

Coronavirus Anthology

A collection of rhyming prose pieces written in 2020

By

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All these pieces and additional material is posted on my website

RHYMINGPROSE.COM

Preamble

I write Rhyming prose (not poetry) as one of my hobbies.

I have a website for such material - **rhymingprose.com**

All the material in this anthology is available on the website.

The website has additional material.

One heads-up: depending on your political persuasion, you may not like all the pieces.

I wrote all the pieces in this anthology between April and December 2020.

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Preface - Lockdown's effect on me

The lock-down did not affect me much
I am a “loner” and, mostly a “home-bound” animal
“Pretend” golf is the only activity I had to suspend
Otherwise, changes in my routine were minimal

Composing “rhyming prose” is something I dabble in
Under lock down, it became a mainstream activity
The motivation was to cheer up my children,
provide them relief from the morbid reality

For unexplainable reason, the ideas kept coming
I penned about a dozen new pieces
I still have more than a dozen ideas waiting, which
would probably lie dormant until Covid-19 panic ceases.

Written in July 2020

It will be a better tomorrow

You are sad, but do not despair
Go out and take in some fresh air
Smell the flowers, enjoy their hues
Let breeze tousle your hair

Watch
... butterflies flutter their wings
... baby birds learn to fly
... hummingbirds dart effortlessly
... clouds wafting in the sky

You will be amazed, how much joy
and happiness outdoors can bring
Take a few deep breaths
Enjoy the bounties of Spring

It will be a better tomorrow.

Amen!

Written in April 2020

A rose bush to lift your spirits

During these uncertain times,
the world is under a pall of gloom
It is craving for good news, any good news
How about a rose bush sprouting super bloom?

The bush is laden with a trove of flowers
All decked up in colorful attire
Each flower competing with others
to see which one can reach higher

Sweet and amorous scent wafting in the air
Bees and butterflies dancing with a flair
Inviting you to come and just soak it all in
It is bound to lift your spirits, I swear.

Have a nice day.

Note:

A photo of a rose bush in our backyard, full of first blooms of the season, accompanied this piece.

Written in April 2020

Do not Lose Hope - This Too Shall Pass

We are surrounded by gloom and sheer misery
Yet, there is no reason to lose hope
Mother nature keeps delighting us with its magic
Presenting unique works of art to help us better cope

Moon light shimmering over the Pacific Ocean in dark nights
Sunset sky getting painted with dazzling colors
Rainbow arching over the ocean after rains have washed the air
How can one not be inspired by nature's wonders?

Mother Nature offers me reasons to want to keep going
This time of misery too shall pass it always does
We are resilient, we fall down and yet get up
We will be better for it, no ifs or buts.

Note:

Photos of 1) full moon over the Pacific Ocean with its reflection in the water, and 2) a rainbow arched over the ocean accompanied this piece.

Written in April 2020

This too shall pass (Longer Version)

Dedicated to our fellow human beings who gave their lives to serve us.

This too shall pass, it always does
We have been in dire straits before
Yes, it will leave us with sad memories
We may even be knocked to the floor

But we always find the courage to get up
Take a few staggering steps, may look dazed
We may even stumble a few times
Yet, we find our stride and remain unfazed

Yes, we are living through a nightmare
Scarred for life, and setback by years
But we will survive and will thrive
Paraphrasing FDR, *we have nothing to fear but fears.*

One day we will look back with mixed emotions
At these times that left indelible imprints on us
Remember those who met an untimely death, and
Marvel at our resilience despite immense stress

The Covid-19 pandemic put in focus many of our ills
Ignored all along, but now in full view
Hopefully, we will change as we move forward
Society should work for all, not just the privileged few

I am optimistic....

The Sun will still shine tomorrow
The Moon will still rise in the night
Birds will still chirp, Bees will buzz
Not to worry, we will be all right.

This too shall pass.
This too shall pass.
We shall overcome
We shall overcome

Some Observations and Learnings

What we can and should do.....

Check on those who are feeling the effects of social isolation
To those who lost loved ones, offer words of consolation
To everyone, especially those feeling down, advance the proposition
.....This too shall pass
.....This too shall pass.

Paraphrasing President Kennedy.....

Ask not what others can do for you (to save your life),
Ask what you can do for others (to save their lives)

It is becoming clear we live in a two tiered society.....

Those of us who can work from home
are the lucky ones; still getting paid
But those of us who have been laid off
Must be feeling they have been betrayed

It is becoming clear to all of us.....

The line between making ends meet and being broke is very thin
Half of us live paycheck to paycheck, with nothing to spare
With no money coming in, can't pay rent, can't buy food
For no fault of theirs, they are having to live through a nightmare

What about the new Heroes....

New frontiers have opened in the war against the virus
These frontiers are not miles away, in some foreign land
they are right here among us, in our neighborhood
Just look around, our fellow citizens are making a resolute stand

The new heroes are taking a good fight to the virus
They are risking their well-being trying to save our lives
They are our front-line soldiers, but often without proper armor
Hats off to those on whose accord our society survives

So where should we begin in search of heroes....

