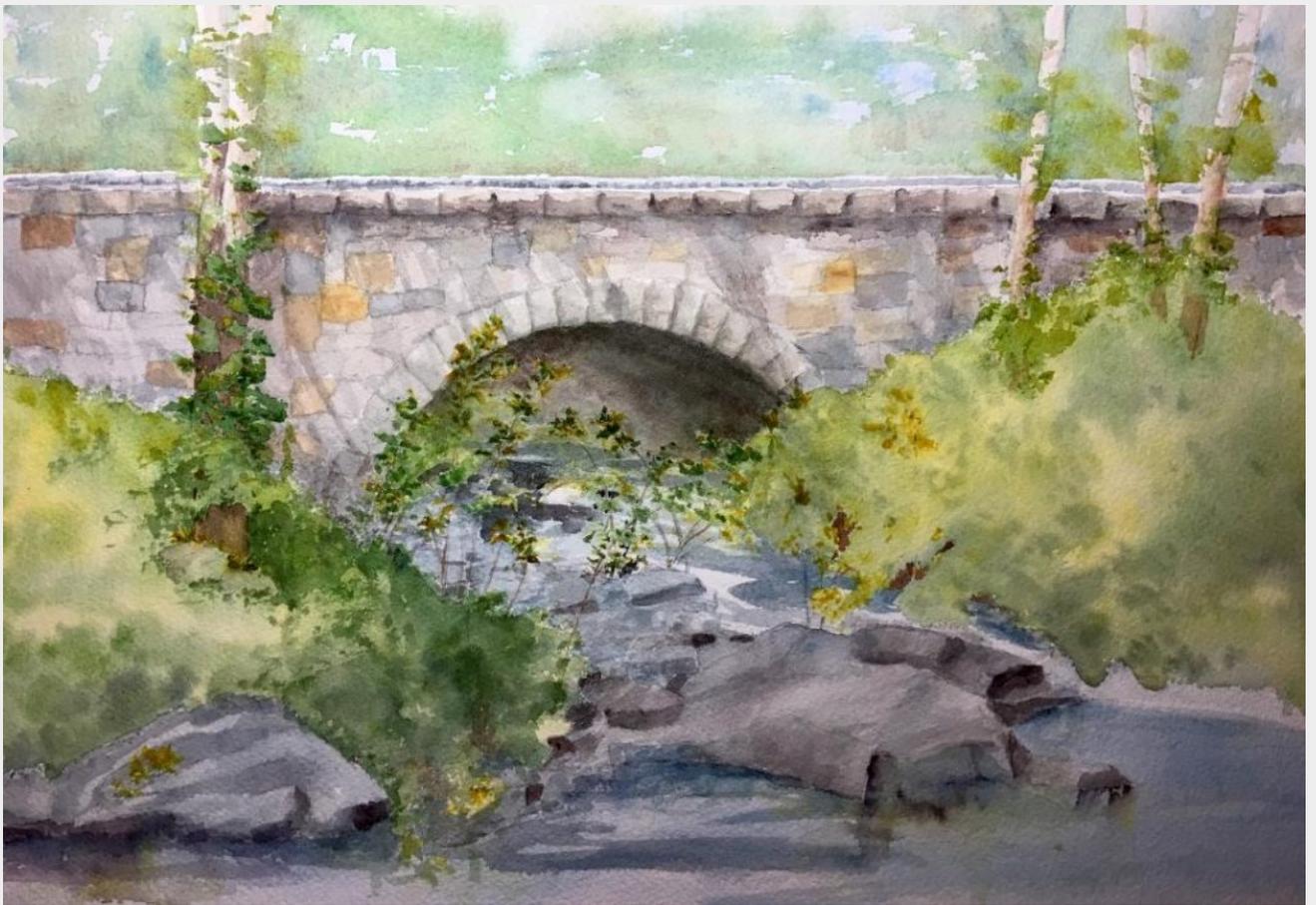
The Aldrich Museum has a lecture series, and other museums, such as MOMA, are giving virtual tours of their galleries. And so as we stay home and learn to live with this new normal there are many ways for us to experience art.

Thanks to Zoom and other platforms we can get together for virtual events, online singing and dancing and parties. But we can also use all this time to do those things listed in the poem as rest, meditate, pray and heal.

It is said that Shakespeare wrote King Lear while he was home avoiding the plague. We can use art at home to help us heal and so when we are able to go out into the world again we can experience the joys of human contact and the community of enjoying the arts together.

A recent message from Americans for the Arts stated that so far the pandemic has caused a loss in attendance at arts events of over 197 million people and \$6.2 billion in consumer spending, and that arts organizations have lost over \$4.5 billion.

*Editor's note: At the suggestion of a reader, we looked more closely into this poem and based on what we found, we corrected our original post about the origin and author of the poem. Originally attributed to Kathleen O'Meara in Ireland 1869, we found it apparently was actually written by Catherine M. O'Meara and published on her blog, The Daily Round, on March 16, 2020.*



• Watercolor by Kris Lynch



• Pond at the corner of Route 136 and Morehouse Road. — Darlene Krisko Photo

Photo at top is Silverman's Apple Orchard by Geri Gould