

HELLO, VIRUS

by Gerry Horwitz

With apologies to Simon and Garfunkel, I feel as though the Corona Virus has put me on a “Bridge Over Troubled Waters”more aptly, a bridge over waters *roiling* with not only the dangers of severe illness but the dangers as well of climate change, of economic insecurity, of racial unrest, of political polarization and of educational disruption.

Where am I? This bridge has no end in sight; its only direction is toward a new frontier of as- yet-unsolved problems, still unanswered questions, and unexpected consequences. Rather than, like brave pioneers of the past, *choosing* to depart from an unsatisfying present in search of more opportunity, I am—unwilling and unconsulted—losing control, on a voyage toward.....what?

Can I reframe the narrative? Can I help mend this ruptured culture? Will time itself, squeezed and stretched at once, regain a recognizable shape?

And yet, and yet, I resort to two ways of thinking that calm me. The first is an inherited sense of humor which enables me to see the ridiculous lurking behind many situations. Secondly I admit, and surrender to, a firm belief that Mother Nature cannot be conquered. She can be anticipated, and she can be dealt with, but she cannot be overcome; perhaps not a comforting notion but a realistic one, oddly soothing.

But I am afraid. I fear the virus and I fear the possible after effects if it catches me and I survive. In the meantime, I wonder about this bridge on which I seem to exist; will I reach its end?

Is there, in fact, an end??

I argue with myself.

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