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Shadows of COVID-19*

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Still Waiting for a Cure

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Still Waiting for a Cure

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Before the virus, masks, and the distance
that is making us all
Anti-social.
I was consumed with the things the make me
happy.
Enjoying the togetherness of a live concert,
the warmth of a friendly hug,
Teaching my students, exchanging banter
with friends at brunch,
Or attending community events.
Possibilities of hope danced from one month
to the next,
Goals were checked off and new milestones
reached.

I was doing just fine.
Walking, breathing, touching things with my
fingers
Without the fear of possible death.
Catching a whiff of a stranger's perfume
Or swallowing a room full of air while
laughing hysterically with friends.

Then it happened.
The news of a novel virus made it to social
media, newspapers, and TV.
Forcing the world to retreat into their homes,
huts, apartments, and castles.
All people were asked to participate in a
lockdown-This was not a drill.
This was the real deal, a modern-day ailment
with no cure in sight.

Starting from one person, patient zero,
Then spreading to another,
Until the number went from zero,
To definitely, certainly not zero anymore.
Millions felt the blow,
Schools closed, suicide rates soared, divorce
lawyers were in high demand,

While hospital ICUs looked like shots fired
in a war zone.

It was a full-blown
wash-your-hands-hygienic-contact-tracing-
endemic-essential-working-lock-down-
pandemic,
Before anyone could warn us.
Before anyone could shout, "LOOK OUT
IT'S COMING!"
Before anything could have prepared us ...
it was here.
Like the slam of a fist on a table, BAM!
It was here. "The new normal."
The new normal came crashing in like an
unwanted dinner guest.
An unwanted guest that doesn't bring
desserts or a yummy, covered dish.
No, it just lingered around with a huge
appetite devouring all that it could.
Swallowing up entire birthday parties,
graduations, and weddings!

Suddenly, the virus began to mutate itself.
It went from being a microscopic particle to
being political machine.
In its political form
It turned our attention to a new respiratory
ailment.
It was not the virus, but the silence from the
virus that allowed us all to hear
The labored breathing of black and brown
bodies
As they painfully cried out, "I can't
breathe,"
Their voices muffled under the knee of the
law.

The summer brought the heat and the
temperature certainly rose
Headlines oscillated from the political virus
to the novel virus.
From the racial pandemic to the viral
pandemic.
The line between the two often blurry,
overlapping, or nonexistent.

The virus was more than just a sickness of
the human body,
It revealed the sickness of our nation's soul.
The racial unrest, that no mask can hide.
The political divide, as the death tolls rise.

We pray asking for a glimmer of hope,
The recognition of the humanness of all
humanity.

The answers only come in parts and pieces.
Packaged in small vials.
As a speedy vaccine makes its way to clinic
aisles
But, the cure for the soul has no quick fix,
the cure for the
Racial woes still left unstitched.