



RIVAL TO THE RECKONING OR BLESSING IN DISGUISE

The Chronicles of
A Locked Life

BY THE ELEVENS

"Fear, feel or flee...?"

This is the story of an ordinary juvenile, Cody, who lives in the 21st century in the year 2020. He lives with his two loving and concerned parents, and a younger sister who always lightens up his day even when it appears impossible. His dad works in one of the leading hospitals in the country as a finance manager being the only breadwinner for his family. As the world was about to enter the ever-spoken and well-awaited year of 2020, things didn't go the way people had planned it. Year 2020 was all about flying cars, AI robots, and so many other high-tech revolutionaries. Some of these milestones were even yet to be achieved but just as humans became extremely mindful of the future, the present was not even to be thought of. 2020 then became a rough start, with everyone's worst nightmares drawing closer towards reality exclusively with the evolution of an incurable virus that started to spread like wildfire across the globe.

Cody loved going to school every day, enjoyed hanging out with his best buddies, and treasured his daily cycling time. He would pick his sister right after school was over and walk her to their house which was just about one lane away. Cody's mom would have then prepared lunch in which the family would sit around the dining table and happily enjoy the food. All of this was only possible way before lockdown began.

Months later, as things changed around the world, Cody was reluctant just as any ordinary soul, to sacrifice his daily routine to the bitterness of the lockdown. Cody's school closed down a month ago and all the days of having fun with his friends vanished. The streets that were once full of playful children, roaming pedestrians, and scattered cars, transformed into a barren, desolate area with a sort of dystopian look in it. People across the world began facing difficulties with unemployment as businesses went bankrupt or just couldn't operate with the current situation. Cody's mom feared for her husband as day in day out, he worked in a hospital environment. Many offices started to operate through online facilities with VPN access, but Cody's dad remained going to work every day with a curfew pass in his hand. One night, Cody overheard his mom and dad talking in the living room, and just as curiosity got into him, he eavesdropped on the whole conversation.

“Can’t you stay at home and work online, honey?”

“Darling, my office doesn’t work that way, as it is a leading hospital”

“I know, but... I fear that you might get infected!”

“Don’t worry, our office has taken all precautionary measures, besides I’m fortunate enough to receive my monthly pay, am I not?”

“Yes you are...”

“Come on now don’t cry, we have to be strong in the eyes of our children...”

From that day onwards, nightmares clouded Cody’s head as he worried that his father may be just another mere victim of this Corona virus. His paranoia further grew as he came to know that all of his other friends’ fathers stayed at home and worked online, while his dad kept on being cooperative with his employers at this time of pandemic. This was the fear that Cody masked within him ever since.

As days became weeks and then months, the number of daily reported cases began increasing tremendously, and this was a real nightmare to see on the news headlines. Cody’s mom had a selfless personality as day by day the concern of her neighbours grew. Our neighbours lived across our house and they had a little child. Sadly the father of the house had lost his job due to the current situation, in which the poor family faced a financial crisis. Cody’s mother opted to lend a helping hand in terms of rations without a second thought, but just as then, Cody’s dad reasoned with his mom. He mentioned that helping and feeling for one another is an exceptional human virtue, however, with the present-day condition, Cody’s dad had an apprehensive mind and didn’t wish to take a chance in which the meal provided by their family would cause some sort of illness to the neighbours.

With each passing day, things exacerbated forcing the lockdown to be extended, and one day, Cody glanced through the window and caught glimpse of a man. This man seemed to be searching for something or someone perhaps, and on the way, he sprained his ankle and collapsed on the pavement. With no one to help, he laid there, possibly waiting for an “Angel” to help him up. Cody had no option but to remain at home and so he could not be this man’s angel. Cody waited, and watched, if there would be any passing pedestrian to help him up. Instead, Cody thought to himself, “Will anyone help him by giving a hand?”. Again an epiphany struck him, “Who would do so by giving their hand to a complete stranger?” The meeting of hands were put to an end some time back as shaking hands ceased, with the fleeing of hands taking its place due to the ever contagious virus. So will a human help a man in need or flee from a man in need, keeping in mind the current crisis?

The choice of fleeing from another or feeling for another was quite conflicting, Cody pondered upon. The nefarious virus had decided everything from what will happen to us to what has happened to us. All we have remained are the supplications and prayers of the entire human race and a child’s dream to come true.

-Thaabit Raziq



-SARA RASHID

CONFINED & QUARANTINED

While in real life, the world feels paralyzed in a suspenseful state of anticipation of the dreaded future. It's eerily quiet, with almost no one outside out and about, the only sounds that can be heard are the occasional birds chirping, the soft drops of the spring rain, and the wind whistling through the trees. Despite the crystal clear blue skies from the lack of traffic, the future couldn't be more obfuscated and befogged as everyone waits anxiously in isolation hoping for the pandemic to pass. The coronavirus has changed how we work, play and learn, Schools are closing, sports leagues have been canceled, and many people have been asked to work from home.

While they may seem radically different on the surface, they both share an underlying root of fear that drives both of their reactions. Fear floods the internet with so much information that it overwhelms everyone on it, causing chaos and panic. While on the other hand, the unknown and highly contagious nature of the virus causes almost everyone to be scared straight and stiff in their homes, with nearly no one even daring to leave them even for the essentials. For the first time in history there was a theft taken place in order to steal masks and toilet paper, and this shows the values of things that we usually don't care about.

The streets which were filled with colorful lights and chattering of people were no more. No more public transportation, no more socializing and people had to maintain a social distance. It was a year where people had time to socialize with their family and also taught the value of having a family and made them spend time together, it was something that never happened before the virus had spread, people doing their own work, not caring about the family rather only on worldly possessions and the definition of HERO has changed instead of an athlete or celebrity It's doctors, nurses, front line workers, teachers and scientists.

-AASHIF AHMED

Hope and pray

When the time came to self-isolate, I was quite in dismay.

As we dwell on the past, I never thought life would be this way.

As life on streets started to disconnect,
the busy lives turned their concerns to disinfect.

Heroes frontline, fighting against an enemy too small to acknowledge.

As unity is strength, their aim was to demolish.

During our time in confinement,
it seems as if our busy lives had gone into retirement.

A creative mind could not fail to impress,
especially during these times of distress.

Friends and family have been estranged,
But our bonds and love will always be the same.

We hope and pray for a cure to be found,
As we turn to our gods to turn this thing around.

- PRAVIN

Dietnosed with Covid-19

Tears shed, and mortalities were overabundant, by what news reporters claim, “a speck that annihilated the world.” Covid-19, a calamity that catapulted lives into a realm of possibilities (or lack thereof). In May, almost everyone is observing self-quarantine, predictably, to protect others from this pandemic. Paradoxically, stargazers contemplated hitting Mars in 2020, yet many can’t even step out of their residences. Can we help the WHO or our society?

Firstly, as time passes by relentlessly, civilians are locked up like frantic doves and encounter frustrations due to a plethora of financial instabilities, and mainly lacking employment. Secondly, the world is facing its worst currently, demises that scars loved ones and soaring of essential commodities that people in their multitudes cannot handle. Restaurants are also closed down because of this dire situation. According to the Economy Policy Institute, the labour market is lacking 10.9 million jobs. However, statistics show that personages have found “hundred thousand” new jobs.

Moreover, these poignant words don’t give justice to the sheer amount of people starving. Why cannot humans be cooperative to those who are in need, by conserving resources and preventing wastage? Adding fuel to the fire, researchers reiterate that severe consequence of 265 million people may face acute famine at the end of 2020. Hallucination is also a side effect of Covid-19, since the skyrocketing of prices for a significant reserve - water.

On the contrary, some have stepped up their game and are showing individuality by projecting ways to improvise delicacies. Thirdly, challenges, attempts and inspirational words are all about the grapevine, resulting in many to adjust their endeavours to support themselves and the community to eradicate this virus once and for all. It can predictably be the solution for our devastation: subsequently, are you ready to lend a helping hand? To further elaborate this, thirty per cent of Americans today work from home, which in return entails more cooking from home. This sacred act has put lives out of misery; yet, others many contend this, by stating the leap in prices of dough, wheat and rice. For instance, Nigeria's charges for rice in retail markets leapt exponentially around 25% in the latter part of March. For all what we know, this value remains theoretical by the time you are reading this and definitely could have risen or declined as scientists are on the verge of identifying a solution (god forbid if there is at all one). Are we equipped to be the keys that sacrifice ourselves to allow the world embraces its shine?

Furthermore, this has enticed particular residents to cope up during this contagion and virtually create new connections, igniting forgotten ones and exterminating solitude. Besides, folks are tuning in on the shindig via the internet. Additionally, YouTube and Netflix are observing a mild increase of 15.5%. Lastly, the internet's influence is rather staggering, as such, many can forget and portal themselves from reality. This medium enabled professional to highlight their expertise, being proactive while transpiring in the safety of their home. Attributable,

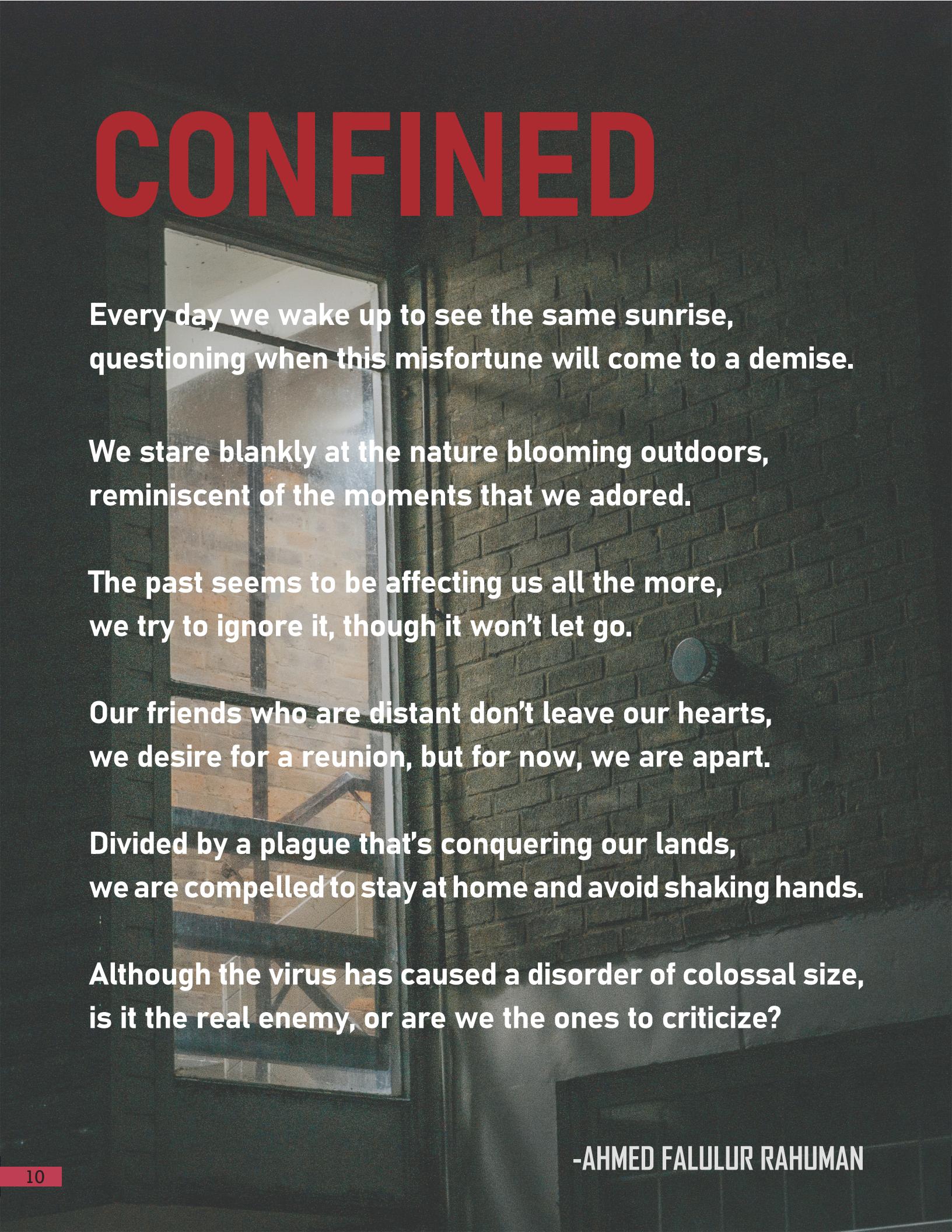
countries have begun local production of food, and this prevents the spread of the virus and boosts the prosperity of the nation. And then there are those lunatics hoarders.

Conversely, hoarders are selfish and inconsiderate greedy heads; history would perceive. The main reason behind this phenomenon began when some pedestrians decided on buying numerous things and created a stockpile and a stockpile they collected. This unfortunate verdict led every Tom, Dick and Harry to meander their way and sweep through stores. Why cannot we be considerate? Does someone need this much food supplies? Also, it is due to these frenzied people many lives are in stake. These are typical beings that come and go every generation: enjoying their lives and including others in a catastrophe. In actuality, 19 million Americans hoard, which is roughly around six per cent of the U.S population. Despite this, forty million Americans face hunger each day, according to Wikipedia.

Nevertheless, the globe's protectors are the people who live simple and considerate, to be the ray of light in the dark abyss [Covid-19]. In hindsight, we were able to change the world before and can unquestionably be the difference today. People are humane in these precarious situations, like never seen before: we remain as one and work as one, to destroy this virus. Should you think we would achieve tour de force, unite humanity by holding hands and rise like air, for I believe that this pandemic isn't eternal nor is our defeats.

-Shabbeer Imtiaz

CONFINED



**Every day we wake up to see the same sunrise,
questioning when this misfortune will come to a demise.**

**We stare blankly at the nature blooming outdoors,
reminiscent of the moments that we adored.**

**The past seems to be affecting us all the more,
we try to ignore it, though it won't let go.**

**Our friends who are distant don't leave our hearts,
we desire for a reunion, but for now, we are apart.**

**Divided by a plague that's conquering our lands,
we are compelled to stay at home and avoid shaking hands.**

**Although the virus has caused a disorder of colossal size,
is it the real enemy, or are we the ones to criticize?**

-AHMED FALULUR RAHUMAN



-HANA IMRAN

CODE WHITE

Inside the human body, roughly 37.2 trillion cells work energetically, all day, every day. The story begins in a deserted tissue of the windpipe. A Naive T Cell, an immune cell that has never encountered a pathogen before, was patrolling the place. Not a single ordinary cell was to be seen, but then he heard a groan, and no sooner, did he see it...

He saw regular cells; peculiar ones that had slimy green headwear. An infected cell! The Naive had one option: to run. Unfortunately, he was soon surrounded. "Somebody! Help me!" yelled the Naive T Cell. Just then out of nowhere, through a crack in the walls, a neutrophil jumped out and battled the virus-infected cells until there was none in sight. Neutrophils are white blood cells whose task is to eliminate foreign substances.

"Hey, are you okay?" the neutrophil asked. "Yeah, never mind that. How did you get here?" asked the T Cell. "It's called migration, the ability to move freely through the system." The commotion caused by the neutrophil attracted more infected cells and soon the neutrophil was in a bad situation. He couldn't deal with all of them alone, and the Naïve cell wasn't any help. A pretty girl in a white dress happened to pass by, and all Naïve could do was warn her. He was about to yell at her to run until he noticed the massive sword she carried on her back. It took the pretty girl a few minutes at most to exterminate the infected cells. "I owe you one macrophage" commented the neutrophil. "Just doing my job Neutrophil," she replied. Macrophages are white blood cells that kill foreign substances, they find and send immunity information and cleans up dead bacteria.

The Macrophage bent to squish one of the headwear of a dead infected cell and concluded that it was a coronavirus. "This is Macrophage. It seems the coronavirus has invaded this body." the Macrophage informed a dendritic cell through an intercom. The dendrite, in turn, passed the antigen information to the commander, The Helper T cell.

"Rest assured neutrophil, the killer T cells will soon be here to assist you" Macrophage informed them.

With wide eyes, the naive T cell exclaimed, "What?! Killer T cells?! Please tell them I brought down at least one of these viruses or else ..."

"Cha! Where are those damn viruses? The killer T Cells are here to wipe them all out!" barked the killer cells. They had a black military uniform and a cap with "KILL" written in bold.

Killer T cells, also known as cytotoxic T cells, are immune cells that mobilize under orders from helper T cells. They kill virus-infected cells, cancer cells, and the like.

"Humph! So, you're here too neutrophil." Just then the killer T cells spotted the naive T Cell trying to crawl his way out.

"Hey, Naive! You let someone else do you work for you again huh? Hey there's still a whole horde of them over here. Let's see you slaughter at least one of them this time, you little punk!"

So, the killer T cells, neutrophils, and macrophages went on to battle the virus-infected cells.

"Kill them all, don't allow any more common cell casualties!" yelled captain Killer T- cell.

Petrified by the virus, the naive T cell ran away screaming. “Hey, naive! Get back here! Ugh just forget about him Lets deal with the virus first.”

During his escape, he bumped into a dendritic cell. Dendritic cells notify other immune cells about invasions. “Hey! Are you struggling in battle? Don’t worry I’ll call for help” the dendritic cell asked.

“No, I ran away from the battle. I’m just not as strong as neutrophils, macrophages, or killer T cells.” wept the naive T cell.

“That’s not true naive T cell, you’re not the only one. Nobody starts powerful, ya know. Here, take a look at this.” The dendritic cell handed a photo album containing pictures of the killer T cells back when they were naive T cells.

“That’s right! Long ago, your seniors were just like you. They all were naive T cells too.”

Back in the battlefield, the resilient killer t cells sensed something. “I’ve got the chills! It’s like the dark past that we kept sealed has been released” cried the killer T cells.

“Don’t worry naive we’re all here for you, see? You have all these friends working with you, so you know what you have to do, don’t you?” comforted the dendritic cell.

A piercing bright light was starting come from the naive T cell. He was turning into a herculean muscular-looking cell; he had undergone T cell categorization. T cell categorization is a process when Naive T Cells get activated and turn into effector T cells.

“I guess you could say that’s my job.” thought the dendritic cell to himself. Dendritic cells can activate naive T cells.

On the other hand, the killer T cells were facing the short end of the stick. They were driven into a corner by the infected cells. Just then, the newly reformed effector cell returned. “I apologize for behaving in such an unsightly manner earlier, but I have conquered my past weakness and returned.”

“Hey, so he finally did it freaking naive! This gives us herculean strength.”

“Hey, I’m here too, sorry to keep you waiting, I’m B cell! And I made some antibodies.” exclaimed a young guy in a green uniform. B cells are lymphocytes that fight pathogens using antibodies.

The efforts of the immune cells and the hard work of other cells were put, to eradicate the disease. However, it has caused discomfort to the body through symptoms such as fever, sneezes, coughs and decreased appetite.

Fever helps the body reach the optimum temperature for immune cells and suppresses the multiplication of the viruses. Sneezes and coughs are reflex actions that expel any foreign substance like a virus. Decreased appetite occurs as a result of the immune cells using energy that is usually used for digestion.

A fortnight later, the efforts of the immune cells and coordination of everyone, the virus had perished from the body.

-ADEEL FAHIM



Amane Yusuf

The Silent Cry

My heart hurts
With your turns
In your attitude
With no latitude

You once asked for my answer
Wanting to be my life dancer
Once again
Forgetting the past life of pain

My heart shouted a yes
But you weren't able to guess
Thinking it's a no
You left before I could say so

You say something
Next day it means nothing
I believed in them
But it was a worthless gem

I waited long
With no song
Hoping you'll see
What you did to me

-Ayesha Omar



BY: Dr Ramali Mashoor

Q. As a doctor, which category of people do you vision to be most at risk?

A.