We must start with workers in hospitals
They are working long hours with hardly any breaks
They are tending to the sickest with little hope
Stakes are high, they are doing what it takes

But right along are the essential workers....

- ... Ambulance drivers and medics
- ... Grocery store staff,
- ... Food and grocery delivery personnel
- ... Public transit drivers
- ... Cleaning and sanitizing crews

They all are doing high risk low-paying jobs
Keeping businesses and households afloat
Dutifully serving others, while risking their lives
Salute to them they are our lifeboat

It has not been all bad....

We have learned to stay connected w/o touching
We have learned to care without hugging
We have learned virtual partying and wining /dining
We have learned new phrases like *social distancing*

We have learned we are one humanity on our planet
This virus is an equal opportunity enemy, does not discriminate
Color, race, nationality, economic status, sexual orientation does not matter to it
It needs a body, any human body, as a host for its species to propagate

Yet, who lives and dies often depends on class and race
Where one lives often predetermines the outcome
People with poverty borne diseases are easy prey for the virus
Despite doctors & nurses' heroic efforts, to corona virus, they succumb

We have learned we are interconnected locally and globally
Though virus originated in China, it is now in every corner of the globe
What we do or do not affects our neighbors and people we have never met
It jumps from person to person, it is a vicious microbe

We have learned a new meaning for the phrase "*6 feet*"
Yes, we all know about being buried "*6 feet*" under
Now the "*6 feet*" refers to the minimum distance between us
The virus cannot hitchhike if we stay "*6 feet*" apart from each other

Those of us, with school age children who are being home schooled now...
Have gained a new appreciation for teachers
Teacher's job is hard, extremely hard, damn hard
Wonder how they tend to our children for the better part of a day!
Beats me; they deserve higher pay and greater regard

But let us not forget moms - overworked and stressed
While Dads^① do help, moms carry a disproportionate load
With the entire family sheltered at home 24x7
It is a wonder why moms do not implode!

① Think about a Single Mom in the current environment

Superman, Batman, Spiderman, et el. -
Each one is a fictional hero
They cannot *hold a candle* against Moms
Moms do real work at ground zero!
They deserve to be called Super Moms

The household world has turned upside down^②
Devoid of social activities^③, relationships drift
Stress builds, leading to an eventual “blow-up”
Divorce lawyers and counselors are chomping at the bit!

② Consider the current environment...

- Four meals having to be eaten at home
- Kids being home schooled
- Dad and/or Mom working from home
- Both Mom and Dad considered “essential workers” (Ouch!)
- Scarce day care options for tots
- Sports starved Dads :-(-
- Mom and Dad penned in at home having to “get along” 24x7
- Teenagers forced to live with parents 24x7
(no dates, no clubbing, no hanging out, ... :-(-(-(-
- Siblings getting on each other’s nerves
- House cleaning now in-sourced

③ Smart phone activities do not really count

Written in April 2020

Tomorrow will be better; oh yes it will be

We may feel we are stuck
Fret not, we are indeed moving
The virus is in retreat
We are the ones winning

We are doing our part
We are social distancing
We are sheltering at home
The curve is flattening

We cannot pause, we cannot rest
The road to victory is long
We must stay disciplined,
determined and strong

“This” too is passing
Tomorrow will be better
We are not battling alone
United, we will win together.

Written in August 2020

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We can see the light

We are not out of the danger yet, but
we can see the light at the end of the tunnel
What the world will be at the other end
remains a complicated puzzle!

I feel fortunate; I count my blessings
all my friends and family are safe and sound
Unlike millions of my fellow Americans,
none of us got knocked off the ground

I ache for the essential workers
They have carried an undue burden
Despite a lack of proper armor,
their duties, they did not abandon

To those who lost loved ones, our condolences
To those who recovered, our felicitations
and to the rest, a friendly caution -
it is too early for celebrations

Mr. Governor, you have done an admirable job
of leading the State during the crisis
However, you need to listen to the growing
voices asking you to address the lock-down neurosis

The *stay-at-home* order is wearing on us now
Six weeks of *shutdown* is all we can take
We did our part in *flattening the curve*
Collectively, we have tamed the outbreak

A democratic leader, unlike an authoritarian,
draws his/her power from a willing electorate
Listen to our message - restore our freedoms
“It’s my way or highway” is not your mandate

We hope that the worst is behind us,
that the *curve* begins to go down,
that we emerge from the quarantine,
and that life comes back all over the town

We are unlikely to return to the BC* days
Corona virus has forced us to change our ways
Donning of mask in public is the new norm
Physical distancing is not a perfunctory phrase

Until a vaccine is developed,
please keep up your guard
Stay in touch with friends and family
Better days are definitely in the card.

