

## Pandemic Poems

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### The Grace Period

The cars were faster  
Changes were quicker  
Even the speed of running was faster  
The internet too had become faker and better  
All had been mustered  
Life appeared finally managed

Then came the ogre  
It ravaged and stopped everything  
Keeping the streets clear  
The ogre ate all the children who played outside  
Extending its tentacles to those safe inside  
The adults stayed indoors too  
Save for those armed enough to face the ogre

To confuse the ogre  
People made colorful masquerade suits  
With masks that covered the eyes, nose and face  
Some made music and danced in their houses  
When the ogre was asleep  
Some parents and adults ran some errands  
Hunting and gathering food  
Sometimes driving far to find food

The ogre changed everything  
Now everyone washed their hands more  
The short lines for services became longer  
The ogre looked on and smiled  
The ogre was winning  
The ogre killed some people  
Everywhere people were planning for change  
They wanted their lives back

The scientists worked day and night  
The doctors and nurses worked day and night  
Families took care of their sick fearfully  
The garbage men collected garbage carefully  
Then one day, it all stopped  
The ogre was caught and destroyed  
People started living their lives

They shared what they had learned during the quarantine  
They wanted to keep some of the lifestyle changes  
They wanted to remember the good experiences  
They also wanted not to repeat some mistakes  
They wanted to continue washing their hands while singing  
Cooking food once a week  
They realized that they all were equal

Children wrote a list of what they wanted their world to be  
A world of no isolation  
A world of health for all  
A world of love and equality  
A world of play  
A better world

**You Shall Be Me**

Now you know my life  
I am always already social distanced  
I am always already physical distanced  
I am read as coming from a place of diseases

Now you know your healthy body can be read as sick  
That others cannot want to sit next to you  
How it feels to looked at suspiciously  
How it feels to be read as infectious

That you can be asked if you are sick  
That you can be tested for any disease  
That you can be tested and retested  
That you can be isolated and quarantined

To be asked about Ebola  
To be tested for HIV/AIDS  
To be thought of as medically abnormal  
To be stigmatized

Now you will be asked where you were last  
Your dignity will be attacked  
Then this will become normal and you will learn to hear it  
Presumed dangerous, always pathologized

## **Viral Memories**

It is like the 80s again  
 There is a virus going viral  
 Killing the famous and the unknown  
 It seems far then becomes close  
 Like a slow river that suddenly turns turbulent  
 Destroying all its banks and those near it

It is like the 80s again  
 We are afraid of now  
 We are spreading rumors  
 We are stigmatizing and naming others  
 We are unsure of our future

It is like the 80s again  
 The scientists are at work to stop the virus  
 Running experiments day and night  
 Those giving care taking a risk  
 Some dying like their patients

It is like the 80s again  
 The present virus seems wild  
 It is more dangerous  
 It has stopped the world  
 It once has made toilet paper precious  
 It turned hoarders into boarders

It is like the 80s again  
 With some twist  
 Death is more palpable  
 Making our mortality visceral  
 Forcing us all to be still  
 So, we pretend to forget our fate  
 We watch television, Netflix, Hulu, play games  
 Then return to our lack of control  
 Eventually turning to hope

It is like the 80s again  
 We will win and return to our life  
 We will be changed forever  
 We will tell stories our lockdown, quarantine, stay at home period  
 Maybe we will learn to live with the virus  
 As we have learned to live with the one from 80s  
 Sometimes pretending it does not exist

**Returning to Work**

this nation was built to work  
we must get back to work soon  
the workers are sick and scared  
but we must get back to work  
remind them they have work to do  
they must get back to work  
for the plantation will make losses  
for the crops will die  
then the master will make losses  
the workers must return to work  
they were made to work  
if they do not work, they will be lazy  
if they do not work, they will be dangerous  
we must get back to work soon

**The Young Kenyans**

they are now at home  
held behind doors  
sometimes playing out  
not going to school  
waiting to go back to where they stopped  
playing, sleeping, eating and nagging  
perhaps studying and learning something new  
growing tall everyday  
will their uniforms fit them after the coronavirus period  
will they remember what they learned  
will they remember where their books will be  
will they remember the sound of the bell  
will they remember the names of their friends  
will they forget these scary moments  
will this become part of their memory  
the virus called corona  
the virus of curfew, lockdown, quarantine and stay home  
worries the Kenyan parent

**The End**

When the virus will ebb  
We will form an orb  
And play some dub  
Bad memories will off rub

We shall return to a form of normalcy  
Maybe sustain something fancy  
Having learned after we lack efficiency  
Now maybe better with our intimacy

We shall start a new  
Still remembering what we knew  
Bringing forth a new worldview  
Perhaps a counterview