

## Hoarding

I drove to the pre-dawn old-people-hour  
at the grocery, when only people over 60  
were permitted to shop, planning to buy  
a pantry-full of goods: the larder was getting bare.

I'd remembered my face mask this time,  
and I even donned a pair of gardening gloves  
a local animal-rescue outfit had sent  
with a plea for donations:  
unused, sanitary, protective.

I joined the handful of other shoppers,  
pushing carts around the store  
in the spectral overhead light  
like spirits in Hades flitting among the dead,  
the darkness outside doubling our numbers  
in the reflection of the plate-glass windows.

In the paper aisle I saw gold:  
two six-roll packs of Quilted Northern.  
Was this a mirage? A mistake?  
It had been over two weeks  
since I'd seen any at the supermarket.

We still had four unused rolls at home,  
along with the half-roll on the holder  
(*Was there a technical term  
for a toilet paper holder?*),  
but I snatched one of those packages  
like a basketball player diving for a loose ball.

We still didn't need any,  
but the reaction was so *immediate*,  
the satisfaction so pure.

I keenly understood  
the pleasure of hoarding.

*Charles Rammelkamp is Prose Editor for BrickHouse Books in Baltimore, where he lives.*

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