- 1.Elderly patients
- 2.Patients with other diseases like Diabetes, Heart disease, Kidney disease and patients taking medications to reduce their immunity like Transplant patients.
- 3.Obese patients

Q. Treating patients infected with covid-19, how has it affected you mentally as your putting your life at risk?

A.

My anxiety levels are

high, obviously as this is a new disease with no definitive treatment. Sleep patterns were disrupted too. Also we are frontline staff with the maximum exposure. As we prepared for this well before we actually got patients, the risks were minimised. We had sufficient Personal Protective Equipment. Once we had a few patients coming in, we got used to it and our confidence level went up too. Long term mental health effects will be known only later.

Q. What is your experience treating patients tested positive different from

treating other infections-related diseases?

A.

We learn new things as we go along. We did not know if these patients would survive on the ventilator. Sometimes we were the last people in their life to talk to.

When some were nearing the end of their life, we were the only one to hold their hands. No relatives were allowed.

Lot of research is happening with covid-19 positive patients too.

Q. Is it possible for patients who have recovered from covid19 to get natural immunity towards

the virus?

A.

We don't know for sure. Most probably yes. Only doing antibody tests will tell. We are not there yet.

Q. Do you think that these clothe masks used by many people of developing countries are actually effective in controlling the spread of corona virus?

A.

Masks are most effective for patients who have the disease.

For non-infected people the scientific evidence is weak. It would be good practice to wear masks in public places.

Q. How has quarantine isolation and the lack of socialization affected the psychology of people of different ages especially children?

A.

I think the worse affected are the old people and children. The elderly, unfortunately are at risk of mental health issues like depression after a while without social interaction. Although various programmes have been introduced to keep the children occupied, nothing can replace school. They will suffer from educational poverty. The working group of people

will have both mental and financial impact due to job losses.

Also there has been an increased incidence of domestic violence.

is to be guided by the science.

Q. As you know their various kinds of medicine all over the world. Yet governments from all over the world have been spending billions of dollars to fund the western medical field. Do you think any form of indigenous medicine would be the cure to this virus?

A.

Indigenous medicine or western medicine, the truth is there is no treatment for this disease. The most valuable medicine at present is Oxygen. We support all organs when they are critically ill. There is lots of research happening.

Q. The lack of protective equipment in hospitals has led to huge setback in fighting this virus. Are there any alternatives or is the idea of manufacturing the equipment needed in the hospital practical?

A.

It has been an issue due to the very high volume of patients.

I don't think there is a short answer apart from planning well ahead.

Q. What is your opinion on the progress scientists are making on developing a vaccine?

A.

There is good progress made on developing a vaccine. Oxford University has already started trialling them on humans. This is the most effective exit strategy.

Q. Politics has been great influence to the field of medicine during this pandemic. Some decisions taken by politicians over the recent past has been to an extent both successful and unsuccessful. Do you think it is important for politicians to interfere with this crisis?

A.

Politicians are the ones who have the power to make decisions. The only way they can make good decision

MBBS MD FRCA FICM

Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine and Anaesthesia

Colchester general hospital -NHS

UK Colchester

A MYSTERY AFTER ALL

Looking at the window

Waiting till the sun hits my face

Waiting till the memories pops up into my

Reckless brain

The way we students “ no matter boys or girls “
prank our teachers

And end up in the principal's office

Day after Day

The day we wake up and drag ourselves to
school because of the faces we love to
see everyday

Remembering the days, we distributed other
classes and end up in the VP's office everyday by

Singing in our beautiful and melodic voices

The day I Wish, I Wish I could scream from my school
Windows again, scream from the rooftops again
To make the memories I lost to came alive

Again

The way I Wish I could scream to the world and tell
them that this lockdown

Was never

Is never

And will never

Be a mystery at all

-SALMA CASSIM



-SARA RASHID

A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor

1st Jan 2020

"Happy new year everyone" Those were my first words of this year. Which seemed to be just like any other new year. But this year just felt different. New decade? No. New resolutions? No. What could it be?

Feb 2020

My friends and I just came back from a successful event where we ran a two day bookstall. It was a great start to the year and we wondered what could go wrong now? This year seems to be a big deal as it was the start of a new decade. The best part for me personally was the announcement of the 4th Season of "**Stranger things**"! I was overwhelmed with joy that the start of the year just got better with this announcement.

March 2020

Talks about China and the Covid-19 were being chattered through the hallway and all around my school. A day later, it was the 9th of March when we were struck by this life-threatening news. "The COVID-19 is now a worldwide pandemic". I couldn't hold the emotions of joy when I heard that there won't be school until further notice. It took me a few minutes before I realized how serious, uncontrollable and uncontrollable this virus could get.

Today

That brings us to today. All of us forced to stay indoors to help reduce the spread. Getting closer to friends and family, thinking about how I would spend my time going out with my friends and family when these tough times are over, but in order to achieve this we need to do our part in helping to flatten the curve.

This brings me to my next point,

What have I done so far? What has this lockdown taught me? What can I do to help our world heal faster?

This difficult time has taught me the value of time, the value of how important your family is and to never take anything for granted. None of us expected for something like this to happen.

To tell the truth, this lockdown hasn't taught me much yet but I'll tell you one thing, never let a crisis like Covid-19 go waste. A crisis, as unprecedented as this one, will not leave until we have learnt the very important lesson that it's probably here to teach us.

It is our job to do our part, listen to media, follow restrictions, and take precaution (Not just stockpile). I urge everyone to stay indoors, do our role and help the front-line workers, who are working tirelessly to save lives every day, to reduce the weight on their shoulders. You can help flatten the curve in the shadows as well by donating to those who are in need.

It is our job to do our part, listen to media, follow restrictions, and take precaution (Not just stockpile toilet paper). I urge everyone to stay indoors, do our role and help the front-line workers, who are working tirelessly to save lives every day, to reduce the weight on their shoulders. You can help flatten the curve in the shadows as well by donating to those who are in need.

We were so obsessed with speed, that we lost our sense of direction. It's time to change. The lockdown may be extended. This pandemic has affected us all. But don't let this get past you and stop you from achieving what you dream of.

As the days pass by and the more I talk to my friends and family, is bringing us closer than it drives us apart. Friends who have been with you from your childhood now almost feel like family. This quarantine has helped me to build a better relationship with my colleagues. If you're ever stuck with one of them in quarantine, consider yourself the luckiest.

Whenever this is over

"Is this it? Is this the end? Can we go back to our normal same old life, where walks in the parks were more than a memory and chilling with friends are just one call away? I rush into my room and get my mobile. "Bro we can finally meet!" The next minute - 15 notifications. I switch on my television and there it is. It actually says in the headlines, "It has indeed ended. We have done it." I go back to my mirror and look at those cheered and tearful eyes. "We've been through it all. For now, let's just live this moment." I then proceed to my front door. Quite a while since I've seen the sun. Take a deep breath. "Hello, world. I'm back!" - This is how I would expect the events to unfold when all of this is over.

Back to today

These tough times that we are going through are the periods of growth. The times we can learn who we are. What we can do and will learn to do. Now take a minute to think back on your past, think about these tough times and learn from it as I hope they will never be anything like this pandemic in the future.

This pandemic has indeed taught us a lot. This prepares us and gives us the confidence and strength we need to fight better in the future.

I would like to take a moment to thank some people. These people were not only saving lives but are leading by example.

Dear doctors, nurses, grocery store workers and the many that are helping in the shadows, the whole world is praising the efforts that are being made by corona warriors to ensure everyone's safety everywhere. You people had been tirelessly working to deliver essential services. Thank You SO Much.

The world as we know it will never be the same, and I hope neither will we. If we are privileged enough to survive this, let's hope we break from the past and enter the world a new, carrying a fresh perspective and a greater sense of appreciation, for everything we have.

To conclude, and hopefully this pandemic, this right here is what I would call a World War. A war that can bring us all together. A war that could finally mean something to us and our future generations to come. Something to remember, a pandemic which we can overcome, a war worth fighting.

-Daniyal Thaslim and Hammadh Ruxshan

Dear Humanity,

Thank you!

Thank you for giving me a home in a species as abundant as you. A super-host of eight-billion; walking, swimming, and flying.

Thank you for allowing me to travel across Horizons, one that stretched across oceans and seas through the North, East, South, and West.

I thought my habitat was a rainforest, away from humankind. In the far dense regions, I thought humanity was yet to occupy.

All my life, I thought I was confined to the lands that the trees occupied. Slowly but surely, I saw it fall apart, and my brothers like SARs were lucky enough to capture a large home, but somehow, I naively thought that'd show you. I guess that wasn't enough...

Then followed the floods, acid rain, and bush fires, all of which were trumpets meant to wake you up, and realize the destruction of your own kind, as revenge for destroying my lands, taking away my friends and leaving many of them obsolete.

However, you remained asleep.

Amidst your slumber, I crept in. When you were fighting amongst your own kind, pledging millions to the one who brought your friend dead or alive, meanwhile, I was pledging to wake you up. When you prepared your nuclear weapons, I was preparing my scheme of attack.

We viruses are kept in check in diverse and abundant wildlife, but when you rip forests and capture billions of species due to your insatiable wants. You bring viruses like me out of our natural quarantines.

As you drive our natural hosts to extinction, I want you to know it is not my goal to wipe out my hosts, and just like you, we too do need other life to survive. So please understand me, I know I'm smaller than your building blocks, but I possess a loud scream that echoes the all-encompassing message of your roommates in this shared planet.

I find it funny how you call yourselves, 'Homosapiens' meaning wise man and yet you were so blind to our signs, deaf to our screams and overall ignorant to our sirens for help. You are willing to give up your home for something as valueless as money, and your power-hungry mindset fakes intelligence, while you remain heedless to the fact that without our shared home, you wouldn't exist.

I'm sorry, but all of this makes me question, 'Are you really that wise?'.

I know there are a few of you human beings that can understand this. Joel Henrique Ellwanger and 13 co-authors published The paper, which is entitled "Beyond diversity loss and climate change: Impacts of Amazon deforestation on infectious diseases and public health," which shows my exact thinking as he says 'Deforestation brings people into close contact with wildlife. Both simple proximity and human consumption of bushmeat can allow animal pathogens to "jump" to humans.'

You bring me to you by capturing my original hosts and then question me, 'Why are you here?'. It was you and solely you. Your illegal trafficking and disruption of wildlife are

what caused me to jump to you.

You use more animals to feed yourselves than wild mammals and birds in their habitats, and yet you curse me for coming to you when you clearly welcomed me into your own abodes.

I'm here to let mother earth breathe again, to allow our fish to swim in the ever-flowing rivers that you filled with your garbage, I'm here to allow our birds to chirp harmoniously as they fly across our skies.

I wasn't here to foster hatred but simply bring awareness. I see you coming together to defeat me, your nurses, doctors, and chemists work tirelessly as the voices of the rational begin to be heard.

I now see the millions you pledged to bring your friend dead is what's now being used to cure my victims, and I see the power-hungry of you, realize your worthlessness without the assistance of our shared planet.

I now slowly begin to see how much you miss our home, dear mother Earth.

When you look around and realize you as a species are in lockdown, remember it was me who was meant to be locked up.

Coming out of this, you as a species will never be the same again; you will treasure those long warm hugs, the deep conversations, and those smiles from your friends.

I've destroyed your happiness, ripped many of your hard-earned money, crushed your relationships, demolished your sanity, and crashed your economy.

Out of all this, I still have one question.

Am I enough?

If the apocalyptic fires weren't enough, if vanishing glaciers aren't enough, is the excruciating pain I bring to you and your loved ones enough?

Am I enough to wake you up from your long slumber and realize the prospect of your own extermination?

As you struggle to find the antidote to my existence, I would like you to know:

I truly believe in your wisdom, please find the antidote to the deeper sickness: the slow demise of our shared planet.

Please come together and realise; war among you isn't going to make the situation any better.

As I hear you singing out of your balconies in isolation but very much so together, I on behalf of the planet have a straightforward request:

Please live up to your name. Be a Homosapien and think wisely

*With love,
Your enemy,
SARS-CoV-2*

-Nabeelah Faumi

Covid-19, the enemy that assembled the whole of humanity together

“It is during the darkest moments in life, we must focus to see light.” Malls, streets have been abandoned friendships have been broken and the darkness has overshadowed life. Streets that inundate with people have turned into a warzone. Ambulances, military vehicles, tanks, AK-47 guns, and fire trucks. Lockdown here, lockdown there, and lockdown all over the world. All we see is trauma, affliction, misery, and suffering. All we hear is COVID-19 and quarantine. All we feel is fear.

I believe fear is the most dangerous word in the dictionary. If we allow fear to control our feelings it would end in hatred and our actions would end in destruction. This is the reason for this detestation and divide, between religions and races. Often as human beings, we tend to victimize one race or religion. We sit in our comfort zones, watching televisions seeing people suffer but do we ever feel any compassion towards them? Whether it is Africans, Asians, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, any other religion or race. Now when we are in this together as one we start pointing fingers at each other as if some race or religion is responsible for this devastating virus. When you discriminate someone have you ever thought why did you do it? What did he or she do to me? This virus doesn’t care about your race or

religion it is going to hurt you.

We all have heard or seen millions of stories worldwide during this pandemic. All of them involving pain, suffering, and death. Yet mine is different. Living as a teenager in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, life was simple until this mysterious virus appeared to haunt me from daylight to moonlight. Moreover, I thought my family and I was invincible from this virus. Just like any other family mine too would sit in front of the television watching the broadcast on the mayhem the virus was causing in China. My mother would use the term. “Reckless,” to describe the Chinese government of handling the crisis. “Don’t even think about visiting Uncle Lee Chang upstairs.” My mother ordered me in a very grim manner. She would think that anyone from China would have this disease and unfortunately, I did too. “Italy reported approximately five hundred deaths today,” reported the television broadcast. “Did you visit Uncle Adriana from Italy to borrow the tennis racquet?” My father asked me in a serious tone. “No, no, no, I didn’t the tennis tournament was canceled.” Likewise, my parents restricted my communication with many of my friends and neighbors. In no time this invisible enemy was in my territory. “Now who to blame?” I asked myself. I was like a blind pessimist who had no idea of what he was blaming. I was scared to such an extent that I avoided texting or calling my friends. In my brain, my virus could spread through a simple phone call too. “Now am I going to be

cornered by my friends back in Sri Lanka? Why should I feel guilty for this irksome virus?" My mind was boggled with questions. The tables have turned now, I was the bad person. I thought my friends and relatives would stop contacting me. I felt left out from the rest of the world. Yet as time passed on the virus spread to each and every country. The whole world was in the same situation as I am. That's when it woke me up from all that fear and hatred. When the Chinese were the victims I would blame them when I was the victim the rest of the world blamed me but when the whole world is a victim of this gruesome virus who to blame? I got in contact with my neighbors who were Chinese and Italian whom I didn't speak for months. My relatives back in Sri Lanka contacted me frequently to check my wellbeing. Even though this devastating virus stole my freedom thanks to this virus I have built a strong community around me that I wish to call it a family.

Therefore my dear friends now it is your turn to reconnect with the world. We all have friends from different religions and races from whom we stopped interacting at some point in life just because their community did something wrong. Now it's time to start a conversation and build a strong relationship. Your story during this crisis doesn't have to end in suffering. If you start to think optimistically and look towards the bigger picture, you could too understand the true meaning of humanity. Then your story could too have a happy ending. We can already see this effect. Wars

are being halted worldwide, protests that promote racism are being deserted and scientists from all over the world are coming together to carry out research to find a cure to heal the whole world. Remember the day that you close your eyes to depart from this world all you will remember is the friendships and relationships you have made. This horrendous virus is going to haunt humanity for a long time more people will eventually lose their lives. Yet don't lose hope a cure will be eventually found. One main reason for the failure of governments around the world of controlling this virus is hatred between the varied communities. Each community blames one another for the spreading of this deadly virus. Now it is the time to end this. Let's us use love over hatred and unity over diversity. This way human's worst enemy will be destroyed. Now it's your turn to make this change. Since nothing is impossible if we work together. This way the infantry from all over the world will assemble together and corona will be no more. The decision is in your hands.



-DEWMITH WARANASOORIYA

LIVE IN THE MOMENT

The trick is to enjoy. Do not wish away days waiting for better ones ahead.

207k deaths from a deadly disease directed at tarnishing human as a whole. Did any of them know their turn was coming? If they did, were they prepared? I do not think so, but let us be prepared if our turn comes. And the only way of doing that is living every moment of our lives to the fullest. Do not let go of the present expecting a better future, you will regret.



The lock down of the country is a chance for families to get together with each other, for parents to children to spend some time with each other. The love of a family is the greatest treasure one could have, and now most of us are lucky enough to own it. Fathers and mothers busy with work, children busy with school and university works are all free. Make it the best time of your life, time spent with family is worth every second. We have time for our friends; we could all rebuild those lost friendships and get back together with them. Friends are the foundation of the rest of the fun things you may want to do.

This has become a chance for people of different religions to pray for the same miracle, that of curing the world. This is the best time to spread love and care. And the best of doing so is by staying at home and staying safe. Prevent the spread of this deadly disease by wearing masks, gloves avoiding close contact with people, washing hands often and using sanitizers. Let us all keep praying as corona virus will not come near our loved ones or us.

With all this, it is honestly disgusting how some people earn from this. Some countries sell Ayurveda products; some sellers increase the price of necessary goods in the country; price of protective items is increased. We have all fallen into the same mud puddle. Why can't we come out together, holding hands? Why push some down and try escaping? Children face the biggest disadvantage of this virus. Our education has been paused for quite a while, those kids used to outdoor games maybe affected psychologically. For those who think this is bad, it is going to ruin our lives. My advice is, yes, it may ruin our lives. But we cannot let it!

Something the society today has to understand is that Mother Nature is a living organism too. If it weren't for the fertile soil, many people in especially the Asian countries would have starved to death. Many countries have learnt to live with what their nature provides them rather than the imported ones. Have confidence in your country, trust the leaders and believe in Mother Nature.

Our turn could be tomorrow. So, we need to learn to live happy today and hope for tomorrow. There is no time to waste, spend your time on things that make you happy. Let there be no regret. "Today or never", let that be your motto.

**US: WE CAN'T SHUT
EVERYTHING DOWN
BECAUSE OF CLIMATE
CHANGE!**

**MOTHER NATURE: OH
REALLY? HERES A
VIRUS. HAVE A LITTLE
PRACTICE!!**

-Kalinga Promodh Madushan

Caught off guard... I am at the border!

As a schoolgirl, I always wished that there would be a day when I would never have to go to school anymore, never do homework again, stay home, and do whatever I feel like doing. I thought when that day comes, I would undoubtedly be the most blissful person on Earth. And to my consternation, I am living those days now, but I am not the happiest person on Earth...

I am free, but I am in prison. I have no burden, but it still feels heavy. Something entered my atmosphere, and I am to live the rest of my days with the horror of its existence. Something million times smaller than me, yet I am scared to death of what it will do to me - and I am not the only one fearing. It is a virus. It started small, and now the world is under its control. It is called "COVID-19".

First and Foremost, Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that are known to infect both humans and animals, and in humans cause a respiratory illness that ranges from common colds to much more severe infections. The most well-known case of a coronavirus epidemic was Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

COVID-19 first started in Wuhan, China, and spread to nearly every country in the world ever since. More than 4.66 million people are known to be infected and more than 312,000 deaths have been recorded- including 34,466, in May, in the UK. The exact number of infections and deaths is likely to be considerably higher. This disease has already taken hold in Europe, the United States, and South East Asia. It is beginning to wreak havoc in Africa and South America. No matter how many countries out there are well-developed or under-developed, it doesn't make a difference because no one so far has come up with a cure to eradicate this life-threatening disease. The World Health Organization is particularly concerned with the ability of the poorest countries in the world to control the disease. What started as an epidemic mainly limited to China has now become a global pandemic. "Pandemic is not a word to use lightly or carelessly. It is a word that, if misused, can cause unreasonable fear or unjustified acceptance that the fight is over, leading to unnecessary suffering and death." Said WHO's director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

On the whole, our Earth is in trouble, and us earthlings are all to blame. I, as a sixteen-year-old am afraid to touch anyone or anything because I might get infected, I am afraid to hear because all I hear are innocent people being helplessly trapped by COVID-19, I am afraid to see because all I can do is watch people get infected and there I stand, staring at defeat by a minute creature.

