

“I Know This Rose Will Open”  
a round by Mary Grigolia  
for Meghan and Rod

For long months we, like many singers,  
have been just squares in a quilt of faces,  
muted, hearing only our own voices  
and a distorted accompaniment.

We have learned a new meaning for *latency*:  
the lag of sounds and images  
carried imperfectly through the ether.

Hungry for harmony,  
we have recorded  
take after lonely take  
over guide tracks,  
finally choosing our best  
to be painstakingly layered  
into a collage of parts.

When the two of you  
stood at last on the outdoor stage,  
still masked, still six feet apart,  
but in the same time and place,  
and sang that simple round,

the way you listened to one another,  
your living, breathing responsiveness—

like lovers turning in their sleep,  
molding the curves of their bodies  
to each other’s warmth  
without fully waking,

like wind cleaving  
to the rise and fall of the ground  
or sea swirling  
into the hollows of a tidepool,

like starlings constantly measuring  
the distance between wingtips,  
matching speed and direction  
as they spiral and shapeshift  
through twilit sky

—returned to us  
something so deeply missed  
that we had not wanted to name it.

~ Deborah Bachels Schmidt