

## Once Upon a Time, a Virus Paused the World

Day and night orbited around the planet  
like tired mamba, man became zebras  
hiding amidst grasses from a pride of lions.

The virus shook the universe like tsunami,  
like hurricane, like tempest, like insurgency,  
It swallowed men like earthquake;

Dragged the world through the mud  
of recession and left our wares to the  
mercy of its turbulent wind. That time

the world knew the silence of marketplaces  
and the voice of ants. Muezzin changed  
the wordings of Azzan – it wasn't heresy

but necessity; necessity that turned the  
haramayn to a desert of pilgrims.  
The pandemic fed us to the earth

so much it began to throw out:  
In Italy, there were no more grannies  
to lead the moonlight tales.

No grandpas to tell the origin of our lineage.  
That time, small things mattered – we  
adventured for and mined toiletries.

My nephew saw a kit up barber and called  
him a Doctor. Couples were remarried and  
honeymooned in the 5-Star of their homes.

Table turned and, like we did during bird flu,  
birds lulled us to bed and woke us with  
dirges for our men that transited overnight.

A boy said it's a China virus, that China  
had been a crack where a staccato of  
ailments enter our world: say hantavirus,

say SARS CoV-2. But I reminded him of  
Ebola, of lassa fever, of monkey pox, of  
Zika virus, of flu that plague us for decades

via other lands. Once, covid-19 ceased our  
world of its insanity, squeezed it to altruism.

~ \*♦\*❁\*♦\*~

## Oddity

how do I eat from a meat  
that once tread my body,  
licked my fingers and  
cheeks, ate from my palms.

mother separated our pots,  
plates, the way we pick  
grains from chaffs,  
from beetles, from weevils.

i knew what it means to  
lose a part of one's body &  
my heart has been a well, my  
face a pool where fingers swim.

my first cat didn't die, was killed  
& it tasted like chicken;  
& my body became a mall of  
weak bones for two weeks.

***Taofeek Ayeyemi** fondly called Aswagaawy is a Nigerian lawyer and writer. He won the 2019 Soka Matsubara International Haiku Contest.*

~ \*♦\*❁\*♦\*~

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