

## *Then and Now*

My grandson turned 8 on April 4th 2020 and of course could not have a party. On a video we watched him open a large box of Legos, build a fort, devour chocolate cupcakes, kick a soccer ball in the yard. In late afternoon he heard a steady beat of honks, shouts of his name-- *Ellis Ellis*. Dad, Mom, the twins gathered on the front stoop: vans filled with friends sang *Happy Birthday* to you again and again as the traffic moved along. Not a soldier home from the wars. No National holiday. What kid ever witnesses his own parade? He knows about Covid-19, the sick people at Mt. Sinai where he was born and all over America, the World.

On April 4th 2012 I sat in the lobby of Mt Sinai, across from Central Park, held captive by a sea of pink, all the cherry trees in bloom. I didn't want to leave--- memories of mom and dad taking me and Sissy to see the blossoms, to feed the pigeons, to skip to the swings. The message arrives from upstairs *Baby Ellis born Bronwyn fine. Come right away*. Seeing baby Ellis? sweetness supreme.

Today the park is packed with 14 stark white tents all facing the west side, far away from the sea of pink cherry trees but close to *Strawberry Fields Forever*, a memorial for John Lennon. Next April I hope to take Ellis to Central Park to see the Cherry Blossoms, to visit Strawberry Fields and hear young musicians singing *love love love*