(*BC Before Corona)

Written in August 2020

Yearning to be free

After more than a month of “shelter at home”
our frustration is busting at the seam
We are yearning to be free
but sadly, it still is a faraway dream

Oh, we long for the freedom to go wherever
and whenever to shop, dine or play
One only appreciates the freedoms
when they are taken away

I know now how caged animals must feel
They are born to be free -
free to fly, free to run, free to roam
Their natural instincts, we fail to see

We lock them up in enclosures
Their entire lives we destroy,
What right do we have to rob them of-
liberties, they are born to enjoy?

Unlike the encaged animals
We will get our freedoms back
It is only a matter of time
Sadly, such options these animals lack

Look at a bird in a tiny bird cage
If she could talk, she might say.....
I want to fly
I want to touch the sky
Alas, I cannot get free
No matter how much I try!

Look at a big cat in a zoo
If he could talk, he might say.....
I was born to rule the Savannah
I had my own territory
Hunt, raise a family, live like a king
In this cage, I lost all my glory

Both the bird and big cat might also add...
You proclaim big ideals
Such as “live free or die”
It is a hypocrisy, since
to us, these do not apply

No other animal treats
its fellow living beings this way
By stealing their freedom,
we have gone astray

Maybe our forced “internment” will prod
us to be more mindful of animals’ plight
To give them their freedoms that Nature
endowed them, is only just and right.

PS: on the plight of animals we raise for food

The plight of animals we raise for food is even worse than those we keep in cages as pets
or showcase them in zoos.

They are walking dead, like zombies
While we keep their bodies alive,
we cruelly kill their souls and
we let them barely survive.

Let us consider how we treat animals raised for “food”:

- we fatten them by force feeding
- we starve them when it suits our purpose
- we breed them in “*Frankensteinish*” way
- we pack them like sardines (they are still alive!)
- we mutilate their bodies to make them powerless
- we force them to live in unsanitary conditions
- we pump antibiotics in them to treat infections thus caused

Then, we enact gag laws so that
no one can report their plight
Industry and politicians collude
to make sure no one can shine a light

These animals too are God’s children
They deserve to be treated humanely
We don’t have any right to “steal their souls
We decide their life spans, let us do it ethically.

It may cost a little more to raise them the right way
Morally, it is wrong to treat them as anything less
than living breathing creatures with souls
More humane treatment is a duty, not a largess.

Written in April 2020

A letter from Covid-19 – Introduction (Letter #1; May 2020)

To humanity on planet Earth
I am Covid19, yes, the same Covid19
that you say has caused a pandemic
and played havoc with your routine

Your body has never seen me until now,
though my family is well known to you
You may develop a vaccine to thwart my aim
but my “cousins” are waiting to start this cycle anew

Black or White, does not matter to me
Red or Blue States - I do not discriminate
I need warm body of a host to invade
and *voila*, soon I begin to replicate

Nature is uncompromising,
where *only the fittest survive*
The idea is simple, she wants the
best genes to propagate and thrive

You must have noticed that I have been
far deadlier towards the old,
Especially those with morbid conditions
Its nature’s law*, truth be told
(*only the fittest survive)

While I invade humans of all hues equally,
the effect of the infection is not the same
Blacks, in particular, are more susceptible to dying
For their 2nd class status, society must accept the blame

Your Constitution bans double jeopardy
But the reality is rather different
Veterans who fought in Vietnam are now
dying of Covid19 in #s that are significant

Nursing homes were the easiest targets
Packed with people morbidly sick
Cared for by workers, you call “essential”
These fragile souls were easy to pick

Hey, do not be mad at me, I am only doing
what nature has programmed me to do
Every species is sent to procreate
You are doing the same, the 7 billion of you

My mission is to infect
Your is to protect
Your chances depend on the method you select
and the leaders you elect

Is it any surprise that the worst affected countries* -
are all led by men with questionable leadership traits?
For a comparison, look at the countries led by women**
who displayed leadership skills in spades
(* US, UK, Brazil, Russia; ** Germany, New Zealand, Taiwan, Iceland & others)

Yes, I made a jump from an animal
Do not blame me, I did not create this racket
You made it too easy -
have you looked at China's "wet" market?

I hope you do not go back to your old ways
This pandemic is a strong message
that mother nature is sending forth,
take note and treat it as a presage

You have been exploiting Earth wantonly,
especially since the dawn of industrial age
The ever-growing consumption of fossil fuel
is warming the planet, but where is the outrage?

Let me repeat, you have been abusing the Earth
The climate is changing for the worse
You may be able to tame me through a vaccine,
but there is no vaccine for nature's curse

Climate change will impact billions of people
Especially the poor and the disadvantaged
A warmer planet will compound the pandemics
Your land will become disheveled and ravaged

You may think, as a species, you are infallible
Do not be so arrogant and smug
Climate change has decimated species before
You cannot sweep this fact under the rug

Let me warn you, Covid19 is not the last pandemic
There will be more, and even more deadly
Add to this the impact of climate change
You are stacking the deck against yourself badly

Nature's balance is being uprooted
A billion more souls within your lifetime - c'mon
How will you feed them, shelter them?
The conclusion is forgone

The clock is ticking, time is short
History repeats itself, but you do not learn
What did you learn from the Spanish flu?
Not much, preventive measures you spurn

I must go now; I have people to infect
Do not say I did not warn you
I doubt you would change, & if you do not
you must accept what comes due!

