

Pandemic

By Diane Judge

All anyone ever talks about is COVID
But there's another pandemic we should deal with
Cause so many of us do it.
Don't think you're an exception.
Everyone participates in online putdowns.
Few may go as hard as political junkies do,
Go as hard as the silent scrollers who search
High and low for online detritus to criticize.
It's as if they have no life
Just a web one, that is,
Knowing their identities are screen-protected,
Lashing out for the fun of being cruel.
Millions of people do this.
No one can resist the poison pin
Of the words they use to pan
People they wouldn't dare insult face-to-face.
Quiet people seethe in sentences
Rife with expletive'd emojis,
Say things they'd never say out loud
To people they'll never meet,
Unknown people they intentionally hurt.
Vaccines don't exist for this pandemic of putdowns
We engage in.
X-ray words are what we expose ourselves with.
Yet we are all infected
Zealots, like zombies, eating each other alive.