In conclusion, all I can say to everyone in the face of today's Earth is, we are all caught off guard... we are at the border. But let me tell you this, Challenges are what makes life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful. So, if you can stay positive in the face of negativity, you win.

-Dania Rizvi

ANOTHER BEGINNING

Hours and hours that pass by,
Resonating in a mountain of isolation and melancholy.
The light of, once a day, became an anthracite of another sigh.

The joy of one's eyes runs with lies;
For the plinth of joy, runs amok with cries,
With hours and hours that pass by.

Now the door appears front to be an obstacle;
For it to be locked abruptly,
For every effort now made to flee would result in life
being fleeing anarchically
So again the light of, once a day, became an anthracite
of another sigh.

While the slumber of pain passes high,
And nature heals thoroughly,
With the hours and hours that pass by,
For the light of, once a day, became an anthracite of
another sigh.

-ALAA RUZLY

SCARS TO REMEMBER

It's almost dark. You can feel it coming. The world holds its breath because there's really no guarantee that the sun will rise. That there was a yesterday doesn't mean there will be a tomorrow.

Sometimes I think I might be the last human on earth. I know that's dumb. They can't have killed everyone...yet. I see how it could happen, though, eventually. And then I think that's exactly what "they" want me to see.

Life no longer shared the same hues. I sit by the window and watch the sky fall down every day. The sun drops in the ocean, splashing browns and reds, and yellows and oranges into the world outside my window. A million leaves from a hundred different branches dip in the wind, fluttering with the false promise of flight. The gust catches their shriveled wings only to force them downwards, forgotten, left to be trapped by the soldiers stationed just below.

It was as if "they" had locked us up in an asylum for something out of our control. This was what life on earth has become since its arrival.

During the outbreak, most of us, ALL of us, had been sent into quarantine with the goal of protecting other citizens.

Quarantine is considered as the separation and restriction of movement of people who have potentially been exposed to this contagious disease to ascertain if they become unwell, reducing the risk of them infecting others. This term differs from isolation, which is the separation of people who have been diagnosed with the virus.

Imagine if there were no awakening after what had happened if there wasn't a tomorrow. With false hope, we would still be blindly walking into an uncertain future, wouldn't we?

Now, as for me, being a 16-year-old with anxiety issues, I can feel it devouring me. This pain.

I've struggled with occasional anxiety over the course of my life, but I've generally been able to manage it. But the older I got, the less powerless I became.

I don't know how to save myself this time.

WE don't know how to save ourselves this time...

Italy, one of the most impacted by the corona virus spread, which I know as one of the most extraordinary places on earth.

In hospitals there, there's a community of nurses, physicians, and scientists that have been quietly battling the current deadliest threat to humanity in decades. But these individuals risk their

lives to protect the individuals in their communities, and by doing so, protect us all.

We often tend to forget about them. Forget about how much they have contributed by sacrificing their lives for the diseased. Sometimes, it's not about how much we have lost, but about how much we have left. It's time we look out for each other. This is the fight of our lives.

However, on the bright side, with all this going, there is a silver lining that can be seen in terms of unidentified benefits of

this lockdown. The world health organization is starting to refer to this as physical distancing to emphasize the importance of being far away enough to avoid infections from the respiratory droplets that carry the virus.

Life under lockdown brings many challenges, and there have been many instances of people flouting advice in social distancing or isolation. But the more people abide by it, the more effective it will be. Few of the countries that have implemented full lockdown are committing to a date when they will lift restrictions, however, because they will need to see how the pandemic evolves.

Most countries are waiting to see how their lockdown and quarantine measures are reducing cases of the virus. China

has just lifted lockdown in Wuhan, the city where the pandemic originated, two months after it was clear that the number of cases had dramatically reduced. It seems plausible that once other countries start to see such a reduction in cases, they too will begin easing restrictions, even if only temporarily. This removal of restrictions is also taken into consideration in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where it is dangerously increasing.

It's hard to plan what comes next when what happens next is not what we expected for. If this pandemic comes in five waves, at the end of the fifth wave, we will have learned five lessons; we were taught courage in the face of hardship. We were taught when everything was lost. We were taught perseverance when the path seemed dark. Staying at home, we were taught to protect humanity. By seeing what we have lost, we were taught to appreciate the smallest things. The price we had to pay for these lessons was far more than we could afford. The world has changed, and none of us can go back. All we can do is our best, and sometimes the best what we can do is to start over.

-Fatheena Furqan

Facts & Myths of covid-19

What is COVID-19?

Covid-19 is a contagious disease caused by the newly discovered corona virus. The virus gets this name because of its circular body and tiny spikes shaped like a crown. It contains a group of RNA viruses that is responsible for the disease. It is a non-living organism as most viruses do not have the 8 characteristics of a living organism, they can reproduce in a host cell only.

Why is COVID-19 contagious?

Covid-19 has now become a life-threatening virus. Initially starting off from a wet market in China and now becoming a global pandemic. The reason for this is because covid-19 can spread when an infected person coughs or exhales. These small droplets contain the virus and if it lands on the surface of the other person then he is very likely to contract the virus. Unlike other harmful viruses like AIDS, corona has an easier transmission method because coughing and exhaling is something people do very often. Therefore, corona can be easily passed from one human being to another.

Is COVID-19 a threat to a particular age group?

Yes, according to researches by doctors most of the victims of the virus are the people in the region of 60 years and above. This is because as people get older their immune system becomes weaker, their WBC is no longer working in an efficient manner, their response to the virus may be much slower, in turn slowing down the healing process. As such older citizens are more likely to fall into the category of fatalities if they have contracted the virus.

Is COVID-19 a threat to a particular gender?

Recent studies and researches prove that women are more likely to recover from the virus once they have contracted it unlike men who are having bit of a struggle to overcome this battle. Although men are physically and mentally stronger,

women have the XX chromosomes which acts as two swords and boost their immunity but for men who have XY Chromosomes, the y chromosome makes the response slower and makes our immune system more lazier therefore men have to go through a bit of a hassle to recover.

How effective is the use of thermal scanners?

Thermal scanners can be used to detect people who have a higher than average body temperatures as it is one of the symptoms of the contraction of covid-19 virus but the people infected only develop symptoms like fever a few days after the date of infection. So, it cannot detect these people at the early stages making it rather not a 100% foolproof solution.

Is using antibiotics a method of curing the covid-19 virus?

No, this a misconception that some people have. Anti-biotics is only effective against bacteria not virus. So as the COVID-19 is a virus anti-biotics become a very unreliable solution to this ongoing pandemic. Although antibiotics are not used for the cure of covid-19 it is still given to infected patients this is to reduce the chances of the person contracting any bacterium related infections.

Does Wearing Face Masks actually prevent you being infected from COVID-19?

There is no proper evidence that wearing face mask prevents you from being infected. Medical and surgical masks are better if it was used by people who are sick so they could prevent others being infected with the disease. Moreover, Medical Doctors and assistants are advised to wear masks as they have a high chance of being infected as they are actively interacting with the infected patients.

How Long will it take to develop a vaccine?

It is predicted that it would take months or a few years before a vaccine will be introduced to the virus. Preparing vaccine is not an easy task as it requires a proper study and research about the virus and then even though we get through this stage easily the vaccine needs to be tested with a group of people to check whether there are any side effects that this vaccine can bring about. After undergoing multiple revisions and test will the vaccine be available in the market for use.

Are the symptoms when you contract COVID-19 similar to that of Common Cold?

Yes, some symptoms such as Fever, Cough, Runny Nose, Headache and becoming fatigue are common symptoms of both the common cold and the covid-19 virus. If you are experiencing these symptoms it would be better to consult a doctor to prevent your loved ones and the ones around you from contracting the virus.

Will the intake of fresh juice, Garlic and honey help prevent covid-19?

Fruit juices, Garlic and honey will not prevent you from COVID-19 but rather is required to boost your immunity. This is essential to help you fight against the virus after contracting it. Therefore, it is better continuing with the uptake of these substances and is a “must do” for all to overcome the battle against the virus.

What is the best method to prevent COVID-19?

The best and most effective methods of prevention is to Practice Social Distancing and Washing hands with soap affectively. When you keep you distance from one another you reduce the risk of the transmission of tiny droplets from a person who is infected from COVID-19 that is responsible for to cause the disease in others around them. Further more washing your hands with soap will disinfect your hands and make it clean from any germs or infectious particles that is present in it and prevent it from moving inside the body.

-Zeeshan Ahamed

If I ever could...

If I ever could relive the past one more time,
And cherish those moments of joy,
With laughter dominating the pleasant morning sunshine,
Children running about their usual play in the wide-open area.

If I ever could be in the hands of my grandparents one more time,
And hug them for a bit longer,
Help them in their day-to-day activities,
Knowing that this will be the last time,
To ever lay eyes upon them.

If I ever could bolt into the future of our existence,
And be aware that we will survive this pandemic,
And relieve the world from its anxiety and trepidation,
So that we can once again return to normal.

A normal where peace and harmony,
Will come back for the entire human race
as one united whole.

If I ever could encounter an antidote,
And be the one to stop this global rampage,
Allowing cities to open up their borders once again,
Letting children who lived abroad to
reunite with the worried and vexed faces
of their isolated parents and loved ones.

If I ever could fast-forward time to where
the sufferings of the victimized were only an illusion,
and let happiness no longer be in siege.

Then and only then,
Would I be the happiest on this planet Or!

-Thaabit Raziq

Questions for Ms. Isra Imthiyaz

Do you think it is a good idea to have medical students involving in the treatment of patients or should it be left to the professionals only?

In my opinion any final year medical student should have sufficient knowledge of basic patient care and should be able to handle simple procedures. However, the current pandemic situation in the world is not a typical situation and therefore warrants a more thorough degree of understanding of the medical field, which generally speaking, develops only after some years of experience. Therefore, I think that a student should not be given the responsibility to handle patients of moderate to severe degree. However basic outpatient work may be divided across medical students under the guidance and proper surveillance of a medical professional.

If you could meet the first child to get the virus, what would you want to say to them?

Hang in there, I'm sure the doctors are doing their best to help you recover soon. Everything is going to be alright.

COVID-19 is turning medical students into doctors early. What is your account on this?

In my experience this particular scenario has seen many local students being given the opportunity to work in the emergency and regional clinical hospitals in Vitebsk, Belarus. This was an attempt by the Ministry of Health to lessen the sudden increased workload of clinical physicians and indeed seems to have caused a positive shift in the war against the surge of patients. Whether this decision, to expedite the transition from student to professional, was the right choice, can only be inferred in the long run as the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

As a medical student. Do you think that online learning is effective or not?

For any medical student, practical training plays an essential role, and in my opinion, is far more effective than theoretical knowledge. Unless the theories we learn are practiced, their proper clinical importance will not be affirmed in our minds. Since practical training can't be done through online education, I don't think it's effective.

Perhaps if a similar corona virus were to rise again when you achieve the doctor status, would you say our medical department would be ready?

Should a similar crisis arise in the near future, realistically, the world will not be ready. The social measures taken by communities have shown to be unable to stop the spread effectively, as we still hear cases popping up all over the globe. Unless we cooperate and develop effective antiviral measures specific to this viral strain, the appearance of another would be catastrophic. On the other hand, history has shown us that even when the world is under siege from similar cases (SARS, Bubonic Plague, etc), mankind will find a way.

Many science students of other sectors argue that COVID-19 has interrupted their flow of studies. Do you think it's true?

Just like in medicine, practical training is an important aspect of all other science streams. Since practical training can't be done in an online setting, it does interrupt their flow of studies.

What are your views being a past student and unable to get meals on the fly or during your stay, as restaurants are shut due to Covid-19?

I don't really have an opinion on this as I generally don't prefer restaurant food that much. However, I can imagine that it has become difficult for students to get meals on the fly.

What attempts did you make to overcome homesickness, studying aboard away from your family during this pandemic while maintaining social distance with strangers?

Being quarantined while you are studying abroad is difficult indeed. However, the only thing that makes me feel close to my loved ones is frequently speaking to them and ensuring their wellbeing. Being quarantined has also given many of us the opportunity to get in contact with all of our friends from school and share our varying experiences. Cooking has been another way I distract myself with. I also use the additional free time that I have during quarantine to learn new languages.

From amongst the changes that have been brought into the education system due to the pandemic, which of these changes could be maintained to enhance the educational system in the future?

Distance learning has proven to be a useful tool as students have been able to prepare for their classes beforehand in a more relaxed environment. So, in my opinion, the distance learning program should be integrated into the educational system in the future.

If you knew the COVID-19 pandemic would arrive, What measures would you have taken?

I would have enjoyed my life that I led before the quarantine better, and ensured that my loved ones and friends are safe too.



- **3rd Year of Medical Science**
- **VSMU Academy**
- **Studying in Belarus**

I STILL BELIEVE

There was a hypothesis that seemed to turn out to be a meme. It went something like this:-

Little did we know that something major would happen in 2020 becoming a global issue, a pandemic fulfilling the 100-year pattern!

Clearly nobody cared about this or it wouldn't have become a meme in the 1st place and if it people did really care about it wouldn't have become a pandemic in the 1st place.

Why would it not? According to another prediction by the renowned CEO of Microsoft, Bill Gates said the same thing but with reason. He said that because the world has evolved at a slower pace we cannot be ready for the next outbreak. And if we had to be prepared we would have to play "germ games" in the sense that we would need to run simulations and find hundreds of treatments. He also said we needed to strengthen health systems in weak areas, form the medic corps who are people ready to risk their lives to save the infected and associate the corps with the military team and of course advance the research & development team in areas of vaccine and diagnostics so that people would be prepared for what's to come

But it's clear no one cared about his words or otherwise COVID-19 wouldn't have become a threat as of now.

But we can't completely blame them for carelessness if we haven't cleared the fear struck in our hearts. Because fear is not something that can be easily fought. It is not something that can be conquered with a touch of a fairy godmother magic.

It's something that puts you to a test, to wake up and forcing you to become the victor in a battle with a better version of yourself. It doesn't scare you, it makes you a better person.

And this year, when COVID-19 has spurred and spiraled out of control while we're at home sending out of positive thoughts, I from somewhere in this world know that you are crouched in a corner crying tears of sadness with fear struck in your heart not knowing whether you will survive or not.

And if you're not, the point is you're scared, I just know it. But you didn't crouch and cry that's all.

The year 2020 has been disastrous and we can all admit that. Millions are suffering and hundreds of people are dying, and the small thing without life has become the world's greatest fear.

No one knows whether it is obstructed or not but now isn't the time to fight over these when we don't know how to cure it.



And this causes more fear.

And there is no point in believing in a cure if we are crying our heads off.

For those who really look forward to positivity let me remind you of a renowned story. A story that isn't lies.

A story that motivated the person to write a song, which made people to direct a movie released in 2020.

The title of the song, the movie, in fact the theme, what was it called... "I still believe"!

Now for those who watched the movies would be pretty much annoyed and be like, "why am I bringing up a Christian movie, I mean there are other movies as well..."

And yes I agree with you there are movies that are widening in thought, movies that have hit a higher rating than I Still Believe.

But rarely these movies are about the trust you should have on one another, have faith to be precise.

And there is never a possibility that these movies on having faith will be a non-fictional movie, trust me.

And for those who haven't watched the movie, let me share with you a spoiler placed in the least annoying way.

The protagonist Jeremy Camp, gets married after finally convincing Melissa to do so. Later on it has been learned that she has cancer and to cut it short she dies. But he being a Christian singer decided that he would go on with life and bounce back stronger

My point isn't the tragic death it was the stronger comeback. Something that we all have failed to do during the pandemic.

I would also like to point out a line from his comeback song, "I still believe." It went like, "...even when I don't see.... I still believe."

That is the strength that we need, that is the belief we need in this time. That during failures and hardship we can still believe that things were still around.

That we still have to believe that if we can still survive and beat this virus

And I believe that if we are able to have faith during these times we would be able to fight this pandemic and making it not.

Meaning that there will be no carelessness scenes.

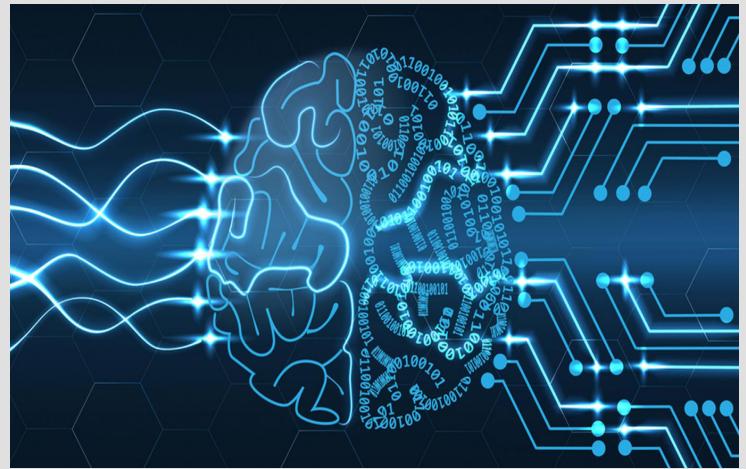
And there is things to look positive towards fighting COVID-19 because there is chances for surviving COVID-19.

There is recent studies of cures with 8%-10% success, although unfortunately the success rate is for monkeys and not humans so we don't know whether the same rate of success will be for humans as well

Moreover though we have advanced at a slower pace than expected, we still have a valuable treasure in our hands that if we use it in the right way we can find a cure

Most people would have already guessed what I am talking about and yes I am talking about artificial intelligence.

According to various studies it has been said that A.I has better accuracy in conducting diagnostics, analyze data and detect signs of COVID-19. This means that there is more chances of the cure spreading. Moreover since Artificial Intelligence can control the minds of robots, they can further prevent the spread of infections as robots can be used to deliver goods.



Unfortunately they haven't realized it yet.

They've spun into chaos instead

I mean it is clear when you've learned that Donald trump fires the lead vaccine doctor and why the rest of the world is in a lockdown.

Now don't get me wrong but the lockdown does seem to be the most effective way, obviously other than finding a cure.

Being in lockdown means that keeping social distance is checked, and you have all the necessary equipment with you like big bottles of hand sanitizer, water to wash and toilet paper and masks and all that needed things.

So with all those things you know for sure that the chances of the virus dying within you is increasing and the chances of the virus being spread is reduced considered the fact you are at home.