It is nice doing business with you
You are such an easy prey
Had you tried harder, acted smarter
You could have kept me at bay

Until next time when we meet again, *Ciao*.

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A letter from Covid-19 – Follow up Missive (Letter #2; June 2020)

To all my “friends” in the “*land of the free and the home of the brave*”
I know very soon you will be celebrating the Independence Day
A day you observe with picnic, games, and fireworks
I would like to wish you the absolute best, no matter come what may

I hope you have not missed me since I wrote to you last
Time flies, it has been a month since I penned that letter
Nothing stays the same as father time marches on
I notice, some things got worse and some got better

In the space of this time, you have opened up your economy
Some states took a deliberate science-based approach
But some of your states threw caution to the wind
And these “devil may care” states deserve serious reproach

I understand, lock down gave you cabin fever
Your economy took a major beating, resulting in a coma
Lock down or open up, either way, some lives will be destroyed
Do not get me wrong, I empathize with your dilemma

Pictures of crowded bars, clubs, and beaches I saw
made my “RNA heart” jump faster and my “spikey spirits” soar
In such places, I do not have to work hard
on a silver platter, you offered me opportunities galore

Need I remind you of my solitary mission in life?
Infect as many people as possible worldwide
I treat everyone equally, though the effect may be unequal
Democrat or Liberal, Blue state or Red state, I do not take side

Borrowing a famous one-liner, I feel “*I don’t get no respect*”
You think “by wishing upon a star”, you may shoo me away
It takes discipline without short cuts if you want to see me go
Follow the course, do not allow yourself to go astray

Let me stress, you cannot make me go away that easily
by “rubbing on a bottle” or “sprinkling some pixie dust”
I wish the prescription was this simple
To have any chance of defeating me, discipline is a must

I can be cowed down if you take simple precautions:
wear masks and maintain 6 feet physical distance
Beats me, as to why many of you choose not to follow
You take pride in maintaining a look of askance

Generally, I do not go out looking for people to thank
But I must complement your “leaders” for doing my bidding
Being poor role models and flouting their own experts’ guidelines
Believe me, they make my job easier, I am not kidding

Special thanks are in order for the “Bumbler in Chief”
Or, as you call him “duly elected” President Trump
He is my unpaid ambassador, doing an excellent job
Removing obstacles for me as he is out on his stump

I especially liked “Dumb and Dumber’s” rally in Tulsa -
a “super spreader” event as this rally was
With no insistence for masks or physical distancing
I consider it a charitable donation towards my cause

I know many of you feel invincible, unlikely to catch Covid19
If you are young and healthy, I may go easy on you
I will let your body defeat me, but not before
I would have used it as a carrier to infect others in full plain view

I was especially worried by the success of
many countries, you call foreign, in countering my attack
Lucky for me, you do not believe in copying others
Regardless of how effectively they may have fought back

Looking at the results of places such as New Zealand
Forced me to think, my life may be sniffed out prematurely
I am worried no more; my fears have been allayed
Your victim count is rising right now surely and steadily

I noticed the “Black Lives Matter” movement is gaining strength
I hope the movement results in changes for the better
I would be remiss if I do not affirm Black Lives Matter
Blacks are the easiest preys, they have proven to be the pace setter
(I know, it is not in the right spirit, but like you, I too am *“looking out for #1”*)

I know you are working frantically to come up with a vaccine
I am a realist; I realize you are likely to succeed
But 7 billion people can’t be vaccinated in a short span of time
No matter how hard you try, a reality you must concede

I also have anti vaxxers in my corner
Their numbers are quite high in your country
Antivaxxers have a loud megaphone on Facebook
Effectiveness of false and damaging reports is no mystery

Nothing lasts forever; I am not naive
When my turn comes, I will not have any regrets
I would march out with my head held high
Covid19 - the most serious pandemic in 100 years, no ifs and/or buts
(and for that I will wear a corona!)

And this is a record not worth
- sneezing at, or
- coughing at, or
- wheezing at, or
(get the drift!)

