

## The Island

Distancing defines us  
here on this cherished plot of earth –  
this ledge of forest, rock and beaches  
set apart by nature's liquid realm –  
a separation that provides its own protection,  
a solitary, salutary distancing from disease,  
all those too familiar perils of  
this season of pandemic.

Those who live here chafe, at times,  
against the time and effort that it takes  
to reach the business of the mainland.  
But those necessary miles create community,  
foster a blessed sense of "All In This Together."  
lend strength to all those inconvenient measures –  
donning masks, scrubbing hands, standing six feet  
or more apart – that help keep us safe,  
shape care for one another, show forth  
precisely what it means to truly be  
and live, embrace community.

Then thank God for distance –  
open seas and rugged shores –  
and for the spirit of Chebeague  
that brings us all together,  
even while holding us apart.

J. Barrie Shepherd