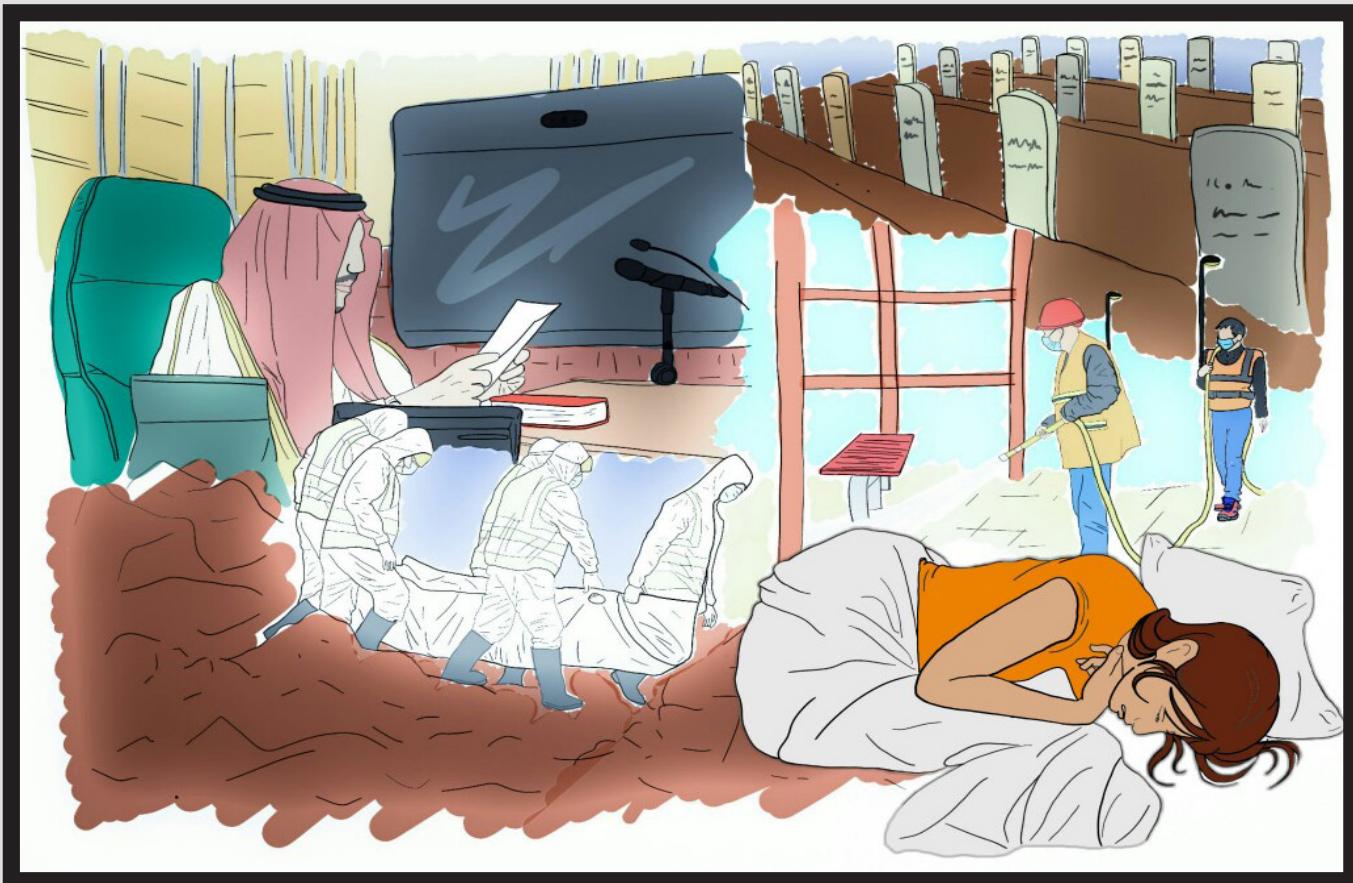
Moreover the chances of something happening like this again would reduce. Though the world is developing at a slow pace it is still developing, it can still develop and be prepared for another pandemic which according to the hundred-year theory would be 2120.

But the most important thing is to believe. Believe that you can survive the virus, believe that there is a cure that will come, believe the world will be in great shape even after the pandemic.

If you believe, that could be more than enough to charge into a war with half of war materials yet you would emerge out as victorious.

So to the people of 2120 and people living in future pandemics, one word: - BELIEVE

-SHEHAN NITESH



-HAJARA RAHEEM



-AMNA ARSHAD

Invisible but Excruciating

Almost around 4 months has passed ever since the start of the pandemic because of the outbreak of a virus and has infected more than 4.06 Million people and has unfortunately taken the lives of around 208 Thousand people world-wide. Now as a result of this all those people who were once very boisterous and packed together in the streets are all now quiet and isolated and all those roads which were once busy with cars moving around are all now empty with the cars parked on the sides or inside garages, all because of something that is invisible to the human eye but excruciating once encountered.

Well the reason as to why this has occurred needs no explanation or introduction because it is the reason as to why all of us are trapped inside between four walls. It is the Covid-19 Virus which is recorded to be the most dangerous virus that humanity has ever experienced because of the unendurable pain it puts humans through. As a result of this it has led to everyone around the world to panic and isolate themselves so that they can prevent getting the virus. For me personally at first I felt like as if I was secluded from Earth and placed in a remote Galaxy so that I would not make any contact with any form of organism in order to stay safe and prevent getting the virus. Eventually as time passed it felt like as if I was an animal who was trapped inside a cage with a display that shows the number of people who had been infected by the invisible and excruciating virus. Now for the entire world as well me, the days weren't getting better instead they were getting more atrocious.

But in reality if we think about the pandemic more vividly we are able to understand that it isn't just evil but a blessing too to humanity. It is a blessing because after the pandemic within just around 4 months the pollution rates around the entire world has decreased by 20% , all the animals who were once trapped inside are all now free to move, plants which were once dark are all now greener than before, the sky which was once polluted significantly is now being polluted less and is more brighter, everyone around the world are now more united to help overcome the pandemic and the atrocious days and finally all those families who were once spread apart and busy are all now together. Although this virus might be invisible and excruciating to us it may still be a form of blessing to the entire planet as it provides a form of redemption after the activities of humans and all what we can do is try to stay safe and keep hope that it would all be over.

-P.A. Chatlula Losara Perera

My 15th in the eyes of the world

As her mom screams,
“Keep your hands clean!”
She missed a party,
the day she turned fifteen.
As everyone is in quarantine
She's always awake till six
And has binged everything on Netflix.
It's seven in the morning
she's yawning.
But little did she know out there
some were crying, some were praying
They tried to be aware of the
“Cheese touch”
More deeply, they wondered,
“Who is going to be corona's next meal?”
As she and all stayed inside,
everything began to heal outside
The masks soon fell away,
As all flights no longer remained lain
People hugged and kissed just like their old ways.
Watching the Earth breathe again.

-Khadijah Nadir

Red crown

15.7.2020 |

08:24 AM |

The colorful drawings that decorated the grey, brick walls of the shadowed alleyway caught my grey eyes as I trudged through the alley. I'd never seen such a place before, and it left me awestruck. Fourteen long years of captivation had taken away chances to see such places, but now, I was set free.

All thanks to COVID-19.

The name of the disease was often mentioned with so much venom and hatred, but in my eyes, it was my savior. It had killed my parents whose pride was so high they refused to go to a hospital and had died at home. It had gotten one of my brothers shot for stepping out during curfew in a desperate attempt to get aid for our parents and had struck such fear in the heart of my second brother that he'd fled with all the money and food he could take. His actions didn't surprise me; the way my family had treated me taught me that in this world, it was every man or woman for themselves.

I'd never loved my family. They were rich, proud, and old-fashioned. They never wanted a daughter, for she couldn't carry down the family name, and so my very existence was a good enough reason for them to have me locked up all my life. Covid-19 was, by far, my knight in shining armor. A blessing behind a more sinister mask.

The officials would stop by at our house soon enough to check why our family hadn't submitted the obligatory two-week blood samples that were used to determine whether we were or were not sick. They'd find the two dead bodies, the empty house, would look into our family details, get to know one member had been shot and taken away and would notice two kids were missing, one of them being me - Ida Wilkins.

Then they'd be after me.

I'd been confined with two sick adults for over three weeks, and the officials would kill me instantly should they find me. These dreary thoughts weighed down on me as I continued to trudge through the alley, kicking away stray cans as I did so.

Entirely out of the blue, I felt something shove me to the ground from behind and quickly flipped onto my back to see a man towering before me. My eyes flittered down to his jacket, where a laboratory's logo was present on the shoulder, and fear shot through me, mixing with my blood like a drug. They've found me!

I opened my mouth, but the man quickly clamped his large hand down over it to muffle my cries for help. Managing to pry his hand away ever so slightly, I bit into it hard, causing him to let go with a cry of surprise and pain. Stumbling onto my shaking feet, I tried to run away but felt a sudden sting at the back of my neck before I could get very far. Why isn't he killing me quickly?

And the whole world turned black.

18.7.2020 |

16:43 PM |

The whispers of the conversation taking place outside my room drifted in towards me. I could hear enough to understand that the operation they were about to carry out on me was going to be fatal.

When I'd woken up after having been knocked out by that man, I'd found myself in some kind of hospital or laboratory. A woman - who I'd presumed was a doctor - had narrated the whole, seemingly fictional story. The usual tests on the blood-samples had revealed that my own blood was different, due to the presence of an unknown chemical, and further tests had revealed that it was capable of actually destroying Covid-19 particles.

So, each day they'd extract blood from me before dishing out the antidote to infected people across the world. No one seemed to care that I'd lost my freedom again after having been able to enjoy it for less than a day. They'd had me strapped down to the hospital bed after I'd knocked over their precious equipment and kicked a nurse when she'd tried sticking a needle in me. I'd hoped that perhaps once they'd finally had the world in a better state, I'd be let free.

But now that one wish was whisked away, like dust in the wind.

The virus had mutated yet again, and they needed a more potent extract of the chemical. But the only place they could get it was directly from my brain. An operation I would never wake up from.

I didn't want to do it. I didn't care what the problem was, and surely there should be another way! I found myself half-wishing that Covid-19 would kill all the people in this wretched laboratory so I could get out of here. It was strange how much I regarded this virus as a good comrade, but I was being used to destroy it.

Eventually, a doctor entered my room - more like confinement - followed by two medical staff. She proceeded to tell me about the operation they would be performing, how I'd save countless lives, how grateful everyone is for what I've done so far, and what I was about to do.

It all enraged me.

"I'm sorry, but your speaking like I'd asked you to kill me." I spat.

"It's like you want the human race to just kick the bucket for survival." She stated, irritated.

"The only thing I want to kick right now is your face."

She merely sighed. "You'll be a hero at the end of all this, Ida."

"I'll be a queen. Heroes are fictional, and this is reality."

She just shook her head and ordered her staff to prepare everything. The metallic clinks of equipment being shifted had me panic like never before, but there was nothing I could do. I didn't want to die. It was only in stories that the protagonist bravely sacrifices themselves, but this wasn't a story. Not for me, for sure.

I felt a sharp sting in my neck, and in due time the world around me began to darken. Please, no... I looked up into the hazel eyes of the doctor as she gazed down at me with admiration and glee. You can't kill me...

"We all appreciate this, Ida." She whispered.

My voice was slurred when I spoke, and the anesthesia was already working on me. A spark of discomfort appeared momentarily in her eyes when she heard my words, a look that filled me with satisfaction.

"You can't kill me... I'll live on in your blood."

-Nuha Mohamed

ISOLATED, SEPARATED, YET SURROUNDED

Suddenly and without warning, the world switched off its lights, leaving its residents in the dark...

I looked up from my terribly written assignment to be greeted by pitch black. A power cut... ‘This won’t do,’ I thought to myself as I got up, the slight creak of the old wooden chair beneath me echoing throughout the house.

I stood there for an aeon as my eyes slowly but gradually adjusted to the uninvited darkness. I could finally make out the faint outline of the room with my closet overflowing with clothes and my eclectic bookshelf about to erupt. The slightly open door was accentuated by the silvery moonlight that peeked through the shutters of the high, grubby window.

Cautiously, I made my way to the door, making sure not to knock into anything, but my mess of a room wasn’t making things any easier. I dilly-dallied around the house in search of a candle because, lo and behold, my torch was out of batteries. Life was playing a terrible joke on me. I finally found a red, strangely scented but untouched candle somewhere deep in the troves of things we thought were pretty but useless.

“Mikey, what is happening? I am scared”, I heard my five-year-old sister, Kathy, ask as I debated the success I might achieve in my future - I had managed to light up a candle all by myself! She was in her nightgown, her unusually long bangs obscuring her eyes. She was holding on to her old, hideous teddy bear. I could not understand how it never gave her any nightmares because it definitely gave me some.

“Don’t worry, it’s just a power cut, and don’t move around. You might hurt yourself.”, I said as I scooped her up into my arms and put her down on the sofa. “I am scared,” she repeated as her eyes brimmed with tears. “It’s okay... just wait, it will be back any time now”, I falsely claimed as I calmly comforted her with a gentle hug.

I wanted to give her hope, but I felt myself despairing inside ...

I had heard it on the news yesterday; the power cut was imminent given how many workers had gone on strike due to the pandemic!

The pandemic!

It was the pandemic...it had changed everything.

The once ever so crowded streets and shops now craved the breath of a human.

Everyone - prey to lockdown and curfew - was now afraid to step out of their humble dwellings. Every day an ambulance would flash by, carrying yet another victim of the deadly creature.

The pandemic had muted down the world, and no one was willing to break this pact of eternal silence. But this silence wasn't peaceful. Beneath it, if you tried long and hard enough, you could hear people screaming and shouting, you could hear loved ones leaving, and you could feel the earth bleeding, and no matter how hard I tried to be positive about life... I just couldn't get my mind off the horrors that were slowly taking over the world.

"Mikey, I am hungry.", Kathy said slowly in a low voice.

"Just a moment." I walked over to the kitchen and opened the fridge...empty!

It had been well over a month since mom and dad left us with a well-stocked fridge and a tidied-up house for a two-day business trip. Soon afterward, the flights were all grounded, and they have still not come back. Slowly but surely, we were running out of food. I looked around the kitchen for anything edible and finally found a small packet of cookies. This would do...I guessed.

I handed over the biscuits to the now-satisfied Kathy and resumed my search for extra candles around the house. I didn't want to think about what I would do after this one went out. It's fine, I assured myself. This couldn't get any worse. But back then, the naive me hadn't was yet to realise that I wasn't really one of God's favourites...

That night, I was woken up to the humming of my phone. My heart jumped with excitement as I picked it up. DAD? Was he finally going to come home? Were they already here? Were they going to surprise us? I immediately put the phone to my ear and screamed, "Dad!? How are you? And Mom? Are you all coming ba—"

"Michael...", my dad interrupted, his voice breathless and tired.

"Dad?" Oh God, what could have possibly gone wrong?

"How is everything back at home?" Dad enquired. I could hear someone crying softly.

"Dad, what happened? Is that mom crying?"

"How is Kathy?"

"She is okay, Dad. What's wrong?"

"And you?"

"Dad I am okay, please tell me what's wrong?", My hands were trembling, and my heart was hammering. I didn't let the phone slip from my now-sweaty hands.

"Listen, Michael, remember the tests we talked about?" his voice broke.

"Yeah?" I knew what was coming. I knew what he was about to say. I wasn't prepared. I wasn't...

"The results came out today. And both were positive. I am so sorry. Please be strong Michael and take good care of your sister-"

And that was it. That's all it took to break me down.

"I love you both!", Mom wailed between tears.

My father's words burned down my world to ashes. Any hope I had for a better tomorrow was now shattered. What was I supposed to do now? HOW WAS I EXPECTED TO BE STRONG WHEN LIFE HAD SHUT ALL IT'S EMPTY DOORS ON HIM?

I was angry. Angry at them for catching the virus. Angry they left us here. Angry at my rotten luck. I felt betrayed by everyone and everything and I wished for a swift end to my wretched life.

I hung up the phone and collapsed on my bed.

I felt so isolated from the world, so separated from the parents I loved, yet surrounded by this merciless predator.

I wanted to give up. I had had enough. What with all the chaos surrounding me...

A virus spreading, complete lockdown, parents in another country infected, a power cut, a hungry sister who will have to cry herself to sleep, a candle almost melted away, and a young fourteen-year-old boy drowning in a pool of tears.

I wanted to give up.

"Was that Mom, Mikey?" my sister asked, entering the room.

I didn't reply.

"Can I have another cookie?" Where should I bring one from?

"Why are you crying, Mikey?" She asked, now concerned.

"It's nothing," I whispered, wiping away my tears, "Let me see if I can find you a cookie."

I couldn't give up just yet. I had a sister to care for.

I had to keep this tiny light flickering...

-AAIMAN AMJAD



-AMNA ARSHAD

FIGHTING COVID-19: THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Many countries around the world have faced a global threat from pandemic. While some states made the right decision to act fast and restore the safety of their citizens, some countries were deprived of their primary needs amongst the rise of money-hungry politicians. It is now a basic fact that countries who promptly acted towards the virus experience a far less adverse effect against the increasing cases of COVID-19 globally. These countries that have taken the utmost care of their citizens prove to show that PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.

The countries mentioned below are each grouped into categories. They include:

- Safe
- Strive
- Impuissant

SAFE: Vietnam

Amongst the many countries that took prompt action against the rising pandemic, Vietnam was one of the first. Their government lead by the leader Ho Chi Minh with their timely response, decisive decision making, and proper compliance was able to lead their citizens to a safer path amongst the declaration of war against COVID-19. As of any government, their main objective had been to safeguard their citizens and rightfully so, in the initial state, they began quarantining tens of thousands of desperate civilians for testing any symptoms of the virus. Furthermore, the government took into consideration suspending the issues of visa to all foreign arrivals in the hope of preventing any infected foreigners or citizens from spreading the virus globally. A significant stride to success in Vietnam was due to strict decisions made by the government, for instance, from March 28th to April 15th, the government had banned any social gatherings that included more than ten people. Not to mention all non-essential services such as salons and restaurants were also closed until further notice.

Additionally, the government assured the availability of masks to all citizens.

Amongst all this, the majority of their nation was not star-struck by the governments' new amendment, mainly considering the fact that the country has had enough experience from a global pandemic that hit them in 2003, stripping away many Vietnamese lives as doctors battled to save lives against the SARS pandemic.

Strive: South Korea

As of now, South Korea is experiencing its second wave of COVID-19 and is under a worse consequence with rising shortages of beds and medical equipment. However, they have adapted swift fixes by implementing COVID-19 testing tents for drivers to test without needing to step out of their car. Furthermore, the citizens receive constant updates of the presence of any COVID-19 patients and their whereabouts by

the use of apps.

In order to avoid economic downfall, the government has been reluctant to implementing lockdowns to major cities around the country, allowing small scale businesses to continue trading.

The culture and traditions of the people of East Asia allow protection such as wearing masks to seem less intimidating than those living in the western hemisphere who are generally brought up with fewer restrictions.

IMPUSSANT: America

America, on the contrary to Vietnam, experiences a staggering death toll due to a lack of prompt decisions made by the government.

As the government continued to deny allegations of the WHO during the initial cases of COVID-19, they faced a significant obstacle in passing regulations that required the public to abide by the laws of safety, leading to many riots on streets in uplifting the lockdown in major cities. The situation worsened with “panicked buying” and the public continuing to overlook safety guidelines. It was during this time that the number of deaths reached its peak.

However, until early April, the government had granted greater interest over the economy and the so-called “Human Rights” of their citizens through which they faced major complications with rising death rates across the country.

So as of now, even though the economy has not been affected dramatically in comparison to other countries, their total workforce has taken a hit with the numbers reducing over a period of time. The safety of the nation is still uncertain and will continue to be if the government does not take strict action against the violators.