There is no rest for the weary
I still have too many virgin bodies to invade
So until next time, I bid *adios/ciao/sayonara*
In my mission, I cannot be mislaid

Also, need I mention, an army of my “cousins” are ready to take the baton
Rest assured; we will be back!
Oh yes, we will.
(God willing/*Bhagwan Bharose/Insha' Allah*)

Note:
Bhagwan Bharose – Hindi
Insha'Allah – Arabic

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A letter from Covid-19 – Advice not admonishment (Letter #3; July 2020)

Hello there, did you miss hearing from me?
been terribly busy lately spreading my *spikes* globally
working day and night without any rest
It has been a marathon quite literally

I will be terse, short, and direct
I do not have time for a long diatribe
I must write this letter myself
I do not have a scribe

What has transpired since my last missive,
has been a bonanza for me and my brothers
We could barely keep pace with the opportunities
Covid19 spread like a wildfire, like no others

Your ignoble leader in the White House
derides science and common sense
If it was not for his disdain for scientific knowledge,
There will not have been our rapid resurgence

Though I should not complain
If it was not for your irresponsible acts
We will not be enjoying the boom
Alas* your leaders are deniers of facts
(*for you)

The only thing that could save you from my
rapacious appetite is your behavior
You ignore good public health directives
only at your own peril, it is your moral failure

“Live Free or Die” does not give you a license
to act freely but cause mortal harm to others
Their right to live free is as sacrosanct
as your right to have your own druthers

I know you are counting on having a vaccine soon
But, let me ask you - will you trust your life
to a vaccine that may have been compromised
due to haste and administration's internecine strife?

I hate to give advice that is contrary to my self-interest,
especially to the young and the restless
Wear mask, maintain physical distance and
follow public health directives; do not act reckless

I am a nice creature, despite my “spiky” reputation
I am doing what I am programmed to do by nature
I do not mean ill to any one in particular
I treat everyone equally regardless of stature

I could have admonished you
But I know it would be pointless
Instead, I am leaving you with friendly advice
You do not follow it, you cause your own distress

Ciao.

Just one more thing

One of my brothers suggested we add the following to the letter. I told them I needed to be going and that I was running late. Still, they insisted that we add a few lines to display compassion. So here we go.

You have too many layers of government
Often issuing conflicting directives
Shamefully litigating against each other
Lashing out and hurling invectives

It is no wonder you get confused
Especially, if you live in large city of a Red State
Atlanta vs Georgia; Austin vs Texas
It must be hard to keep it all straight

If you live in one of these States,
and if you do not want to become our prey
Follow Dr. Fauci ‘s advice (even though we hate him)
You will definitely live to see another day

Best of luck to you from the bottom of our RNA hearts.
Got to go now. We got job to do.

Until we meet again, stay safe and healthy.
(We do have a compassionate strand in our RNA hearts)

A letter from Covid-19 – OSCAR awards (Letter #4; August 2020)

Gratitude and COVID* OSCAR Awards from Corona Virus (Top Ten List)**

(*COVID – Corona Virus Infectors of Distinction)

(**OSCAR – Out Standing Covid19 Army Rangers; Awards include Several New categories)

Hello there, this is a thank you letter
for those who helped me prosper and grow
Without their valuable contribution,
my spread would have been rather slow

To be totally honest with you
I was worried about my longevity
By now, people would know how to stay safe
Thankfully, Americans do not show such proclivity

So here is my “Top Ten” list of Thank-you and associated COVID OSCAR awards.

#1 Donald Trump - winner of the COVID OSCAR for best *Misdirection*

At the top of the list, as the “helper” in chief,
sits comfortably your “leader”, Donald Trump
Without his bumbling and fumbling
I would have been in a major slump

#2 Red State Governors - winners of the COVID OSCAR for best *Reality-Distortion/Altered-Reality*

Right behind are the Red State Governors
Who took cues from President Trump
They opened their economies too soon
Otherwise, I would have been in a dump

#3 Religious Leaders - winners of the COVID OSCAR for best *Misinterpretation of Religious Liberty and the 1st Amendment*

Religious leaders showed disdain for public health,
held services indoor w/o mask or distancing
knowing fully “freedom of religion” is not absolute
but, why should I complain, they are doing my bidding!

#4 Nursing Home Operators - winners of the COVID OSCAR for best *Rocky Horror-show*

Tell me, who does not like easy pickings!
Old, sick, and frail packed like sardines
Unhygienic conditions, callous care, poorly paid staff
Operators’ goal is to make money by any means

#5 Anti maskers - winner of the COVID OSCAR for best *Narcissism (co award with Young Adults)*

Wearing of masks is an existential threat for me
thankfully, masks have been politicized
With active support from President Trump
masks have been delegitimized

#6 Young adults - winner of COVID OSCAR for best *Narcissism (Motto “Live Free or Die” - I live Free, but you may Die)*

Young adults believe they are immune
They don't realize, even if they don't get sick
they act as carriers, taking me to their older kins
who, sadly (I've heart) become my easy pick

#7 House Parties - winner of COVID OSCAR for best *Ensemble Cast*

Large house parties are goldmines where
I can infect lots of people with minimal effort
devoid of barriers such as masks & physical distancing
Lucky for me, science and health experts they distrust

#8 Long weekends - winner of the COVID OSCAR for best *Summer Blockbuster movie*

On long weekends, Americans congregate in public places,
hold BBQ's with friends and family in backyards
Happily, for me, they ignore public health directives
and for this, I accord them kudos and COVID awards

#9 Vilifiers of Public Health Experts - winners of COVID OSCAR for best *Villains*

I am not a fan of Public Health Experts
Would you be if you were in my position?
But I adore vilifiers of these experts
These vilifiers have no remorse or contrition

10 Dr. Fauci - winner of the COVID OSCAR for best *Frenemy*

Did I surprise you with the inclusion of Dr. Fauci!
Actually, I owe a ton of gratitude to his preaching
The more he talks, the more “1A” crowd becomes
defiant to wearing mask and social distancing
(1A – First Amendment)

I am not stupid; I know vaccine will have a
limiting effect on my propensity for infecting people
But at least it will take a year for inoculation effectivity
till then I will do my Godly work and remain undefeatable

With the fall season around the corner, soon I will
have company of my cousin – the flu virus
Together we will be able to deliver a one-two punch
and thereby will become doubly vicious
(He He He.....)

