

Trust

It was spreading through the land like a swarm of doubt.
Some folks morphed into skittering creatures,
trying to get what they needed
without touching it.

The whole world needed a hug
and the scientists said for God's sake no hugging.

Everyone was suspect.
If someone coughed, sirens
went off in everybody's brains.

A man walked through our small town whistling.
He whistled the same tune at the grocery store, the Post Office.

He smiled and looked strangers in the eye,
walked outside, looked up and sighed a let-it-all-go kind of sigh,
the kind of sigh that could exhale his entire carbon footprint, maybe yours, too.

He mussed the hair of a kid passing by
like an emotionally healthy uncle.

He shook hands with a chained-up dog
when it raised a paw.

He offered to help a lady cross the street.
She smiled at first, then declined,
as the smile dissolved
into worry.