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'In the time of COVID' – Prose and poetry during lockdown– Mid-2020!

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We are presently in the middle of a raging war with coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).^{1,2} A world speeding with challenges and flushed with promises took some time to see the devil in our midst. In the thick of it all now, we grapple with devastations wrecked by the new evil and are quickly coming to terms with the new normal. From the rational to religious, scientific to dogmatic, expert to naïve; it is all there flooding the public domain.

A world shocked and stunned beyond senses and bereft of any incisive solutions has withdrawn and sought solace in the primordial, time-tested and defensive of all strategies, isolation.³ This has been the first defence of humans since we inhabited this planet and ironically, we are back beating a hasty retreat to the caves again. Defence is a better form of offence and our reactions are justified when weighed in the prism of the death and devastation in our midst. As we sit it out patiently, waiting out our time and the virus, we face the challenges far deadlier than the virus too. The brittleness of our mental health stands like a raw wound craving for empathy to heal it. The economic pains far easily outweigh the health gains; this may be the wringer our generation has to toil through.⁴

A world sailing in uncertain times is plagued by an unpredictable and formidable enemy. What was

initially anticipated to be a transient blotch in our infallible times is now running an extended course. The longer this lasts; it is becoming increasingly clear that we are in for a long haul. Pre-COVID world better braces itself for a post-COVID era too - An era when we will learn how to cosy up, co-exist and hopefully outlive the plague of our times.

As we sit back brooding in our caves
The mask of invincibility ripped off our pretty faces
Wondering, what jolted us rudely
Us and our piped dreams.

Humbled for once
Numbed by the numbers
We go tizzy, introspecting.
Was it a run too fast?
That we blurred all the tell-tale signs
Of a little germ germinating
Seed and spread, to sow her reap.

Rationalists in us reflect reasons
Our scientific bend seeks a causal
The religious pray for solace and redemption
Sceptics swim in the shallow sea of facts.

We look down the ocean of vicissitude
We squint hard and telescopic
We don't fathom the depth, not as yet.
What rolled us by
Can so easily
Raze us too.

Promising prick of vaccine
To ingenuity of isolation
Miracle molecules
To the rebirth of beliefs
It's back to the drawing board
As we start again with a clean slate.

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Stung and smarting still
Humbled and humane again
We shore up our strengths
Pick up our battered pride
Reboot our engine of endurance
We work, knitting the seams together
The tears and the holes
The fabric of our delicate existence.

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