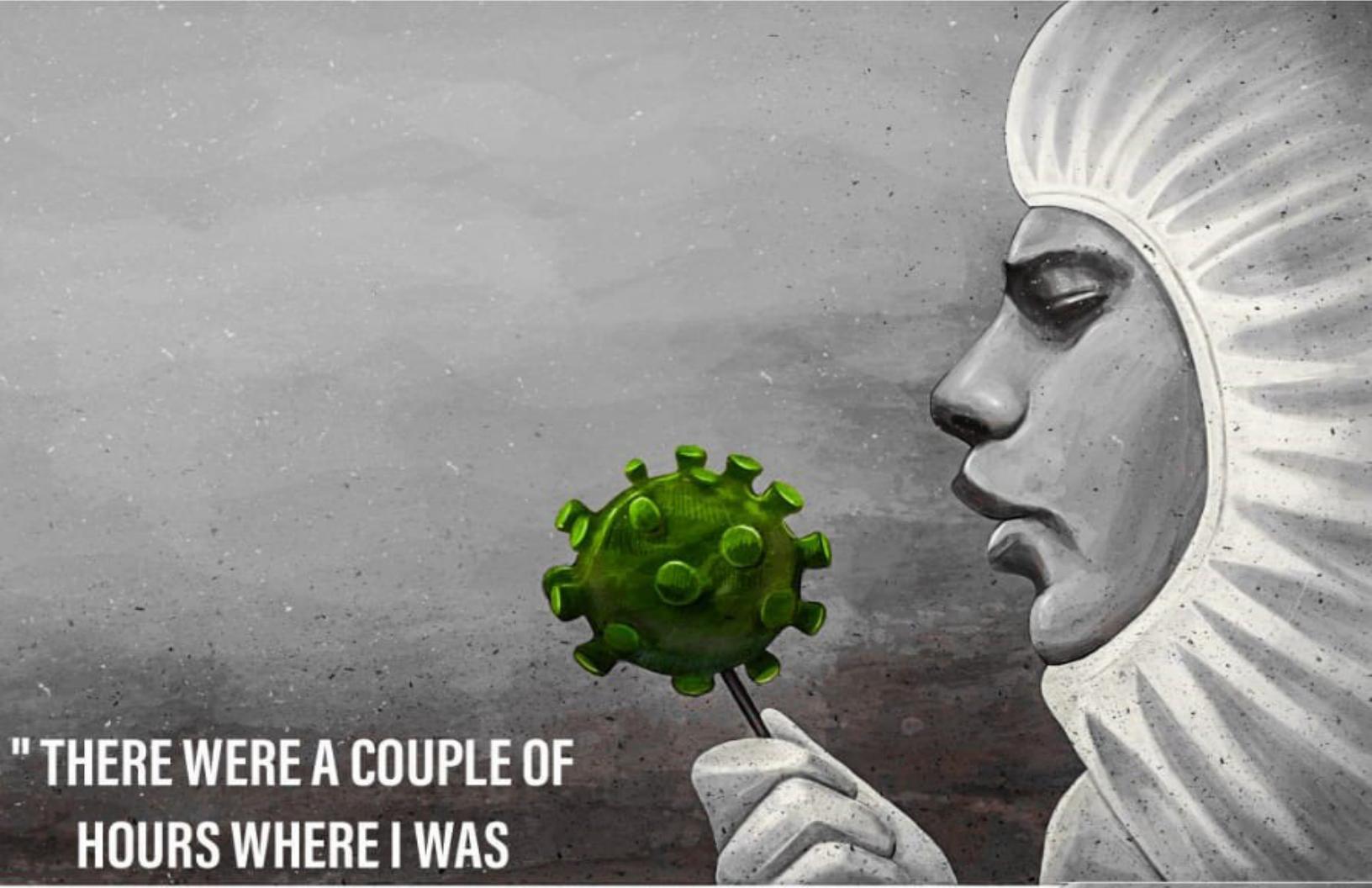
WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

Given the situation of these three countries, the role of the government and the code of conduct of their people play a major role in protecting their country during this harsh unprecedented time.

The integration of world leaders and scientists may save us from a reckoning virus. Still, if we are to understand the lesson taught during this time, it could save even the upcoming generations from another inevitable pandemic. It is clear to see that countries that treat their citizens strictly about the pandemic are far ahead of countries that don't.

While thousands voiced out their human rights, thousands more lay in their death beds wishing to reverse their mindset. But it is too late. COVID-19 has presented to humanity a unique challenge that requires us to improve ourselves, our values, and our ideologies to make this pandemic a blessing to a new life instead of an enemy to the reckoning.

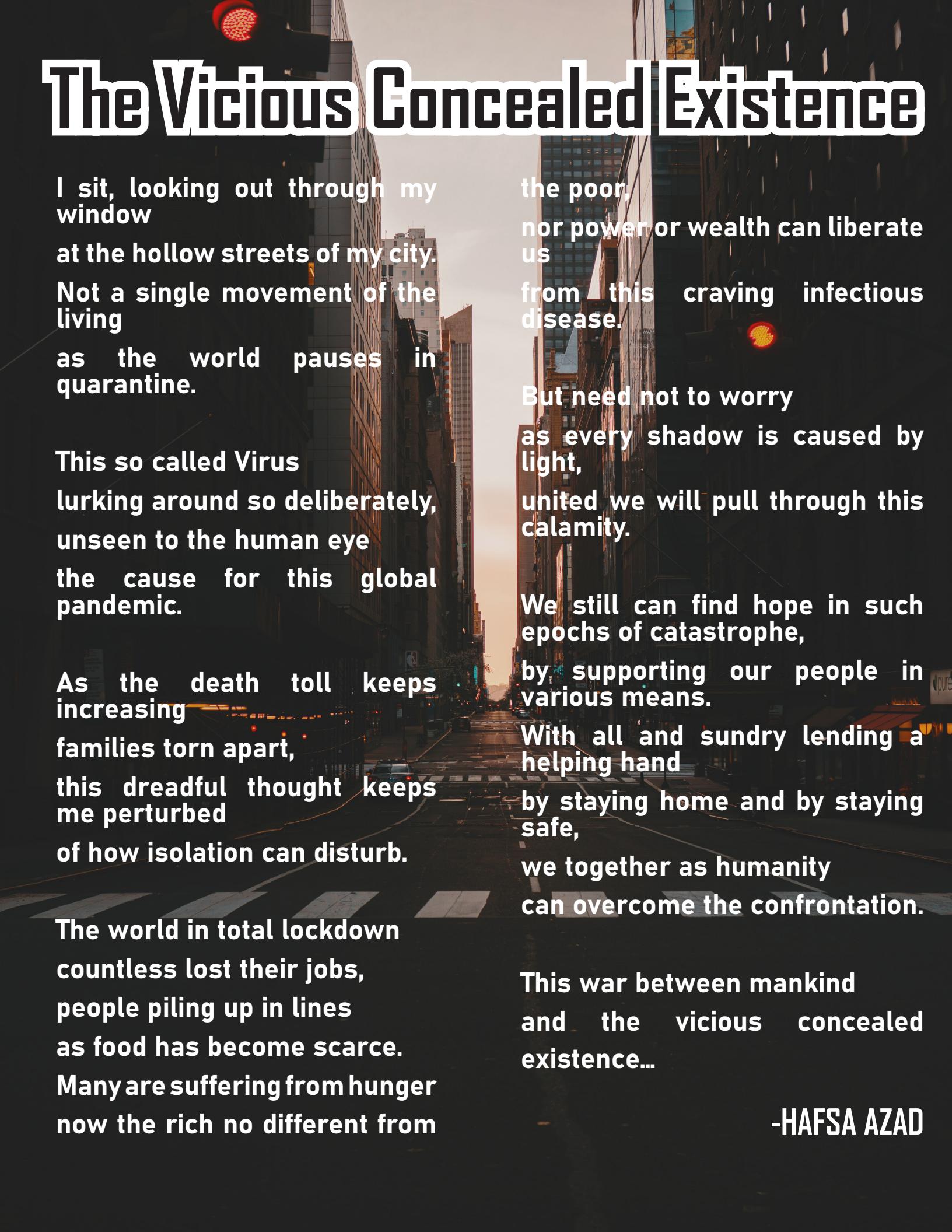
-DEVMI PERERA



"THERE WERE A COUPLE OF
HOURS WHERE I WAS
WITHIN A WHISPER OF
A VERY DARK PLACE"



The Vicious Concealed Existence



I sit, looking out through my window
at the hollow streets of my city.
Not a single movement of the living
as the world pauses in quarantine.

This so called Virus
lurking around so deliberately,
unseen to the human eye
the cause for this global pandemic.

As the death toll keeps increasing
families torn apart,
this dreadful thought keeps me perturbed
of how isolation can disturb.

The world in total lockdown
countless lost their jobs,
people piling up in lines
as food has become scarce.
Many are suffering from hunger
now the rich no different from

the poor,
nor power or wealth can liberate us
from this craving infectious disease.

But need not to worry
as every shadow is caused by light,
united we will pull through this calamity.

We still can find hope in such epochs of catastrophe,
by supporting our people in various means.
With all and sundry lending a helping hand
by staying home and by staying safe,
we together as humanity can overcome the confrontation.

This war between mankind
and the vicious concealed existence...

-HAFSA AZAD

Masked, meal and marooned

Masked, meal and marooned, Kevin lay in his infirmary bed struggling to breathe, he knew that in no time he would find himself in the next world. He could hear the cries of people watching through the window seeing their loved ones die. He knew that he was next. Tears rolled down his cheek as he pictured his Mother weeping on his lifeless body.

Kevin was a victim of SARS*. He was an ungrateful man, who complained about everything he got. When the epidemic began, he disobeyed the guidelines set by the government and left the safety of his home purposefully to show that he wasn't happy with the new rules, almost immediately he collapsed to the ground while finding it hard to breathe. Then came the ambulance picking him up and finally Kevin found himself isolated in his infirmary bed, an oxygen mask keeping him alive.

Kevin lay there breathing heavily, recalling all the good memories he had and realizing that he had a decent life, he didn't want to leave this world ungrateful to his maker, so he uttered a prayer, "please god give me more time, I promise to be more thankful for everything, good or bad". Then he heard the words that made him cry not tears of sorrow but tears of joy...

"The ministry of health has just announced that the cure for the virus has been discovered and all medical complexes will

CORONAVIRUS

receive the medicine shortly!” he was flooded with tears of joy. Moments later a smiling doctor entered his isolated chamber and without a word he gave Kevin a pill which he gratefully took. A week later he was cured.

Years went by and Kevin was living a happy life, but then came the year 2020 and the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic that threatened life, forcing people to stay indoors, Kevin was frustrated, ungratefully he shouted “Seriously, again?” then he darted outside to show his unhappiness of having to stay at home.

He heard a voice, “I gave you a chance, but still you are ungrateful. This time you are not going to escape!” almost immediately he collapsed to the ground while finding it hard to breathe, when he opened his eyes, he saw himself Masked, Meal and Marooned. Then the watcher of his pulse seated outside took fright as he saw, little, less, nothing...

*SARS-Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (an epidemic that took place between 2002-2004)

-Rayeed Rafees

QUESTIONNIARE

Q.The Covid-19 pandemic has left an impact on pretty much every aspect of one's life. In your perspective, how has this pandemic affected a student's educational career?

A.I don't see much of an effect in the educational career of the students who are around me (in Gulf) as they are equipped with electronics and unlimited Wi-Fi. The online teaching is doing its fullest and mostly satisfying the majority.

But for sure the students who are coming from the lower class as well as village schools are pushed back. Their studies have come to a standstill and no doubt that they are going to suffer due to it. Especially the children who are in grades 11,12 & 13.

Q.In your opinion should this be considered a mental health break or should students still engage in their academics?

A.Most of the students are not matured enough to understand the depth of it. So, you can't call it a mental health break unless for their social distancing.

Children who are sucked by gadgets don't see any difference and in fact, having a very happy time as they can spend more time on them now.

However, the children who were spending their leisure outdoors will definitely have an impact.

I don't consider it as a mental health outbreak in order to keep them away from their academics. In fact, it keeps them occupied to a greater extent during this stay home time frame.

Q.Do you think students can effectively learn the content and understand the materials

required without putting a strain on their upcoming class and what measures have been taken by schools and teachers to minimize the strain?

A.I would like to reframe the question as it brings a greater impact on the teacher than for a student. Most of our teachers are into the traditional classroom centered teaching and very less exposed to modern teaching methods as well as gadgets. Most of them are pushed into this new system of teaching without adequate knowledge or any training. Mostly, students are smarter than the teacher when it comes to technology. So, what I see is the struggle of the teacher more than the student.

As per the question, our school has grouped the students according to their understanding capacity and teaches them accordingly. At times involve the students to teach via presentations, games, dialogs, projects involving all the family members etc.

Q.Due to the pandemic most schools and universities have taken the approach of online education. In your opinion is online education effective for students who have been traditionally schooled? If so, what are the benefits that have been reaped from this form of education?

A. What I personally feel is at this point we don't have any other option other than this. So, why we talk about the drawbacks of it?

Q.One of the problems of this system of education is discrimination of the underprivileged. How can the underprivileged students cope up with this system of education and what measures are being taken to limit

this?

A. So true and unfortunately nothing has been done so far

Q. Many exams all over the world have taken the approach of awarding predicted grades to students. Do you think using these grades as a deciding factor for a student's higher studies and university entry, as done in the past, now reliable?

A. There are many educational bodies relying on modules and assignments for higher education even before this. So, I don't think it will bring about a big impact on this situation.

And higher education is a market where affordable take the chance. So, I don't think it will bring about any major changes.

Q. Continuing on with the theme of exams, many exams like the Advanced Placement exams in the USA and various other term tests are held online. Do you think this is a reliable way of testing students?

A. It's up to the student to showcase his/her character. Parents too play an important role here. Are we going to teach our child to be honest or else.... Again, why we come around the bush? Is there any other way to do these things now? If not, are we going to wait for a year or two until things settle down to have a fair move? Let's be practical. Let's be optimistic.

Q. How has the pandemic impacted your life as a teacher? How long did it take you to adapt to this system of teaching?

A. As a teacher, my day starts with lots of smiling and greeting faces. Even some hugs and flowers from my innocent students. I dress up to impress my students. This motivates me throughout the day which I miss the most.

Still, I am struggling with many things. I don't think that I will get acquainted to the system that soon as every day

there is something new popping up.

Q. Since doctors as well as Health organization staff are being affected by this disease, what do you think is the best way to educate the younger generation about the precautions that should be taken in order to prevent COVID-19?

A. So far what I have seen is that from country to country the instructions and definitions are different. So, I leave it to the health organizations to deal with.

Q. As you are aware your profession is the root of other professions. What do you think is the best advice that you can give to everyone who is in the face of this pandemic?

A. First thing is, get closer to your creator. May He bring ease in every life every house.

Try to get the maximum out of the situation. Many people who have put all their asserts and build a house have got an opportunity to live in it. People who worked day and night to satisfy the needs of their loved once have got a chance to live with them with limited resources. So, cherish it. We will never get a break like this again in life.

Most of All, remember that teachers are the only ones who have started a new job and expected to be perfect. We too have a family sitting 24/7 at home to be taken care of. Along with that we are expected to learn the new methodology and gadgets to teach online. I would call it act out online. So, don't expect things to be perfect. Be cooperative and try to get the best out of what they give.

Fathima Shamila Khaleel

- Co-founder of Mashaail Muscat Private School, Al Seeb, Oman.

Fathima Shakeela Mansoor

- BBA – University of Colombo
- PGDE – Open university of Kandy
- Teaches in K/Iqra m.m.v ulapane

The lock-down and the lives around me...when we come out of it...

6th April 2020. The day it all goes down. It was the beginning of a sequence of funerals followed by the stress applied by my parents to follow up on other courses. It was a disaster. I tended to release my stress with short outbursts and a lot of screaming, followed by an intense workout. It didn't help that we had an outdoor space though we usually tried to play outside.

But thinking about it now the 9th May of the same year I kind of like it. I know... I'm insane. Currently, I think it's the effects of quarantine. Still, lately, I found that my busy father had more time to spare, and my mother was able to share her burden among the family so that we could get things done in record time. Our school had seized to function. It was granting me more time to watch movies and play video games. This, to me, was a relief as I now had time to follow up with my extra activities. Further, I was able to reignite the past hobbies that I had to ditch due to my o levels. I was ready to leave behind the initial weeks of gloom and started to think of ways actually to enjoy quarantine.

I got in touch with my best friend, and she decided to a hangover at my place. This became frequent habit, and we began to have barbecues, watch movies and have sleepovers. It was like the light at the end of a tunnel. I decided to keep myself occupied with one thing or the other. It proved to be productive as I learned something new almost every day.

Although quarantine is fun, I still look upon those days at school where we goofed off and had fun. I still am counting down the days to when I will finally meet the rest of the gang.

It's been almost a month since I had seen them and I knew we wouldn't be able to see each other for a couple more. It was unfortunate all those months wasted on us planning our summer vacation together. Alas, it's all the past.

I had never been more interested in the news, not because of the fear of the virus but rather because I wanted to know the day this all was to end. True, I must first survive to see the light, but my hobbies and discoveries could only entertain me for a little while longer. The constant struggle of my parents' attempts to keep the fridge stuffed was amusing to watch, fully aware of the fact that I had a significant role to play. I fed myself for entertainment and not for hunger. Pathetic as the definition of my current situation. Funny to think a few weeks ago, I was determined to score well in my O levels, and now I seemed to have no plan ahead of me.

Nonetheless, it also amuses me how one must be entrapped in the hopes of being free of the virus. How a microbial being has turned the way we have been living for decades is also stunning. My teenage mind reminds me though how cool it is to be leaving through a pandemic, a tale to share with the future. Maybe this is the earth's way of cleaning itself up to keep itself alive. No more fossil fuels being burnt, and the ozone layer is healing up.

In conclusion, this is not the end of the world but the beginning of a brighter greener future. Then again, I'm still stuck in quarantine.

- SHAVONNE MILROY

HOPE ANCHORS THE SOUL

To my dreams I wave, sitting in this isolation
Realizing life is a journey, not a destination
And the journey, unique between every individual
With the future we anticipate seeming invincible

Looking back at the tiniest of instances we adored
And the unfathomable moments we had ignored
Reliving those treasures only evokes sorrow
For now we hope for a better tomorrow

Eerie silence prowls our empty streets
And our childhoods overtaken at their very peaks
Seizing through this quarantine between ones fake and true
Hustling our way forward to rediscover an entrancing golden hue

To the indelible past we have made
Hold on to us wiping away our frustration
Let this enforced isolation
Never let the love in our hearts to fade
But one day to look back at these days as memories that may last for decades

For now we stand steady and courageous
Fighting thru this virus despite it being contagious
Holding on to the ones we cherished
And to pave our paths out of this darkness, to a whole new world of bliss...

-MOHAMMED ILHAM

-MERINA DISHANI SILVA

PLEASE AVOID PHYSICAL
CONTACT
STAY SAFE

THE LIFE OF A HERO

Xavier Ryfland

Birth-1988 July 15

Death-2020 April 29



YOU HAVE NO PLACE HERE!

We relaxed that late summer break, on our cushions with a cup of coffee on our hands, deeming every day would be the same. We didn't realize we were laughing at 'a certain Chinese weapon,' which would have ultimately gorged humanity. We watched as the clock ticked, and it was the turn of our friends, our neighbors, and our relatives and then what we were afraid of, us.

We were too busy greedily stacking our already filled shelves with sanitizers and soaps, believing it would save us, us only, but back outside, it was spreading. Our fellow mates were dying because you hid all the essentials. Then later did we realize, for us to be safe, all of us should have everything equally. We needed to understand what society was. We learnt all of us are having the same fragile heart and soul. So COVID-19, thank you for taking a look into our reflection, which we couldn't do it ourselves, we realized we were hypocrites of our own soul. We have realized that someone else's life is equal to our loved ones; they are also someone's grandmother or someone's parents, someone's annoying little sister or brother, someone's best friend.

We were too occupied hunched back in our seats with our busy schedule, looking forward to our boss's comments and promotions. Still, we didn't realize we were fading in the hearts of our cherished ones, once again they wished for your accompany....youwerenotsmart enough to understand you are demoting yourself. This crisis has bought all of us together. We started understanding the value of the one sitting in front of you, started seeing each other's misery, began sharing your laughter. Thank you for making us realize that we are shackling our self into an abyss. You bought together shattered families on to the same dinner table, helped them feel the warmth. Now we know the importance of an unknown blessing.

