

## Signals

In the Scouts we started with semaphore,  
later moved on to decipher  
the high speed metallic stutter  
of morse, yet apart from SOS  
little remains.

As adults we know  
white smoke ascending from the Vatican  
means a new Pope, and at sea the language of pennants,  
such as yellow for quarantine, can quickly be decoded.

Though at every step technology outsmarts us —  
parked cars wail at an unwanted approach,  
garage doors open up only to a unique  
voice — it seems that between you and me  
anything goes  
awry: half the time we pick our way  
through a mindfield of missed cues,  
the wrong inflection, hints misunderstood.  
For smiles that should have exhaled a haze  
of butterflies, we stumble, apologize,  
and the black belts we won for non-verbal communication  
are useless. Now we must learn afresh  
at our finger-tips, slowly like braille develop  
a new sign-language for love.

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