I am chomping at the bits, can hardly wait
Labor Day weekend is around the corner
My spikes will get a big bang for their pricks
as people enjoy the last weekend of summer

My advice, I am sure you would like (self-serving as it may be):
Enjoy the Labor Day weekend – last hurrah of summer
You only live once - let go of your inhibitions
Do not worry about tomorrow, make the best of today
Party, play, picnic.... ; ignore all prohibitions

Adios/Ciao.

I am looking forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas.

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A letter from Covid-19 – Thank You once again (Letter #5; October 2020)

Ah, I love the Fall weather
Life is moving back indoors
Leaves changing color before dropping
Temperatures falling outdoors

I know it has been a long slog
We first met in late winter/early spring
I was an “unknown” living being then
But now, about me, you know everything

You felt you had vanquished me
Infections were down, and so were deaths
Preventive measures against me were working
Health care workers were catching their breaths

I was feeling a bit “down”, lately
Worrying my best days may be behind
Everyone would know by now what to do
No one would be flying blind

Then I got news from an old “friend” (Donald Trump)
that he and his cohorts got infected
flaunting the norms, he literally Invited me,
the aura of invincibility no more projected

This news felt like a ton of bricks hit my spikes
I thought now he would change his tune
he would stress the seriousness of the threat
Telling his cohorts no one is immune

I feared he might even support masks
and the practice of social distancing,
may no longer host “super spreader” events
might even curb in person politicking

I am relieved that my fears were unfounded
He was and will remain a role model to emulate
for those who flaunt public health norms,
follow misguided policies and play with their fate

He is even more emboldened by his fast recovery
Now telling his countrymen, to not fear this virus
I have beaten it and so can you
Live your life, do not be fearful and nervous

We are fortunate for your “leadership”
You prioritize politics over science
This allows us a freer hand to do our job
To boot, you even sell pseudo-science!

So, hats off to you, Mr. President
You are an inspiration to billions of us
We thank you from every strand of my RNA
Knowing you has certainly been a definite plus

We wish you the absolute best in the upcoming election
We rather have you back in the White House
than to see “Sleepy Joe” take over from you
In you, we see a lion, in Sleepy Joe just a mouse.

You have been the single most important person
in the success we have enjoyed in your country
With you back at the helm, we are sure
to set a new record in winter by our infantry

We know that a vaccine will emerge one day
And our natural tendencies will be thwarted
But the day of “herd” immunity is still far off
Till then we will continue doing the job we started

Count of my victims is accelerating worldwide
Covid-19 fatigue has set in, prudence is gone
With winter fast approaching, I am doubling down
A reinvigorated Covid-19 season is set to dawn

I sincerely believe our best days are yet to come
Winter is the ideal time for us to feast on you
Packed indoors like sardines in a can
and having to deal with my cousin, the regular flu

A message to mankind (I do have a heart; hearts come in different shapes!)
Don't lull yourself in a false sense of victory
Even as you “conquer” over my strain
A new more virulent cousin of mine is sure to
emerge and cause more misery and pain.

My whole family will be back to give our thanks at Thanksgiving holiday of yours.
Happy to say, by then, we would have made personal introductions to millions more.

Until we meet again, Ciao.

A letter from Covid-19 – A special News Bulletin (Letter #6; November 2020)

We are pleased to announce the achievement
of a special milestone in our evolving story
US logged 100,000 new cases on Friday Oct 30
We have reached new heights and glory!

When we began our crusade earlier in 2020,
We could not have imagined the sad plight of America
Our sights were aimed at less advanced countries
Such as south east Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

Such great accomplishments do not come w/o
the help of great many people on the stump
We have countless people to thank, but at the top
must be your president - Donald Trump

With world's best public health infrastructure,
health Institutes, medical professionals, and scientists
and the richest economy on the planet to boot
Who would have thought you would act so amateurish!

By politicizing masks and encouraging large gatherings
Trump did great damage to the best defense against us
Delegitimizing professionals, downplaying severity and
contradicting scientists only helped to spread the virus

You know, good policy is not always good politics
and good politics is not always good policy
One can only push an unpopular directive
So far and wide in a federal democracy

Don't get us wrong, we are not complaining
We are giving credit where credit is due
Hats off to you, our friend, Donald Trump
We could not have done it without you.