Every ride was luxurious for us, but not for our dear earth. We were too engaged building another plan for another industry, and the earth was too weak to share its burden, as all brightness and hope covered the blue skies; still, it didn't complain. You made me realize the beauty of nature with my bare eyes. We watched amazon forest burn down to crust. All we included in our so-called motivational speeches,» it's never too late to save it.» You

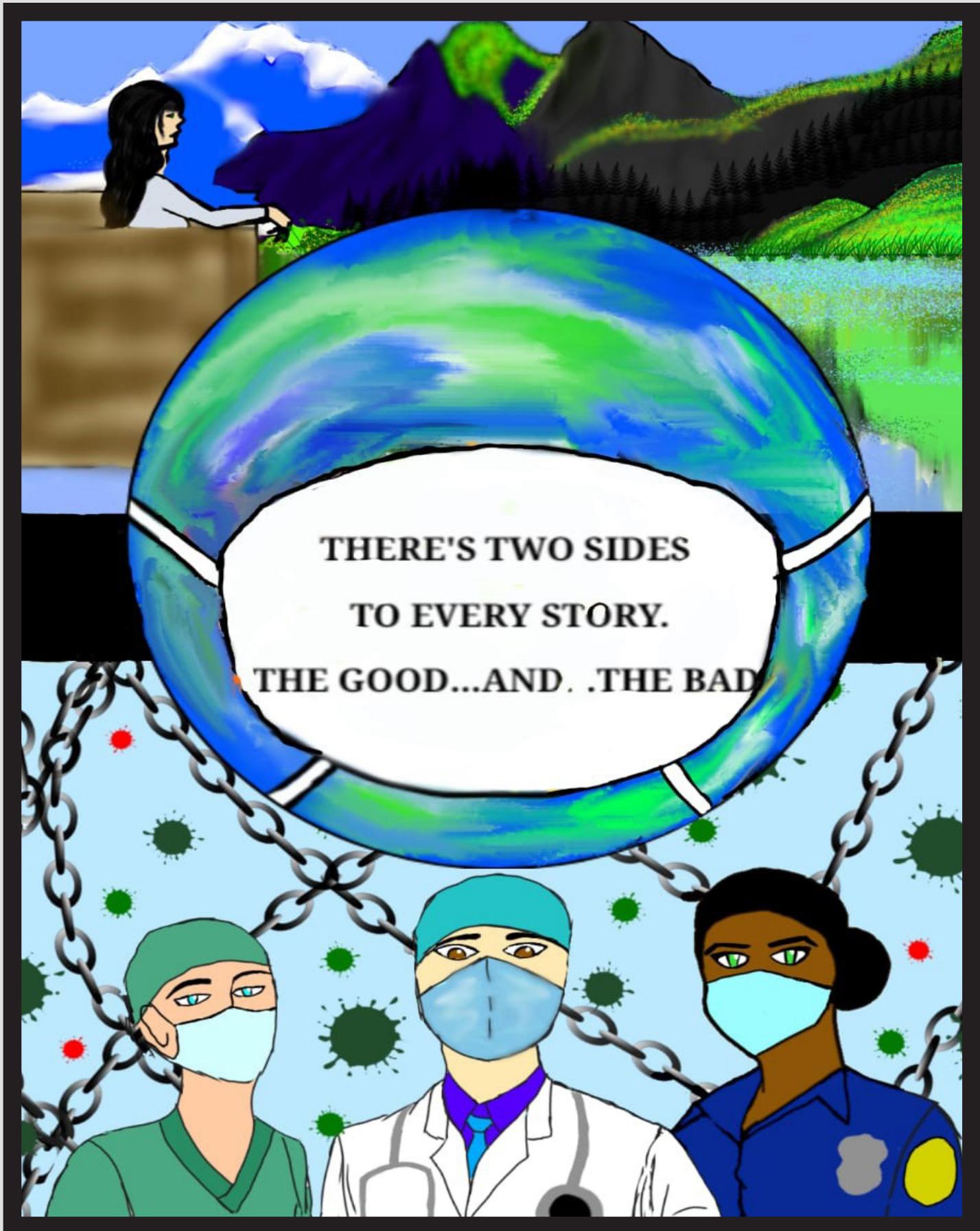
proved to us that action speaks louder than words. Thank you for saving our dear planet returning life to nature. You reminded us of the importance of the other fellow creatures.

You still have no place here because you brought along with you a curse that will forever remain as scars. There were too many who paid for this, and there are some still paying for their actions. So please stop! We learnt how it feels to hurt, what comfort is, especially what life is. You taught a lesson that history would forever remember. When those memories and blemishes, turn into pages, each turn would be of lessons, and each turn would be a remembrance of a loved one. You'll still have no place! You charged too much from us.

I have one request from you, COVID-19. Please disappear.... But leave behind the love, understanding, and equality. The cost was too much for your lessons. Once you leave, we can once again relax back on our cozy cushions this summer break, pondering on our past blunders.

We will fight together, and we'll look at the end because it's decided, you have no place here!

-Zainab Rizaan



-MERINA DISHANI SILVA

A Bird's Eye

Emotions are a very fruitful and divine aspect of being human. The crevices of your mouth widened by your smile, your face wrinkled by the sheer thought of joy, the light ricocheting off a pearl trickling down your cheek when you meet up with sorrow. But have you ever wondered about describing an emotion to someone? What it feels like to shed tears of joy, and to shed tears of sorrow. For most people, words are both audible and visible, words bring out emotion, Words give emotion its voice, a single-sided relationship, just like a fruit and a tree, one would survive without the other, but one could not, yet with them both they are whole... and meaningful.

Having lived 10 years of my life being victimized by high-functioning autism, I could not even begin to fathom why people would just break down, their eyes start gushing with so called "tears", flooding their whole façade. I would not cry under painful circumstances because I did not know how to; my heart not governed by emotions, my mind propelled by rational thought, instead I was an avid thinker. This is my journey to understanding emotion.

The most influential person of my life was my father. He was a doctor, a specialist in respiratory illnesses so he had some knowledge about my condition, and he was quite experienced in handling me. My mother being quite sentimental, I could not wrap my head around her persona, yet I could see her effort to comprehend my feelings. Cracking jokes that ordinarily would drive a preadolescents laughter but instead I would just give her such a confused gaze which would sometimes frighten her; her image of me was quite ambiguous. So yes, I was quite close to my father, no matter what he did he would always make sure to set aside some of his time for me, whenever, wherever.

One night, a Tuesday, the coldest and busiest of nights, I was sitting atop my bed in my white-walled room, fading away to a soothing blue colour, which during the day blended elegantly with the vibrant blue sky; dressed with modern-art and family photos. I was gazing at the stars outside the door that lead to the terrace. My mind as calm as the breeze but sharp as its coldness. My eyes shift their gaze to the streets, alive and breathing, the uproar of the busy streets resonating throughout the hollow, motionless sky, the clouds caressing the thin strands on my head, it was a bird's eye view. I get off my bed is a jerky motion and made my way to the door which secluded my room from the house. I cautiously traversed the polished, fluorescent flight of stairs, dimly lit by lights that creviced the corners where the wall and floor met, guiding me to safety like a guardian angel. My eyes instantly crinkled hard as soon as I reached the bottom as my sight was blurred by the unsuspecting glare of light that devoured the room. Curiosity drove me to the living room as I perceived some ambient noise. It was my father, eyes glued to the screen of the T.V as I

watched him from the corners of the door frame, his back arched and leaning forward, like a lion about to pounce on prey. I sneaked into the room... careful and cautious not even my breath to be heard, like a robber in my own home. I looked over his shoulder to get a view of what he was doing, he gazed upon the screen like a dog looking at a piece of meat; he was watching THE NEWS!, I locked my eyes onto the brown and gold clock, it was an antique, a prized possession of my father's. I always wondered do not they all show the same thing. It just struck twelve midnight.

I moved further, a bit closer to him to get a better view of the screen, and this is what I heard, "This is breaking news coming to you live from the Downtown, Central Detroit. Thousands of patients are being rushed to the Central Detroit hospital with severe respiratory difficulties, it seems to be some sort of virus according to the reports, the number of patients are greatly outweighing the doctors, it has been two weeks since we have been receiving such a large amount of patients overnight. The government has ordered a complete lockdown throughout the whole of Detroit, stay calm, stay safe and self-isolate."

For the next few days, I almost never saw my father, I would sit around wondering what had happened to him, and for the first time I felt... FEAR, a hollow feeling in my heart and stomach, I felt aroused, at a state of unease, I was confused and for the first time I shed a tear that had a meaning. I rushed upstairs, skipping a step each time, barged into my room, and flung myself onto the bed. I clinched onto the window frame, my head hanging out the window I watched the streets, slowly and painfully as people became obsolete, the once lively Detroit, is now a no man's land, devoid of its right to be called home, and the air consumed by an invisible force, the streets, conquered by the fauna and flora, not a single human soul to be seen.

The fate of my father to this day is still unknown, it has been so long since I have seen him, that I almost do not remember what he looked like. I did not feel agony, nor were I in distress, as I was still a stranger to emotion, yet my mind zoned into a state of flux, my stomach in a constant flutter, I was estranged to the one man that loved me ever so dearly. For all the days he wasn't there, I finally had a definition for emotion, I had learned what it means to cry and laugh, as I observed the people outside how they shift their moods according to their situations, when in pain, a groan or a cry, when in joy, laughter, when in fear, a shriek. I had learned to inculcate my knowledge of emotions into the books I read, it was a revolutionary experience, I had discovered why stories can be empowering or why they can be disastrous. All because of emotion. What I have learnt to accomplish, while in isolation, I could not have done without my father, regardless of his presence..... then I rose to my feet, went back downstairs, and glanced at the gold, brown clock, the clock struck TWELVE!.....and then there was an abrupt knock at the door! All I could see was a silhouette of a man, not any man, but a father.

-PRAVIN JAYASOORIYA

Real life heroes

This is a story of the real-life avengers
A group of people that had multiple super powers
One that defined the world's history
to the cost of their own liberty
A team that wasn't accompanied by bombs nor planes
But just their unwavering humanity and intellectual brains

Armoured by surgical gloves and N95s
They shielded the world with their intelligence
Using ventilators as their greatest weapons
applauded on their way back from missions
with the normality of keeping a 6ft distance

Fighting a creature so minute,
that takes out even our most "powerful"
while the powers of superman and batman had no use
these heroes were our doctors and nurses dressed in blue

When our future generations are asked who their heroes are
Tony Stark and Peter Parker will unfortunately not make the cut
However, those hands who used testing kits
to ensure the world wouldn't fall into pits
And those hands that drove ambulances across streets

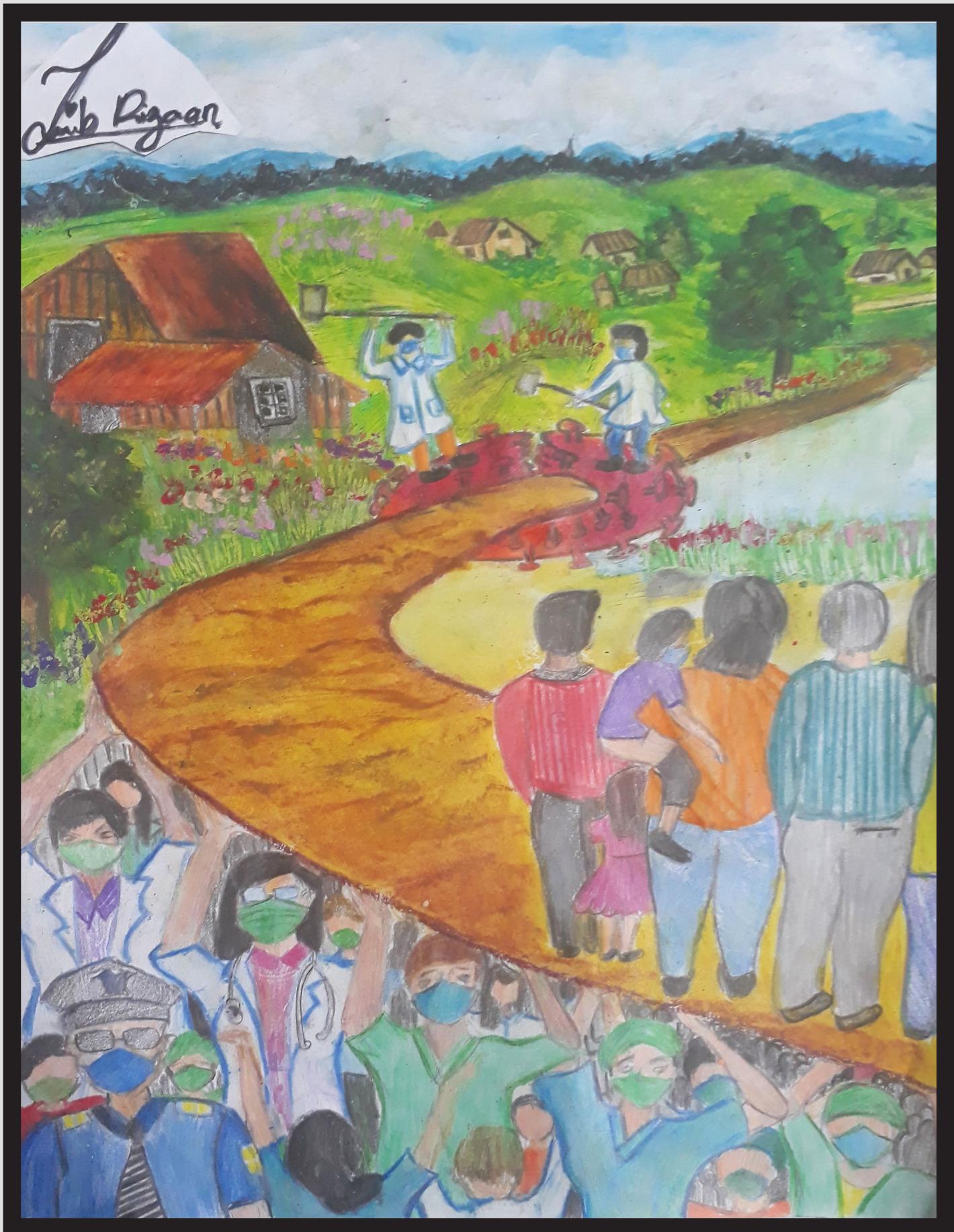
**ensuring the ill will not be put into coffins
These are the heroes that deserve the most credit.**

**While the whole world is stuck in quarantine
getting to spend some time with their families
these heroes venture out amidst this treacherous apocalypse
not knowing whether they are going to be taken down
just like their colleagues, as the next victim.**

**With a debt so hard to repay,
the best we can do is to stick to what they say
From us they require a simple thing
to Stay home; stay safe, for the greater good...
When you must go out don that mask
and keep a safe distance two metres as you should!**

**Lift up our front-line workers in the midst of despair,
Who are selflessly giving our elderly care!
Cheer on and show love for the scared doctors, nurses, and hospital
workers,
Who show up and work doubles in sacrificial services! These are the
real-life heroes, who deserve recognition,
While we stay at home in a lock-down safe position!**

-Mahadiyyah Rasheed



-ZAINAB RIZAAN

THE QUIET SCREAM

It was a new year that would almost certainly be filled with joy and fun. Admittedly, we didn't expect that, at this time of year, it would be seemingly over—the time I regretted the most when hundreds vanished in the grave.

I lived in the streets of Melbourne, Australia, where I mended shoes so that I could earn some money for my family. However, it got a lot worse than expected when the virus began to take over the world.

'Excuse me, sir, I demand that you please find yourself home, and if you don't move, it won't be looking very nice,' said an agitated police officer.

'Dad, what are we going to do?' said Alice, my younger daughter.

I thought for a bit, feeling like a profound lunatic, and finally decided to build a home a few miles away from the city. It was in the Yarra Ranges Forest.

'Justin, are you sure this is going to work?' asked my beloved wife, Lucy.

'Yes, definitely,' I replied, remembering there is always a solution.

Alice and I started building the hut with bamboo sticks and pieces of wood. Lucy, on the other hand, was doing what she does best, making us a cup of tea from last month's supplies.

It was October, and we had a fine-looking house. I would bring them fish from the lake across from our hut for Lucy to heat. However, after a couple of days, something unexpected got caught on my fishing rod: parchments of medical science and much more scientific stuff. A strange sound made its way into my brain; it sounded like the type of music you'd hear in a ghost town.

'Ahhh!' I moaned loudly. The piercing cry that fled into the Yarra ranges was something I'd never heard before. Medical trucks and cops

were abundant on the horizon, filling the world with anxiety and stress. I took the papers back home, which seemed like a good idea considering how thrilled Lucy was when she saw our future in my hands.

Weeks had passed, and it was almost a month until Christmas. Everything was going well. I acquired a cleaning job at the medical clinic. Although taking such a job in a rather desperate situation was considered a risk, it was a risk I had to make to feed my family. The virus wasn't helping; it was doing its job fiercely, like a pit bull terrier munching the flesh out of a poor buffalo.

Life couldn't get any worse, and that was when reality struck me. The howling, raging storm smashed everything in the air, the violent massive drops of hail hit the city and village, and the sirens kept wailing louder and louder. Every day was a horrible mess: patients were lying in places they weren't supposed to be, doctors were suffocating from the torture of treating the infected, and the thought of getting contaminated was like a stinging bug in my brain.

Now I was starting to regret my job. Alice was anxious that I was physically in a dangerous place.

'Is Dad going to die if he waits too long?' sobbed Alice.

'No, sweetheart, he'll be fine,' replied Lucy. Lucy and Alice were having a good time, enjoying what life had for them. They would go rabbit hunting or take a swim in the lake. The experience couldn't have been better, but eventually, it all took a turn.

It was a busy shift on Monday, and I had arrived home late. I had forgotten to tell Alice's bedtime stories, and when I came to her room, I was shocked.

'Dad ... isn't it getting late? I don't feel very well.' Alice coughed.

'Wait, sweetheart, let me check ... check what's going in your body,' I stammered. I plucked the first aid kit, opened the white latch, and removed the thermometer sensor out of its place. I scanned Alice's eyes and watched in despair as the numbers began to rise. I dreaded the sickening thought that hit me every so often: 'She is going to die.'

'What's wrong, Dad?' sobbed Alice.

'It's nothing, dear, you've just got a mild fever,' I replied.

'I think it's best if we took her to the hospital,' replied Lucy.

'No, Mom, I don't want to. There are too many sick people out there,' sobbed Alice.

'But dear, we have to. It's better if we treat you now,' replied Lucy.

'Okay, Mom, I'll get ready,' replied Alice.

We took off on Tuesday night, and driving to the hospital was not an easy task. The plunge of cold air hit my daughter's face right at the moment we entered the frosty hospital lobby. Her eyes glistened at the bright lights above her. It never occurred to me that hospitals would ever be a fire in disguise. Alice was not having a great day today and had trouble coping with the many patients who cried every so often.

'Alice Miguel, Alice Miguel!' yelled the nurse.

'I'm here, Miss,' said Alice softly.

After a couple of minutes, the doctor appeared to be somewhat wary and puffed air into my face in despair.

'You must be Alice's dad,' replied the doctor.

'Yes, Doctor, that's me,' I replied.

'Well, I have some bad news.'

'No, Doctor, it can't be,' I replied.

'Alice is infected and needs to be taken care of in the hospital.'

'Doctor, please let me see my daughter,' I sobbed.

'Sir, I do apologize for Alice, but she has to stay in mandatory quarantine in the hospital.' Lucy was listening to all this, too, and had a hard time absorbing the devil's news. It was after a few moments that Lucy and I were back on the road; the thought of Alice never being able to see us again struck our hearts with immense sorrow.

Alice was facing a far trickier situation. There had been hours of check-ups, with many people in white custom clothes walking around as if they had four legs.

She had decided to stay calm for the next few hours, but things got stranger when she was dumped into a locked room painted bright white. There were many people of different ages in the room. Still, they were separated from each other by glass frames to maintain social distancing. The next morning, a strange buzzing audio streamed into my unconscious mind. It was the call day for all patients.

