

## Relatively Speaking

By Marilyn Reeves

I don't like to complain, but I wish I could order a replacement for this year's Spring. So far, it hasn't live up to the standards of most of the Springs I've become accustomed to ... relatively speaking. We humans, in our arrogance, have been treating Mother Nature like she's a second-class citizen for the past couple of centuries, and this year she's been fighting back – with a vengeance! – reminding us who's *really* in charge!

For one thing, we've been heedlessly polluting the atmosphere in order to pursue our own greedy ambitions ... as if there were no tomorrow. But unfortunately, 'tomorrow' is TODAY! And she's been punishing us BIG TIME with something called 'Global Warming.' If you don't think it's real, check with the polar bears up north who no longer have enough ice from which to do their hunting; or the folks who live on the Gulf and on the eastern seaboard who have been experiencing record blizzards, hurricane, and flooding; or those poor, miserable people out in California losing thousands of homes to record fires; or the residents of Venice, who can now sail their gondolas through their living rooms!

But this year, Mom Nature is hitting us even harder. She's clobbered us with a brand new Pandemic – a Coronavirus known as Covid 19. It's the most rapidly spreading, highly contagious and often deadly disease since the Spanish Influenza early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. So far, there doesn't appear to be a cure. The only way to stop its spread is for people to stay away from each other. Which means businesses have shut down, no more gatherings of friends and families, and for all you sports fans out there – no more ballgames! And who knows how long the economic consequences of this drastic action will last?

Then, as if that weren't enough, she sent us a freezing snow storm last week that nipped the apple blossoms in the bud. I happen to take that very personally. Not only has the Pandemic taken away the one thing I look forward to most on a weekly basis – going to my Monday morning Writers meeting – but now she's taken away the thing I most look forward to every Spring: Apple Blossom Time!

But I guess I should be grateful that I'm doing fairly well – relatively speaking. I may not have my health (that started deteriorating long before I even heard the word 'Covid') but I'm still alive ... at least I still was, last time I checked my pulse. I can't go to the library, but I've got some old books on my shelf that I've been dusting off and re-reading (the nice thing about going senile is that I've forgotten all the details). In the evenings I've been binge-watching *Homeland* on TV, and during the day I receive phone calls and e-mails from friends and relatives I haven't heard from in a while. Not to mention stories and comments I receive from the other Writers – little gifts waiting to be opened in my In-Box.

So, taking it one day at a time, I'm still getting by. Relatively speaking.