

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## **The Winter Variant Arrives**

By William Doeski

The holiday season passes  
like a kidney stone. Shops close  
as the latest plague corrupts  
the nymphs and satyrs gathered  
for eggnog savaged with rum.

We stay home with our hands washed  
and vitamins circulating through  
the remotest parts of our bodies.  
Packages arrive from warehouses  
larger than Buckingham Palace.

The colored lights we've strung  
on our leafless burning bush  
smile at our silent dead-end road.  
We could risk grocery shopping  
if we mask ourselves so firmly

we pant like dogs on choke-chains.  
Yesterday on the road to the dam  
the car tried to slick off the pavement  
and drown us in the angry river  
at the foot of an icy slope.

Today we're too timid to test  
our tolerance for domestic fear.  
The nymphs and satyrs all suffer  
the famous symptoms: fever,  
cough, gloom, daylight stars. A few

will choke to death in their sleep,  
but most will recover their wits  
and embrace a meeker lifestyle.  
We were never figures of myth.  
Tomorrow more snow and ice

will conceal the sky and render  
our little fears impersonal—  
the creaking freeze underfoot  
a threat too criminal to report  
to police, too obscure to ignore.