With winter taking hold in earnest
Holiday season fast approaching
We are confident that our march will continue
unabated; our success will be far reaching.

We wish you happy thanksgiving.
This will be a special occasion for us too
We will get to show our prowess, these
gatherings will be fertile grounds for our crew!

Enjoy the circus (oops I meant the election!) in the meantime.
We will be back even more charged up and still in our prime.

Ciao.

A letter from Covid-19 – Xtra Xtra Edition : Vaccine Special (Letter #7; November 2020)

We have read the news re. the V-word*
We know vaccine is our formidable enemy
But, mass inoculations are months away
Till then, we will continue our merry journey
(* Vaccine)

We have known this day was bound to come
But, you surprised us by the haste
Now we need to speed up our campaign
There is no time for us to waste

Vaccine news is not all doom and gloom
There is still plenty of time for our crew
But we cannot relax or let our “spikes” down
We just need to keep ploughing through

We have to put “*metal to the pedal*”
You must agree, we are damn good at what we do
OTOH, you are handicapped by being *human*
We know your proclivities, to us it is nothing new

Enough about the vaccine and its promise,
let’s focus on the here, now and present
We are full throttle; zipping around the globe
No country, no human being is sacrosanct

We thank you from the “ends of our spikes”
for letting us have the best times of our lives
Victim count is growing across the globe
leading us to do cartwheels and high-fives

We would like to wish our American friends
a very happy and joyous thanksgiving
It is the time to spend with family
No ifs or buts or misgivings

Not to ignore our friends around the world,
especially Christians, Xmas is only weeks away
They need to celebrate Christ’s birth
A pandemic cannot get in their way

We know everyone is “virus fatigued”
It is only natural; it has been a long time
Being a social animal, you need social touches
Reacting to your primal urge is not a crime

We know how you feel - “burned out” and isolated
Nine months of directives and admonishments for you
While miscreant Politicians defy their own edicts
But, then you know politicians, it is nothing new

Hypocrisy comes as second nature to them
They do not even pretend to hide inconsistencies
Newsom* attending a birthday party indoors,
shows “walking the talk” is for sissies!
(* Gavin Newsom – California Governor)

No in-class instructions in public schools
While life goes on as before at private schools
Guess, where does Newsom send his kids?
Yes to private schools, you think we are fools! 😞

You are being told to not visit grandma
while politicians* make an “urgent” trip to Hawaii
I am sure you are not surprised with this
Who can resist a free trip to Maui?
(* California legislators)

Pelosi* visited a hair salon ignoring the health directive
But, when you try to do the same, you are castigated
Why is it that politicians brazenly flaunt the rules?
Because they can; I too would feel manipulated
(* Nancy Pelosi – Speaker of the House of Representative, US Congress)

I don't blame you for not cowing to
the demands of public health officials
They sit in ivory towers and issue orders
without any consideration for life's essentials

Even after a vaccine has been approved by FDA,
the challenge of its distribution can't be minimized
Still it's fair to assume by middle of 2021, majority
of US population would have been immunized

This gives us plenty of time to do our job
You may even see some mutations,
possibly throwing “monkey wrench” in your plans
and lessen the effectiveness of the vaccinations

The story is not the same in poor countries
They lack funds, infrastructure and manpower
to immunize their entire populations any time soon
Their citizens will continue to be ours to devour
(sorry, we are only doing what nature created us to do)

That’s it for now.

My American friends, enjoy turkey and football
You must live your life, the way you want
Whatever happens, happens; fear not
Go visit your grandma, no one can say you can’t!.

We will chat again before the new year.
Until then que sera sera!

Ciao.

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A letter from Covid-19 – Goodbye (Letter #8; December 2020)

How time flies! It has been a year
since we first landed on your shores
It feels as if it was only yesterday when
our *spikes* first entered through your doors

The time has finally come to take a bow, and
to windup our hugely successful mission
Due to the start of vaccinations,
it is not the time for any indecision

We had a productive campaign,
successful beyond our wildest dreams
For the most advanced country,
sadly, it is a tale of two extremes

At one end are the public health experts
Begging and pleading for masks and distancing
At the other end are your President and his minions,
instead of reinforcing, hellbent on undermining

We commend your scientists for their ingenuity
in developing vaccine(s) in a record time
Use of the novel technology of mRNA to produce
a vaccine is nothing short of sublime!

The irony is not lost on us; the same scientists
who gave you the most novel vaccines
have had their voices muzzled, and were
derided by your president and his cronies

Another irony! more of you are dying in a day,
thanks to yours truly, than were killed on 9/11
Where is the outrage now? back then you
turned the world upside down from Hell to Heaven

A friendly reminder, it will be a while
before vaccine gives you herd immunity
If you want to be saved from my clutches,
listen to the experts; avoid stupid proclivity

We want to recognize hospital workers, who despite
not having proper PPE and being over worked
risked* their own lives to care for the sick and dying
They saw it as a moral duty, a duty they never shirked
(* many health workers died while caring for the patients)

By hoarding vaccines for your own use,
you (rich countries) are acting selfish and cruel
You are erecting every possible barrier
to not let poor countries touch your “crown jewel”

If you ask a bank robber, why he robs banks
His simple answer is that’s where the money is
Henceforth, we will focus on the poor countries
Why you ask; dah! that’s where the opportunity is!

