Thursday, April 2

Another cold day. It’s 6:30 p.m. now and only 6 degrees Celsius. Tomorrow is not expected to be any warmer and the night is expected to drop to freezing temperatures. Today wasn’t sunny, either. Grey cloud cover with only occasional glimpses of blue sky. The average temperature for this time of year, historically, is 13 degrees. Not this year.

For the first time, it feels like social distancing has become a new way of life. At Mill Lake Park, there were few people. And when we passed, we veered far out of the way of each other. People returned my greetings with warmth, with friendly responses and genuine smiles, but at a distance.

The wild birds aren’t keeping their distance. A few days ago, I was walking along Ventura Street and saw two Canada geese strolling along, looking around unalarmed. In front of my building, two ducks – a male and female – were casually lying on the lawn, undisturbed by the people walking by. This afternoon, on the road leading to Mill Lake, a male duck was lying on the concrete, quite relaxed. Cars slowly drove around it because that duck wasn’t going to move. On the other side of the road, in the ditch, its mate was determinedly poking its beak among the dead leaves, looking for food. Further along, I saw another duck busily scratching its head with its foot, the same way a cat lifts a back leg to scratch behind an ear. This slower way of life is restful. It suits me.

The weather may be cold and grey, but the natural world is doing fine. Purple violets proliferate in abandoned grassy lots. New pink blossoms cover salmonberry bushes. The snowdrops have finished blooming and are setting seed heads. Spring is here and soon the days will be warmer.