Always before, as far back as my genes remember,

these times were times of
forced adaptation.

Mostly, we died.
Some of us didn't die.

We changed instead.

We
adapted.

Some of us lived.

We were
reshaped by too much rain;

too much rain
and floods;

or no rain at all.

Some of us, mouths parched,
legs shaking,

lived long enough.

Without choice,
in chaos, we changed. And

our children and grandchildren changed
even more.

Eons before,

new life separated its selves,

our selves— living selves being a new thing,
here, anyway—

building cell walls.

Our selves moved apart. Perhaps painfully.

Eons later, our selves

came together, giving up our freedom
and
isolation, for

a larger unity. Perhaps painfully.

Time passed.
Conditions changed.

Inside our larger selfs, we separated again,

becoming

distinct systems in a whole.

Perhaps painfully.

Opening and closing,

separating and joining.

Chaos breaking us apart, forcing,
enabling,
growth in
an expanding universe.

In a rhythm
not of our choosing.

We didn't choose this time either. But,

we might choose the next.

What
would it be like

to choose chaos to grow? Or,

to choose,

to choose,

to grow without chaos?

—Mary Ann Allison, March 2026