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Deconstructing the pandemic through poetry

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Current Issue

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Waking up to a pandemic
Amir Maroof Khan

Death on the Table
Sheela Jaywant

A letter to Rabid Covid: ‘What are you up to Corona?’
Anuradha Joshi
Pandemic Virtuosity

Artist:
Pachay, Graphic Designer
Image source:
https://www.facebook.com/Debcati/posts/10158276886511944

#RHiME inaugurates a new section today: Pandemic Virtuosity

The inaugural poem is one that was submitted to "Picturesque: The COVID Contract" hosted online by Parwaaz, the poetry society of UCMS, University of Delhi

"Disappointed" by a medical student
https://www.rhime.in/.../index.../rhime/article/view/284/283
Feel, Imagine, Think 2020 on #RHiME

Submissions made by a myriad of poets and writers based on the artwork by Dr Haryax Pathak
Publications

Pandemic Virtusity: 30
Feel, Imagine, Think: 12
The Poets and their Angst
I slide a tube
into his throat,
into wind pipe,
into his core.
He breathes easy,
plugged to machines
that work hard
for him.

I walk back,
in a prayer
"Please let him
live a life ahead.
'Coz
I don't want to be
the last girl
for a young man
to have met."

Kakkar K. The last girl. RHiME. 2020;7:989.
You were to stay home while I stayed at work, 
This was all I asked and needed from you, but 
You walked out of your homes, ignored my advice, 
selfish, reckless fools, not even thinking twice.

नाप लिए हैं मुकाम लगभग
मंज़िल मेरी यहीं कहीं है
हार जाऊं ये मुमकिन नहीं है
मेरी कुलबुलाहट भी कम नहीं है ...
You beat me up, you pelt stones at me,
You hurl abuses, and worse, throw punches at me.
Threatening my life as I fight at the front line...

वक़्र की मार से सम्बल जाते हैं लोग,
लोगों की मार से साँसों को बिखरते हुए देखा है।

This chaos, which has made us organise,
Has made us value the gift called life;
Has shown the world - those running after money & might -
that the healers, the cleaners, and the law keepers
Are their only hope in relieving their plight.

Do we really need a pandemic to realise that we are here on earth to support and not to exploit others; that the earth belongs to all species, not just to humans...?

This time let's NOT go back to the old normal, 
Rather, let's build a whole new world, 
one that’s filled with hope and trust, 
And with health and love and laughter.
आज यह संग्रोध मेरे जीवन में लाया वो पल:
जहाँ में गयी खुद से,
हुई में वाकिफ अपने शौक से,
आज इस संग्रोध ने फिर दिया मुझे मौका
खुद के भीतर के खजाने को खोजने का!
वो घर ही होता है, साहब
जो कानपुर से दिल्ली, दिल्ली से कानपुर
पैदल भी चलवाता है
वो घर ही होता है

जो हजारों मीलों की दूरी तय कराता है
और पुलिस की लाठियों से भी पिटवाता है
वो घर ही होता है

The doctors, nurses, and other workers, Who worked with so much determination, stood by your side, steadfast and unwavering, even when compromised by many an administration.

Mullick S. Dedicated to the frontliners who await PPE. RHiME. 2020;7:7980.
An affirmative response is not enough, each must question, and introspect
Where was the protective gear?
What made the conditions circumspect?

Mullick S. Dedicated to the frontliners who await PPE. RHiME. 2020;7:7980.
The poor struggling between sustainability and legitimacy;
The frontliners, between ethics, altruism, and responsibilities;
A middleclass person, between boredom and creativity;
The rich, between compassion and publicity;
Policymakers, between misfortune and stringent actions.

Begum J. Feeling like a funambulist, I'm walking on clouds. RHiME. 2020;7:816.
Yet, our crew - the frontliners - strive to plug the holes. Everyone doing their bit to fight against the waves. Some are scared, some lost in early smoke; others wondering who, why, what and how.

Begum J. Feeling like a funambulist, I'm walking on clouds. RHiME. 2020;7:816.
क्या मतलब था नए विमानों का, 
उद्धार के उन प्रमाणों का, 
जो कठिन समय में फेल हुए, 
एक नोटिस पर ही रद्द किए।

The face of empathy is starting to disappear, blurring as more of us give in to the forgiving nature of apathy. My idle mind questioning a worn out yet guilty conscience. Is it safer, if we just say that we tried?
I am learning to seal the seams of my lips; to pretend that the healer doesn't need healing in a manner reminiscent of Frost when he talked of being one acquainted with the night, but with a smile that hides my bitten tongue.

Salwan A. Some stutters remain lost, nameless. RHiME. 2020;7:185.
My hands work with a deliberate dexterity, borrowed from a dream I once had. Sometimes, I can see thin strands of sharp gossamer swooping from each corner of the hospital ward and cutting into my fingers that are not allowed to tremble. Not allowed to bleed.
The boss spends countless bucks
In building a fancy marble structure,
But nothing is done for the frontline men
If the safety harness should rupture.
No funds are ever gleefully spent
For doctors' emotional wellbeing,
While they are held responsible for
The misery of all the poor and ailing!

Ghiya M. Save the doctor and the nurse. RHiME. 2020;7:1202.
I have revived your body,
Even when you demeaned it,
I have dressed your wounds like
It was my heart that bled.
I have eased your pain when
I couldn’t fight its cause,
I have stood relentless,
Even when you said you’d rather give up.

Pandya P. I've passed you by at the bus stand. RHiME. 2020;7:180.
Poetry, the pandemic, and Ethics

Anger Fear Abuse Burden Despair Helplessness Burnout Feeling unsupported

Fortitude Reflection Enlightenment Compassion Humanity Empathy Professionalism Ethics Gratitude