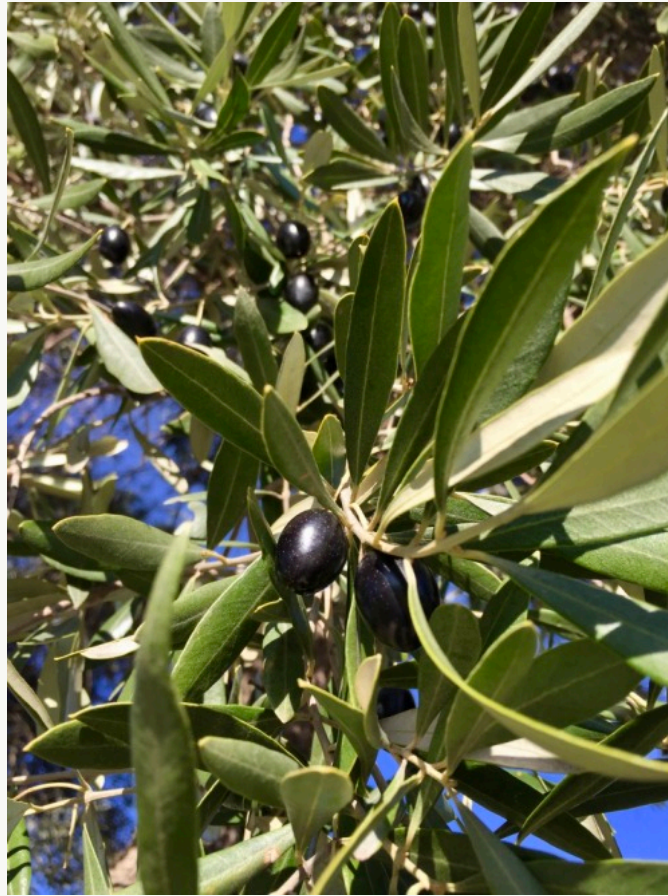


## COVID-19 Closures–Heart Openings



It can close schools. It can close libraries. It can close just about everything—my yoga studio and even my church.

But it cannot close my eyes to the gentle sway of the birch's pale green heart-shaped leaves. Not the coal black olives still clinging to silvery branches. No it cannot close my eyes to the evening shadows on duck ponds, or the billowing clouds floating aimlessly above me, oblivious to the chaos below.

It cannot close my ears to the words of prophets, priests and poets. Oh, the poets. Their words transcend statistics, and render beauty and pathos instead. It cannot close my ears to the kindness of neighbors who check in to see if we need anything. Or the prayers of the faithful shared each day.

It cannot close my nose to the heady perfume of the lilac dripping with raindrops, nor the roses along the now quiet street. It cannot suppress the aroma of freshly baked bread. Sauteed onions and garlic. Chutney with fresh cilantro and mint from my garden, nor the bitter tang of arugula drenched in olive oil and newly plucked lemons.



It cannot close my heart to the tender gaze of my lover, nor to the beautiful, poignant words I digest early each morning from the stacks of books surrounding me in my little room.

It cannot quarantine my life, mask my face, nor infect me with fear, try as it might.

I choose to begin again. Each day. Each hour. Each minute.

I choose Love over security, because I am first loved.

I choose crossing the threshold into the mystery of not knowing what will unfold.

I choose to surrender to Divine Love and inhale the intoxicating Truth.

*“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”* (I John 4:18a)

*“We love because he first loved us.”* (I John 4:19)

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