

two new poems

by fanny howe

A Message to Carry on Your Person

No intubation, nothing blue or white, nothing
plastic or metal, please,
No siren, no admission, no litter on wheels,
No being pushed back by a cop and landing on my
skull,
No science fiction, no science, no testing my blood,
no fever, no intrusion
Into my neck or chest, no medical personnel, no
health worker, no screen
With my child's face on it, no monitor beeping,
No people screaming, no separation from the trees,
no walls, no calls,
No subjectivity, no trying to pray, no wanting, no
memory,
No waking to a man on his face calling, *Mama I'm
through* because she's already.
Get that car off his face.
Put your hand back, Mama, pull him along.
No officer, no torture, no sadism, no biology, no
history, no failure,
No train, no trail, no hands, no nothing.

Red Warning

Don't come over. Don't come in.
Don't breathe out until I've turned the other way.
Take a walk but cover your mouth. Sneeze into the cloth.
Make sure you see someone every day but stay away
If their nose is showing.
"Seems like a plot to lock us all up."
Bring two shovels wherever you go. For you and the other
You used to know. Dig it? Go for it.
Don't eat anything without spraying it first. Poison is okay
In these emergencies. Don't trust friends with open faces
And don't take the elevator more than one floor up.
Even alone on the platform, the code is written.
Lock your children in their rooms,
Tell them a little red cake is coming and not to bite!
Its roses are thorn.
And you can only see it on a screen.