'Hi, sweetheart! How's it going now? I hope they took good care of you,' sobbed Lucy.

'Yes, Mom, they did take care of me. They came every half an hour to check up on me. They also gave me some candy to cheer me up,' replied Alice.

'Oh, dear! That's good to hear, but I miss you, darling.'

'It's okay, Mom, but I missed swimming with you in Drizzle River.'

'I know, darling. But soon they'll let you out, and we can spend the Christmas together while Grandma and Grandpa come to visit.'

'Can't wait to prank them.' Alice laughed.

I went back to my shift, as usual. Alice was not able to see my face for almost a week. So I had to somehow bypass security and ask the doctor about her condition, hopefully without getting caught by my boss, James Thomas. A few moments later, I got the chance to see

my sweet angel. I had the urge to weep, but I held it in and waved goodbye to her. I was about to return to my workstation when I had the fortunate opportunity to speak with the doctor.

'How's my little girl doing?' I asked.
'She's doing fine and can leave the hospital within the next few days,' the doctor replied.
I was so thrilled by the news that I had to take an early drive back home. Lucy was exhausted and always looked sad, which filled the house with an unpleasant atmosphere. When I returned home, I spluttered out the news to her, and it seemed she ran down to hug me.

'Finally, our baby is coming home, Justin,' Lucy said.

'Yes, honey, let's decorate the house for Christmas to cheer up Alice,' I said.

Lucy and I got many things done. We did a complete makeover of Alice's bedroom with her favourite unicorn. For Christmas, we prepared turkey with stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, and vegetables, along with Alice's all-time favourite dessert, chocolate pudding.

On Friday, December 11, Alice stood on the doorstep with a few men dressed in white.
'Excuse me, sir. Your daughter has recovered remarkably well, but please ensure that she wears a mask most of the time. Also, you should be well aware that she doesn't indulge in any playful activities.'

'Yes, definitely, I will take care of her with all my heart. Thank you so much for your help.'

'You're welcome, sir. Have a good day.'
Alice was delighted. Her golden eyes started to brighten again, and the city and the village looked far cleaner. Although she witnessed few vehicles in the roadways, it did seem to be very quiet and peaceful.
The Rainbow Lorikeet, the Painted Bunting,

and many more were all soaring up into the atmosphere.

Alice immediately switched on the telly, and this is what the government had to say to protect the numerous lives out there:

'ATTENTION, CITIZENS OF MELBOURNE. THE CENTRE IS IN A STATE OF QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION. THE GOAL OF THIS IS TO PROTECT OUR CITIZENS. ALL SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES WILL BE CLOSED UNTIL THE CURRENT PANDEMIC VIRUS HAS PASSED. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE RESIDENTS ALLOWED TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES DURING QUARANTINE.'

'Honestly, Dad, this quarantine movement is a blessing. Otherwise, just imagine the chaos it could have caused. Maybe it could have even ended social existence. Ooh, that would be scary.'

'I know, dear. At least you're here, safe and sound.'

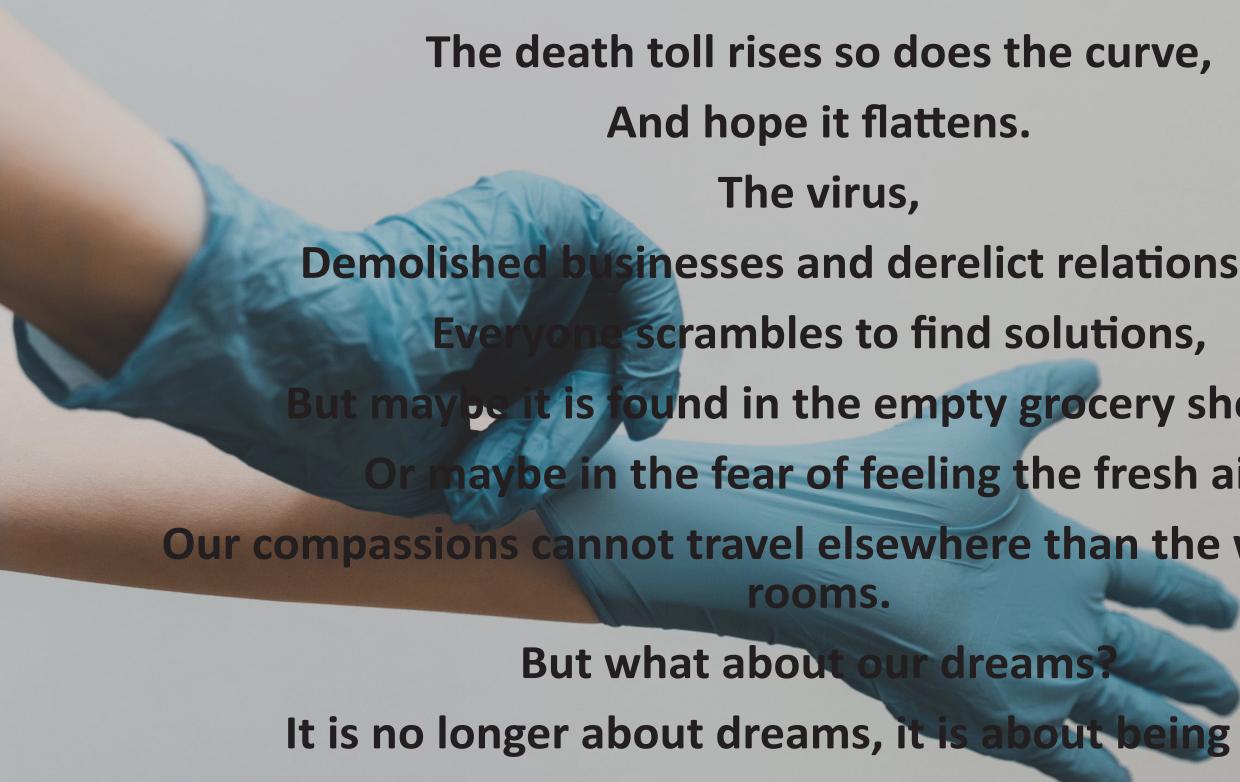
A few weeks had passed, and Justin was having his first enjoyable moment. Alice had picked up technology skills to chat online with her cousins and learnt a lot more than she had in school. Alice was able to witness a new creative world out of that very darkness, perhaps more than the everyday routine of going to school. She, too, was an incredible author after a few weeks.

I love Alice with all my heart. She has been an angel in these vulnerable times, cooking for her parents, speaking a trickle of French, and most of all, having hope in her very soft heart. Christmas had finally arrived, and Alice had the family gathering that she'd been waiting for.

I know my profession is dangerous at this time, but I acknowledge that it's time to help others heal. No longer apart, we are all for one and one for all.

-AMJAD ILHAM

Four Walls



Here we stand, in isolation.
Separated from one another,
And now united by sympathies but divided by entities.
Handshakes have been transformed to an elbow touch,
Hand sanitizers has been transformed to body lotion,
It has made an unpredictable catastrophe that history could imagine.

The death toll rises so does the curve,
And hope it flattens.

The virus,
Demolished businesses and derelict relationships.
Everyone scrambles to find solutions,
But maybe it is found in the empty grocery shelves,
Or maybe in the fear of feeling the fresh air.

Our compassions cannot travel elsewhere than the walls of our rooms.

But what about our dreams?
It is no longer about dreams, it is about being alive.

And the definition of HERO has changed,
Instead of an athlete or celebrity

It's doctors, nurses, front line workers, Teachers and scientists,
Are the people who keep running the world.
Our fingers are crossed as we hope for a cure,
A cure to make things get back to normal.

TOPSY TURVY

Topsy turvy, by definition, when what is expected, isn't what reality portrays. And in our case...

The great plague of Marseille in 1720. The cholera attack of Asia in 1820. The Spanish flu in 1920, and the coronavirus outbreak of 2020. A constant 100-year loop discovered recently, shook us all. Reflecting upon the impact the seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen hundred had, it's not a wonder that our entire world quaked with fear.

While the everyday news talks about the dangers, and awareness, and hardships, and every aspect of negativity to worry about, we forget that it doesn't always have to be dark clouds and demons.

For instance, let's take the lockdown. It has forced each and every one of us into our homes, leaving the outside world into an eternal bliss. With cars constantly not blocking the streets, many countries, including China and America, which used to be the top two most polluted, have seen drastic pollution level decreases. Some in Wuhan even stated that they could finally 'see the sky'. But it's not only the skies we're talking about. Now that people, pets, and strays aren't walking about, there has been a dramatic fall in the amount of trash we see every day. Therefore, I think we could all safely agree that the environment couldn't have enough of it.

Now, as the days progress, we learn to continue our daily work through other means. And thus, many online businesses that used to be at the bottom that offers video calls, chat rooms, games of all sorts, and even day to day necessities, abruptly skyrocketed, reaching new levels of success. Whether it's online meetings and work, or shopping through the aisles of a website. Even something as simple as spending time, like playing games or scrolling through social media. During these days, many rely on the internet and its facilities to survive.

But if we focus on the points that really do matter to us personally, when every one of us is locked in our homes with our family, we begin to learn how family bonds work. Since they are the ones we see every minute of our entire day, gradually coping becomes a habit. Family nights with board games and dinner at the table, to movies in the living room with popcorn and snacks. Or even an effortless chat. By the end of this quarantine, we will all be knowing the history and secrets of each and every member of our household.

Finally, if we look deeply into every aspect, we realize that there can be many factors to benefit from. Yes, not everything is all rainbows and ponies, but nothing ever has been. Yet, I still do stand by my statement that the pros shouldn't just be lashed out. It might be pros to you or to someone else, either way, and we have to accept and move on. You know what they say, 'don't make a dim room even dimmer'. Even if no one actually quoted that, I quote it myself. Because although it might not seem like it, this pandemic might be a wave of a better than a horrible chapter in life.

- NABEELAH FALEEL

WADING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

In a time where every news is terrible news, staying optimistic and flooding your brain with nothing but positive thoughts is imperative. People are forced to focus on worst-case scenarios as economies are crashing, countries are on lockdown, death toll rises, and new conspiracy theories every day, which adds fuel to the fire.

Negative news that floods the internet causes depression and anxiety which is hard to cope up with so let's take a second, take a deep breath and look at some of the positive things going on in these strange times; the death rate in the number of cases which had an outcome was 17% while the recovery rate was 83% which is not the side of the pandemic that the media shows.

This pandemic has allowed the environment to take a break as there has been a slowdown in the production process, and less traveling has caused a reduction in pollution. Perhaps, the most promising news at the moment is that scientists all over the world are rushing to come up with a

vaccine that is currently under development and will probably hit the market soon.

If you are struggling to make sense of everything that is going on in the world right now or just need some encouragement to help you see a better tomorrow, here are some strategies that will help you to nurture positive thoughts and allow you to seamlessly wade through this pandemic. Put your masks on because this negativity is severely toxic to your health!

Finding optimism amid a pandemic can be difficult, but it must be done. To do so, you can start by reducing your media exposure. The fear is worse than the virus. This is an opportunity to change fundamental habits that will ultimately increase your life happiness. It is your responsibility to pour uplifting content into your mind. Don't fall prey to an oversaturation of fear. This does not mean that you should completely isolate yourself from the world; you can use the media to catch up on exciting shows to distract yourself from the tedium of isolation or overwhelm of negative news. This would also

be a great way to relax your mind. Moving on, if you think about it, this lockdown is a blessing in disguise for us. We can use this time as an opportunity to strengthen our bond with our families.

Since most of our family members are working from home, we can spend more time with each other and improve communication. Think about this season as a bonus memory-making time with your family. Use your free time in these challenging circumstances to increase your connection with your loved ones by having deep and interesting conversations.

Often you lack a sense of creativity because you are constantly doing routine things over and over again. In a time like this where everything is locked, you can unlock your creative side by trying new things that you are passionate about like painting, organic farming, redecorating your room or simple things like baking, reading inspirational books, and more. You can also stay productive by starting to work on projects that you have been putting off previously.

If you want to overcome those negative emotions and get back to

your hopeful self, you must take care of your mind, body, and soul. This is your chance to connect deeper with yourself. Many people stay busy with their bustling lives that they do not have time for essential self-care and also fundamental self-exploration. This can be your time to get to know yourself deeper so that you can be yourself.

At the end of the day, this is an opportunity to practice leaning into the unknown without overwhelm- you can learn how to train your thoughts so that they do not spiral negatively. We need to control the power of our thoughts and try to find happiness in every single day. This is a new way of life, a temporary one, but we do not know for how long, so we should embrace it. Acknowledge the hopelessness you feel, wear a mask of happiness, remember that nothing is permanent and that clinging to anything-whether it be hopelessness and despair or our plans to change the world confines us to suffering. Remember that worry does not change anything; it only gives away the hope you can have today.

-ESHAL KHAN

ECONOMIST' S QUESTIONNIARE

1. Travel trade is one of the main sectors being affected by this pandemic. What do you think is the impact of COVID-19 on your trade and the global economy as a whole?

CORONAVIRUS has emerged as a major black swan event and dealt a crippling blow to the entire Travel and Tourism industry, in the entire world. The disruptions that it has caused are across the entire value chain i.e. Airlines, Hotels, Travel Agents, Tour Operators, Restaurants, Rail Networks and Cruises, and a slew of other indirect providers. Equally, all segments within inbound, outbound, and domestic arenas, like Corporate Travel, Leisure Holidays, MICE, Weddings etc. have all come to a grinding halt.

Since the beginning of the year crude oil prices have slumped dramatically which in turn led to a disagreement between two of the largest oil producers. Bilateral talks between oil producers ended with promises to cut petroleum output.

Expected Oil Prices will average 23\$/b in the second quarter of 2020, but could increase to 30\$/b in the second half of the year. The average will be 33\$/b for 2020, down from 64\$/b in 2019. Prices expected to rise to 46\$/b in 2021.

While there is no way to exactly tell what the economic damage from the global COVID 19 pandemic will be, there is wide spread agreement among economists that it will have severe negative impacts. Early estimates predicate that most major economies will lose at least 2.4 percent of their GDP over 2020. To put this into perspective, global GDP was estimated at around 86.6 trillion USD in 2019 meaning that just a 0.4 percent drop in economic growth amounts to 3.5 trillion US dollars in lost economic output.

There is no question that 2020 will be exceptionally difficult and crucially everything depends on the policy actions taken by individual countries/governments.

2. Due to the increase in working from home have you found the potential to allow it to be the future of working and if so, what positive impacts will it have in the future?

Remote work is changing how the global workspace operates and the need is even more now ever since Covid 19 have disrupted the world over and Social distancing and self hygiene has become the new norm and hence I find that there are a lot of reasons why it's good for a business to let employees work from home. Working Smarter, Not Harder

Here are some Future Positive impacts of letting employees work from home.

1. Waste less time commuting.

Cutting out a commute can be both a huge morale booster and a huge time saver. Employees will also waste less money on gas or public transportation.

2. Flexible Working Hours

You will most likely get to choose your own working hours. Even many companies allow their remote employees to decide on their own when they want to work.

3. They'll be more productive.

One Stanford study found that employees who work from home are 13 percent more productive compared with their in-office counterparts.

4. They'll be happier.

Everyone seems to be talking about work-life balance these days, and there's no better way to improve the work-life balance of your employees than to let them work from home.

5. It's easier than ever.

You can be connected to the office every minute of every day if you want to, thanks to the Internet. The concept of working from home might have seemed outlandish 20 years ago, but this is the 21st century. You can find access to wifi almost anywhere, and tools like GoToMeeting and Skype make remote communication a breeze.

6. You won't have to pay for office space.

Working from home means either no office or at the very least, a lot less office space. If you don't want to make the switch to a completely remote environment, try staggering your employees' work-from-home days to save on office space.

7. You won't have to pay for office supplies.

No one likes doing bulk orders for office supplies. By having employees work from home, you can cut out a lot of these useless expenditures.

8. You won't have to pay for office snacks.

Same goes for office snacks as office supplies. IBM has saved about \$100 million annually since beginning its remote-work program.

9. No more wasting time on useless meetings.

Remember the productivity thing? Well, a lot of that comes from cutting all the useless meetings and other time wasters that are ubiquitous in an office environment.

10. You can hire the best, no matter where they are.

No office means the ability to work with anyone in the world. Freelance networks like Toptal (with its notoriously tough location-independent screening process) have capitalized on this concept by connecting top companies with the very best

software developers from all around the world.

11. Your employees will be less likely to quit.

Working from home makes employees happier. Happy employees don't quit. Simple logic.

12. You might get some good PR from it.

Yahoo was all over the news when it stopped its working-from-home program -- but most reactions were negative. Try instituting a work-from-home program, and you might get some positive PR out of it.

13. There are tons of product-management services for remote teams.

Tools like Basecamp and Asana make managing your remote team extremely easy. You'll be just as up-to-date on your employees' activities as you would be if they were in an office.

14. You can get increased insight into other markets.

When you have employees working all over the country, or even all over the globe, you can get amazing insight into local markets.

15. You don't have to go all or nothing.

If a 100 percent work-from-home environment isn't in the cards for your business, try giving employees that opportunity to work from home once a week or a few days out of the month. Most of the benefits listed here will still apply.

16. It will increase employee loyalty.

Almost anyone who has had the chance to work from home would never dream of giving it up. By giving your employees this chance, they will be extremely loyal to your company.

17. Employees will take fewer sick days.

Colds and food poisoning make going into the office miserable, but working from home? Not so bad. Employees who are mildly sick can still get work done most of the time if it means not having to go into the office. Another bonus? No sharing illnesses.

18. Employees will work longer on a day-to-day basis.

Remember commuting? If you work from home, you're at your office right when you wake up. The time that your employees would spend commuting can now be used for real work.

3. What are the measures industrial bodies are taking to minimize the damage on the economy? Do you think it is enough?

The measures of crises are varied and complex, and can be domestic, external, or

both.

Typically, a country's government and the IMF must agree on a program of economic policies before the IMF provides lending to the country. A country's commitments to undertake certain policy actions, known as policy conditionality, are in most cases an integral part of IMF lending (see table). This policy program underlying an arrangement is in most cases presented to the Fund's Executive Board in a "Letter of Intent" and further detailed in a "Memorandum of Understanding"

- Domestic factors include inappropriate fiscal and monetary policies, which can lead to large economic imbalances (such as large current account and fiscal deficits and high levels of external and public debt); an exchange rate fixed at an inappropriate level, which can erode competitiveness and lead to persistent current account deficits and loss of official reserves; and a weak financial system, which can create economic booms and busts. Political instability and/or weak institutions can also trigger crises by exacerbating economic vulnerabilities.
- External factors include shocks ranging from natural disasters to large swings in commodity prices. These are common causes of crises especially for low-income countries, which have limited capacity to prepare for such shocks and are dependent on a narrow range of export products. Also, in an increasingly globalized economy, sudden changes in market sentiment can result in capital flow volatility. Even countries with sound fundamentals could be severely affected by the impact of economic crises and policies in other countries.

Whether the cause is domestic or external in origin, crises can take many different forms: balance of payment problems occur when a nation is unable to pay for essential imports or service its external debt repayments; financial crises stem from illiquid or insolvent financial institutions; and fiscal crises are caused by excessive fiscal deficits and debt. Often, countries that come to the IMF face more than one type of crisis as challenges in one sector spread throughout the economy. Crises generally result in sharp slowdown in growth, higher unemployment, lower incomes and greater uncertainty which cause a deep recession. In acute crisis cases, defaults or restructuring of sovereign debt may become unavoidable.

A global health crisis, such as the coronavirus, inevitably can have an adverse economic impact, and it is part of the IMF's mandate to assist countries through policy advice and lending.

The institution is working closely with its development partners—World Bank, World Health Organization, and Asian Development Bank—and other health officials to provide timely policy advice, technical assistance, and financial support.