We thank you for letting us roam free,
and allowing us to show what we are capable of
But, all “good” things must come to an end;
and so does our campaign; it’s time to sign-off.

Ciao.

PS:
Do not get too overconfident
you know, nature is always adapting
there is bound to be another episode
when your vaccines will be found wanting!
(do not say I did not warn you!)

All the best to you.

Thanks to Covid-19 from the 1% of the 1%

(Millionaires, centi-millionaires, billionaires, and centi-billionaires, especially the Tech Moguls, including Jeff Bezos, Marc Zuckerberg, et al.)

We want to thank Corona virus
for once in a lifetime opportunity
The money we have made in 6 months
Normally would have taken an “eternity”

We know Main street is hurting
Job losses continue to mount
We are making a boat load of money
So much it is almost hard to count

We realize it does not sound humane
to make money from the misery of others
But we have not taking any devious steps
To extract undue profits from our brothers

Isn't it ironic, whereas
main street is full of gloom and doom
We must say life for 1 % of 1 %
has never been rosier and is in full bloom

Do not blame us for getting rich
we are helping you through the pandemic
It is not our fault that our stock goes up
The problem of wealth gap is more systemic

Yes, people are losing homes
we feel sorry for them
Small businesses are closing, we know
On the main street, the situation is glum

It is the government's job to help average Joe
Our millions and billions are off limit
Thanks to politicians we have bought
taxes we owe are quite “minimalist”

Our friends on Wall Street are doing well too
They are raking in record profits
some of it is at the expense of little guy
Bank shareholders are enjoying the “comfits”

Our culture is “winner take all”
We got politicians in our pocket
We do not have to pay even subsistence wages
For us at the top it is quite a profitable racket

Our “raw material” comes for free
People share with us their personal details
Politicians complain every so often
But, in the end our consumers’ will prevails

We are running nice little monopolies
Government does not understand tech
We thwart competition before they wakeup
Breakup of our companies now will cause havoc

Anti-trust rules are ancient and archaic
Formed during the hay days of oil companies
The criteria for “monopolization” do not apply to us
our customers love us like Beethoven’s symphonies!

We sit and watch our wealth go up day after day
While in Washington, they cannot pass an aid bill
Average Joe is indeed suffering and we feel his pain
But the ball is in politicians’ court up on the Hill!

We live in a great country or what!
We are encouraged to make tons of money
using our smarts, ingenuity, and drive
It is not our problem if it causes some agony

God bless America, land that we love
Stand beside her and guide her through the Covid-19 lockdowns with masks and gloves
From the prairies to the mountains to the oceans white with foam
God bless America, our empire, our sweet home!

Written in October 2020

Postface - Corona Virus in rear view mirror

It was the eve of the new year of a new decade
People were getting ready to welcome 2020
Champagne corks were popping
Excitement was building aplenty

We expected 2020 to be a great year
NBA Championship for the Lakers
Summer Olympics, Presidential election,
World Series championship for the Dodgers

Then news started coming of a deadly virus
causing untold damage in the city of Wuhan
Predictably, virus spread to the West Coast
No one was quite sure what the virus had in plan

Hospitals unable to cope with rising cases
ICU beds and ventilators in short supply
Death toll mounting, the country went into lock-down
Feelings of fears, doom and gloom ran sky high

Lives were lost, dreams were deferred
People died alone, no one to hold their hands
Many in induced com; no awareness of the impending death
Life became as precarious as shifting sands

Gradually, situation started improving through the
implementation of sound public health measures
Such as mask wearing and social distancing, though
cooped in at home, people missed life's simple pleasures

Lockdown inflicted undue suffering and pain
On the population least able to cope
With loss of jobs came cash crunch and poverty
Seeing lives getting destroyed, people lost hope

Government tried to help financially
Federal Reserve made money cheap
Congress passed the CARES act
Which did help temporarily, but the price was steep

Congress and the White House could not agree
on a follow-up relief act, CARES-II
Peoples' misery got entangled in politics
It was a callous dereliction through and through

Sadly, wearing of masks got weaponized
in the cultural war between the left and the right
Lack of role modeling and mocking at the top
made us look cavalier; it was not a pretty sight

As time passed, virus fatigue built-up
People started behaving recklessly
Slowly the infection rate started inching up
Situation started to get out of hand needlessly

2020 is the year when our daughter turns 40
big celebrations awaited this important milestone
Sadly, Corona virus disrupted all our plans
She will have to celebrate the day all alone 😞

A vaccine became available in December
But it will be a long while, population will have to be patient
till then the only remedy is masks and social distancing
Everyone will have to do its part; mustn't get impatient

Written in December 2020