

## Hugging the Tree

*“Social distancing during Covid means no hugs.” --NBC News*

It was neither part of a protest  
nor a statement to the world.  
I simply put my arms around  
a tall oak and stood in embrace,  
our bodies juxtaposed.  
There was no swaying: her  
trunk, solid and true, felt like  
an ancestor, a pillar thick  
with years. Her bark scratched  
my skin if I moved, so I stayed  
still. It was a time to be calm  
and reflect on our presence  
together. To look up to the sky  
and fathom the height of my  
partner. To inhale the earthy  
scent. To arc my grateful arms  
around this strong matriarch  
and whisper into the wood  
my wordless secret: I have not  
hugged anyone for months  
my dear tree.

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Published in *Streetlight Magazine* and in *Poetry Society of Virginia Anthology*.