The IMF has the following facilities and instruments in its toolkit to help countries respond to the economic impact of the coronavirus.

Emergency financing. The Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) and Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) provide emergency financial assistance to member countries without the need to have a full-fledged program in place. These loans—which could amount up to \$50 billion for low-income and emerging markets—can be disbursed very quickly to

assist member countries implement policies to address emergencies such as the coronavirus. Emergency lending to low-income countries available under the RCF is about \$10 billion, and for emerging markets under the RFI it could amount to about \$40 billion. In 2016, the IMF provided an RFI emergency loan to Ecuador after one of the strongest earthquakes in decades.

Augmenting existing lending programs. The IMF can modify as needed existing programs in support of countries to accommodate urgent new needs arising from the coronavirus. The IMF was the first international financial institution to swiftly provide additional financing for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone in 2014 to fight the Ebola outbreak. The IMF's response helped these countries make room in their budgets for critical health spending, and served as a catalyst for donors, whose assistance was largely directed at health spending.

Grants for debt relief. The Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT) allows the IMF to provide grants for debt relief to the poorest and most vulnerable countries with outstanding obligations to the IMF to help address disasters, including public health disasters. This facility was used to support Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone during the 2014 Ebola outbreak. The CCRT is currently underfunded with just over \$200 million available against possible needs of over \$1 billion.

New financing arrangement. The IMF can also provide support through a new financing arrangement under its existing facilities such as Stand-By Arrangements, although some of the tools listed above would generally be preferable, including because they can be disbursed quickly to address the urgent financial need.

The IMF will continue to support vulnerable countries through capacity development. Given the need to quickly redirect public resources, the IMF will remain closely engaged with the affected member countries and development partners, working as needed to reprioritize capacity development activities.

4. What are the measures taken by the industrial bodies during this period to minimize the financial impact?

Take Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a case study. A slew of measures announced by the Ministry of Finance would help mitigate the impact of coronavirus-related lockdown on businesses, the industry said.

Overview

The Saudi Ministry of Finance ("MoF") and General Authority for Zakat & Tax ("GAZT") have announced various measures in respect of COVID-19 to support the local economy, including a range of corporate income tax, Zakat, VAT, excise tax, and customs duties related measures.

Corporate income tax measures

The Saudi MoF has extended the deadline for the filing and payment of Zakat and Corporate Income Tax, and has issued other administrative measures.

Indirect tax measures (VAT and Customs)

Temporary three months payment extension for VAT and excise tax; Temporary filing extension for VAT and excise tax returns; and A 30 day deferral for the collection of customs duties on imports for the next three months, provided a bank guarantee is submitted.

As of 11th May 2020: The Saudi MoF has announced an increase in the rate of VAT from 5% to 15% effective 1 July 2020

Individual taxes and labour

- No expat levy for Iqamas (expatriate residence permits) that expire between 20 March to 30 June 2020. Such Iqamas shall be extended for a period of three months for free;
- Employers will be entitled to a refund of fees paid to obtain work visas for employees that are ultimately not used, due to the entry/exit restrictions in the Kingdom; and
- Employers will be allowed to extend exit and re-entry work visas that were not used, due to the entry/exit restrictions in the Kingdom.

As of April 5: The General Organisation for Social Insurance (GOSI) announced significant measures with respect to support for Saudi workers in private sector enterprises affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Private sector employers will have the right to apply to GOSI for a monthly compensation payment for up to 60% of the wages as registered in the Social Insurance system of up to 70% of their Saudi National workforce or 100% of the workforce for employers with 5 or less Saudi national workers for an initial 3 month period comprising May to July 2020. If claimed, the employer cannot compel the worker to continue working during the compensation period. In order to benefit from such a claim, the employer must:

- Have been subscribed with the unemployment insurance branch before January 1, 2020, and continue to participate in this branch;
- Resume payments after the three-month period of the workers covered;
- Continue to pay the wages of the remaining uncovered Saudi nationals and non-Saudis; and
- Have met all their wage payment obligations for employees during the first quarter of 2020.

The relief will not be available to those industries not deemed to be significantly affected by the outbreak, namely:

- The financial sector (including those licensed by the Monetary Agency, banks, finance and insurance companies, insurance brokers, and licensees from the Capital Market Authority);
- Telecommunications operators; and
- Food and supply supermarkets.

GOSI has clarified that it will review and evaluate the performance of this initiative, and submit a recommendation before the end of June 2020 with respect to any extension to the period of cover, or changes to those employers who will be able to make a claim. Employers should continue to make deductions from employees for their share of the payments, as this will need to be paid over once the grace period has come to an end.

5. In the future what are the steps the private and government sector should take to minimize the economic damage for events that are similar to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Decisions taken now will determine the future shape of the recovery and global growth prospects. We need to lay the foundations for a strong, sustained and socially inclusive recovery. Trade will be an important ingredient here, along with fiscal and monetary policy. Keeping markets open and predictable, as well as fostering a more generally favourable business environment, will be critical to spur the renewed investment we will need. And if countries work together, we will see a much faster recovery than if each country acts alone."

The economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic inevitably invites comparisons to the global financial crisis of 2008-09. These crises are similar in certain respects but very different in others Managing supply chain disruption is a challenge for both global and local enterprises and requires a risk-versus-economic efficiency calculation on the part of every country.

6. Unemployment rates is a rising concern in many trades especially travel trade. What are the measures that need to be taken to bring it back to the normal stage?

These depend on the speed of containment and the duration of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders.

This is by far the worst crisis that international tourism has faced since records began (1950). The impact will be felt to varying degrees in the different global regions and at overlapping times, with Asia and the Pacific expected to rebound first.

Domestic demand is expected to recover faster than international demand, according to the UNWTO Panel of Experts survey. The majority expects to see signs of recovery by the final quarter of 2020 but mostly in 2021.

7. Do you have suggestions to inform the people that the economy is improving and how the economists can help in moving the economy back to the boom stage?

As the list of countries shutting down in the face of the coronavirus pandemic continues to grow, leading economists from around the world are calling for radical action to fight the economic fallout.

More than 40 high-profile economists, including IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath and former President Barack Obama's top economic adviser, Jason Furman, have contributed to an eBook from the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) in which they urge governments to act quickly and do whatever it takes to keep the lights on.

They advocate using heavy fiscal firepower for a "whatever-it-takes" economic response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Among the drastic measures proposed are: 'helicopter money,' where everyone gets a no-strings-attached handout; Eurozone countries using Eurobonds to issue debt together rather than individually; and state investment banks providing unlimited emergency lending to firms.

Though the economists say it's still too early to tell how bad the economic damage will be, they're certain it will be large – the pandemic is destroying lives and livelihoods around the world.

To avoid deep, long-lasting damage to economies, governments will need to reduce the number of personal and corporate bankruptcies, ensure people have money to keep spending even if they're not working, and increase public investment and healthcare spending, the authors write.

Put another way, they need to act now to "reduce the accumulation of economic scar tissue".

8. From your understanding what are the countries taking the best steps to minimize the economic impact?

Coronavirus has wrecked global markets in a way comparable to the global financial crisis and Nations are unrolling emergency plans to save their economies.

- Currently across the world, all Governments have a role to play in softening the economic impact of Coronavirus. From spending on healthcare to business continuity plans, there are various options available.

A key role of government is to protect the well-being of its people—most crucially and visibly during emergencies such as the recent outbreak of the coronavirus. The IMF has \$50 billion available in rapid-disbursing emergency financing to help countries suffering from the virus. As Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said, what we want is to guarantee that people are not going to die because of a lack of money. Countries like Germany, Spain, Portugal, France, UK, Canada, USA, Australia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Singapore have taken various measures to minimise the economic impact and have listed down few bullet points in brief

- 1) **Saudi Arabia:** The Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority unveiled a \$13.3

billion package on March 15. The “Supporting Finance for the Private Sector” program will support SMEs through three components, including \$8 billion to support banks defer SME payments, \$3.5 billion for concessional financing and \$1.6 billion to support loan making to small businesses. There are also numerous tax related measures, including extending deadlines for filing tax returns and paying those taxes. Public sector workers will continue to receive salaries, and government has further announced to bear 60% of employees’ salaries paid by the private sector to Saudi nationals for a period of three months and ceiling of \$2.39 billion.

- 2) **Germany:** The German government is providing €1 billion (\$1.1 billion) in credit for businesses and companies of all sizes. The credit will be delivered through the state-owned KfW business development bank. Last week, Berlin said the KfW has around €500 billion to help support its economy.

The government also announced number of tax measures to ensure liquidity for companies. Late payment fines for loans may be waved for companies hit hard by the slowdown caused by the outbreak. Financial support will also be given to the Robert Koch Institute, the country’s public health institute.

Germany's Ministry for Education and Research is expected to receive €145 million for the development of a vaccine. The country has also set aside €50 million to repatriate German tourists stranded around the world. The southern state of Bavaria announced a fund worth up to €10 billion to help the region withstand the coronavirus. The fund allows the local government to buy stakes in faltering companies to prevent insolvencies.

- 3) **UK:** Newly appointed Chancellor of Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, announced a \$14.5 billion emergency fiscal stimulus package to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. The stimulus will support the UK's National Health Service (NHS) and refund the cost of businesses for 2 weeks. The UK is also offering state-backed loans worth \$400 billion (15% of the UK's GDP) for businesses in the retail and hospitality industries struggling in the sudden economic paralysis caused by mass self-quarantine.
- 4) **Canada:** Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau unveiled an aid stimulus package worth \$82 billion Canadian (US \$56.4 billion; €51.4 billion). The package will be used to support businesses and provide temporary tax relief. The package is worth 3% of Canada's GDP. The stimulus package will also support child benefit payments and provide emergency care to workers who don't have access to paid sick leave. Trudeau also announced that Canada would restrict all non-essential travel from the US. He assured that supply chains would not be affected by the move.

5) Australia: Australia has announced a fiscal stimulus package worth \$11 billion to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. The package includes a one-off payment of AUD \$750 (\$451) for nearly 6.5 million lower-income Australians. In addition, the package will be used to save 120,000 apprentice jobs and support small and medium-sized firms. The fiscal stimulus package is nearly one % of Australia's GDP.

Australia's central bank has slashed its interest rate to a record low of 0.25%, to boost fiscal stimulus in an embattled Australian economy. The Australian government also said that it would enable cheaper borrowing for businesses by intervening in the bond market.

6) Turkey: Turkey Said that it would roll out a stimulus package worth \$15.4 billion to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. The 21-point package, known as the Economic Stability Shield, will support delay in loan and tax payments. The package will also increase pension pay, support businesses, reduce Value Added Tax (VAT) on domestic air travel and defer social security payments by 6 months for the retail, steel, automotive and hospitality industries, among others.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also announced that Turkey is putting in place a "periodic program" to give healthcare at home for people above the age of 80 who live alone.

9. How long do you think it will take businesses, the economy, and individuals will take to recover from this downfall?

It is too soon to precisely date as to when economies/businesses will start to recover, the critical questions are how severe and long-lasting the downturn will be and what its effects on longer-term growth.

Estimates of the expected recovery in 2021 are equally uncertain, with outcomes depending largely on the duration of the outbreak and the effectiveness of the policy responses.

This crisis is first and foremost a health crisis which has forced governments to take unprecedented measures to protect people's lives.

The immediate goal is to bring the pandemic under control and mitigate the economic damage to people, companies and countries. But policymakers must start planning for the aftermath of the pandemic.

These numbers are ugly – there is no getting around that. But a rapid, vigorous rebound is possible. Decisions taken now will determine the future shape of the recovery and global growth prospects We need to lay the foundations for a strong, sustained and socially inclusive recovery. Trade will be an important ingredient here, along with fiscal and monetary policy. Keeping markets open and predictable, as well as fostering a more generally favourable business environment, will be critical to

spur the renewed investment we will need. And if countries work together, we will see a much faster recovery than if each country acts alone."

10. How will the economy recover from the boom stage like it was before the pandemic arose?

With the Ongoing increase in COVID-19 affected patients across the world, it will be a long time before the economy recovers — and it won't be the same. The first prerequisite for economic recovery will be a public health solution, widespread testing, tracing of possible infections, antibody testing for immunity, adequate supplies for the health care system, and so on. The coronavirus outbreak will need to be firmly under control before the economy can resume anything approaching normalcy, and we just don't know yet when the public health breakthrough will happen. Consumers need confidence that participating in the economy won't get them or their loved ones sick before they will revert to their typical economic activity. Climate Action Is Key to Economic Recovery and Long-term Prosperity. The global COVID-19 outbreak shows without a shadow of a doubt that governments have ability to take urgent and radical action to contain crisis. This will not be easy, and requires all of us to play our part. However, as we emerge from this immediate crisis, we need to be clear that responding to the short-term economic downturn with bad long-term investments would not make sense. Instead, we have an opportunity to use stimulus measures to boost growth following the COVID-19 health crisis to both curb air pollution and help address the climate crisis.

The growing urgency of the climate crisis shows the dire need for immediate measures to drastically cut emissions now. And the opportunities to do so, given new developments with clean technologies and their falling costs, have never been better. While the restrictions on travel and large meetings are challenging, in turn they may also help us shift our own behavior to work, education and travel patterns that are much more sustainable, including recognizing the opportunities and broader benefits of teleworking and virtual meetings. We are being forced to reset our habits now, but we should use this as a learning moment as we come out of the crisis. We cannot punt the climate emergency down the road. This year, countries must deliver national climate commitments for 2030 aligned with reaching a net-zero emissions world by 2050. While COVID-19 and its economic repercussions are rightfully the primary focus of many governments today, as we look to boost the economy, we also need to consider tomorrow. For countries looking to shore up their economies in turbulent times and achieve long-term sustainable growth, climate action offers a compelling opportunity.

Mahesh Waran
Contract Manager - KSA
Kanoo Travel - BAE Systems

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A Note from the Boys' Head Prefect

“A truly altruistic human being is the hallmark of humanity”

It maybe dark here, but the light at the end of the tunnel is not an illusion...

Humanity, as a species, has suffered challenges of greater magnitude, and has always triumphed over them. Those who know its history, understand that today is unsurprising - almost expected. Those that understand its history, know that this worldwide wrecking will inevitably end. The light at the end of the tunnel is not a freight train, nor a deception, but a start to a new life that will, for many people, be drastically different. We will invariably get there, but we do not understand the price of the journey just yet.

We must hope that we come out of this bleak present having learned important lessons. The world had become so lost in matters so momentary, we had forgotten how helpless humanity as a whole is. I hope this virus will have killed the pride and the evil that resides within us, and that it germinates the golden seed of humility, before we either bid it farewell, or it becomes endemic in our societies.

SARS-CoV-2 is an unwelcome guest, but it has taught us the value of things we may not have previously appreciated: our family and school, the sun and the greenery. It has taught us sacrifice, patience and revealed the good that people have in them. It has shown us that our religious and cultural values are not to be messed with. Our history taught us how to wade through storms like these: I hope this rekindles our respect for our history and those of our ancestors that were part of its making.

I hope we learn the importance of time – everyone has only a very little of it. Death is inevitable and unpredictable: therefore, we must remember to make every second of life count in the best manner possible. NOT for ourselves, but for others! A truly altruistic human being is the hallmark of humanity.

As I write this, 533,000 deaths have been recorded globally, with a single country accounting for as much as 25% of the death toll. This nation is neither poor

nor desperate. But this pandemic should have finally shown us that there is nothing like the perfect land, if it wasn't clear already. It has also revealed our inner bias towards 1st world countries, and has lifted a mask off their society. The grand stories of discipline, respect, cooperation, and kindness we had become accustomed to hearing from them, and so adamantly believed and defended, were always going to prove unsubstantiated.

Poor 3rd world societies, who have accepted a lower quality of life and hardship as inexorable, have set an example to them. Africa has surprised everyone. Melinda Gates, amongst umpteen other 1st world inhabitants, predicted Africa to be embroiled in death and destruction months ago. It may well happen, but hasn't yet. The hardships these people face everyday has shown them the truth of life - it is temporary, and made them prepared to be brave no matter what hits them.

Pakistan has shown the world what makes it truly special. Over 1% of its GDP goes into charity. For comparison sake, U.K uses 1.2-1.3% of its GDP for the same purpose. The difference? Pakistan is a country where poverty is rife and 45% (=100 million) of the people earn less than 2\$ a day.

Some self-serving citizens in several tremendously poor countries have wanted entire nations to lockdown, and economies to freeze. They do not realize that whereas Covid-19 kills 0.6-1% of all those infected (according to the WHO), about 10% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty, and will die of hunger before Covid-19 has a chance. People of monetary privilege do not understand this because they do not know what it means to not have enough money for food and water.

Our community of SLIS-R is a beautiful blend of diversity, honesty and has a very caring heart. The way we have stood together in the last few months is exemplary. This magazine is proof that, no matter what happens, our students will never stop learning, and mastering, the beautiful art that is exploring the treasures of knowledge and creativity.

I thank all my juniors who have worked so hard in completing this project. I wish them the grandest success in this project, and in every endeavor they undertake in their bright, bright future!

I pray that God protects us all from this disease, and those we love and care about.

Thank you.

Mohammad Omar

Head Prefect - SLIS-R, 2019-2020

A Note from the Girls' Head Prefect

Almost everyone is quarantined within the four walls of their home. It becomes not only our duty but also our responsibility, as it is a much-needed step to contain the spread of COVID-19. During this time I have realized so many things that I know I wouldn't have known if we hadn't had this situation.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard people express their excitement about things returning back to normal. But I'll be honest—that's the last thing I want. I want our lives to be even better than they were before. I want all of us to collectively move forward, not backward. I want us to take all the lessons we learned when life slowed to a grinding halt, and use them with intention to make our future that much brighter. I want us to continue to make time for the things that matter instead of getting right back to the things that never really did.

When life slows down, you tend to notice more. Though we usually miss it, we're surrounded by so much beauty all the time. My mom opened my eyes to so much of it.

Spending most of the time indoors has increased the time that I spent with my family members. This has reinstated the fact that it is only family which is beside me through thick and thin. I got once in a lifetime opportunity to spend so many days altogether with family, and it is better to not waste it. Life isn't about work or money or even success. In the end, relationships are truly what matters most. As life starts to get busier, make sure you're devoting time to what's most important. Give your family, friends, and loved ones the gift of your time. Love your family (and yourself) enough to say no to things that aren't a priority.

COVID-19 may have rocked our world. But it's something nearly all of humanity is going through together. I've been so impressed and moved by the simple acts of kindness I've seen from friends, family, and even strangers on the Internet. When you focus on the good, the good gets better. When you look outside yourself and serve someone else, your problems seem to matter a lot less. Of course, kindness goes beyond just giving someone a compliment or writing a thank-you note. Sometimes, kindness means fighting for change and speaking up against injustice. Make it a point to always be kind. You never know what someone else is going through - especially during these trying times. Be generous on every occasion.

The world has slowed so we can rediscover ourselves. Being quarantined has given me more 'me time' and has changed the relationship I have with myself. It has taught me how to be comfortable in my own skin and how to love myself more. As my social interaction is limited, it is me and only me who will have to keep myself busy.

Humans are social animals and thrive by socializing. Being quarantined at home cuts our chances of meeting friends and going to shopping. This has limited our daily activities to such an extent that all we do all day is feel lazy and get bored. As important as it is, home quarantine has made me value freedom of stepping outside, anytime and anywhere.

The most essential of all, being in a lockdown made us realize the importance of the freedom we all had. It will make us realize the importance of a healthy body and will fill us with a feeling of gratitude towards God, towards our government, towards our doctors and towards everyone who is working day and night for a better and healthy environment.

Instead of going back to normal, let's move forward together. We can get through this together. Be optimistic and the rest will fall to its place.

Head Prefect - Chamudhi Wickramasinghe

BY THE ELEVENS