

POETRY  
Shelter-in-Place

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A POETRY CONTEST

APRIL 2020



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UCSF Department of Medicine



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“POETRY EMPOWERS THE SIMPLEST OF LIVES TO CONFRONT THE MOST EXTREME SORROWS WITH COURAGE, AND MOTIVATES THE MIGHTIEST OF OFFICES TO HUMBLY HEED LESSONS IN COMPASSION.”

— ABERJHANI

March 2020 brought to our community – and our entire world – a challenging and frightening pandemic. The UCSF Department of Medicine (DOM) mobilized its entire workforce of staff, faculty, and trainees to prepare for the worst as shelter-in-place orders were issued and our healthcare facilities geared up to meet the need.

As the weeks marched forward and our community worked long hours, we put out a call to activate some of our higher senses – our artistic heritage. We invited all members of the DOM community to engage in the work of resilience through the creation of poetry.

The 2020 Shelter-in-Poetry contest inspired the submission of 121 poems that spoke to the unique and shared experiences of our lives in the time of COVID-19. We are proud to share the results of our literary-minded colleagues in this first-of-its-kind magazine for the DOM. Authors’ thematic intentions are known only to themselves, but in order to facilitate a logical presentation, we have taken the liberty to group the poems into themes.

We hope you enjoy each of these contributions and thank each and every brave member of the Department of Medicine who reached inside their hearts and minds to share everything from levity to catharsis in our ongoing journey together.

# 15 Awarded Entries

In no particular order

## This Kind of Medicine

He died in the hospital room alone  
I was the last hand he touched  
I was the last person he spoke to  
Though they wanted to be here so much  
This is the kind of medicine I never thought I'd practice

He was discharged home alone  
Although he had come in with his wife  
I was the one he thanked  
Although it was here where she lost her life  
This is the kind of medicine I never thought I'd practice

He told me he was feeling better  
He told me he had faith and hope  
And then twelve hours later  
I was the one writing his death note  
This is the kind of medicine I never thought I'd practice

I called her daughter to say  
Her condition is not very good  
She lost her father to this already  
She wanted us to do all we could  
This is the kind of medicine I never thought I'd practice

I told her "Dad has been intubated."  
She didn't know what to do  
She just hung up the phone on me  
And later texted "God bless you."  
This is the kind of medicine I never thought I'd practice

I never thought, ten years ago  
That this is what this would be  
I look at all of these families  
This could have easily been me  
This is the kind of medicine I never thought I'd practice

Now it's time to show up  
And allow them to feel  
Carry empathy and compassion  
Allow ourselves to heal  
This is the only part of this medicine I know how to practice

Sneha Daya, MD, Assistant Professor  
UCSF Health



## Contest Rules and the Judging of Entries

Participants were asked to submit original works of poetry related to some aspects of the pandemic and shelter-in-place experience.

Entries could take any short poetic form such as haiku, limerick, or freeform structures.

Participants were required to be DOM employees and trainees.

Participants were divided into three categories: staff, faculty, and trainees.

A panel of judges\* was created with eight DOM volunteers across all sites.

Volunteers who entered poems in the contest were recused from voting in their respective category.

Judges conducted blinded readings of all poetry in each category. No author names were included with the submissions, only associated entry numbers.

Fifteen poems – five in each category – were voted as top entries.

All remaining submissions that met the call for submissions criteria appear in this publication as a means of sharing our talent with our community.

Enjoy the creativity and impact of our many DOM colleagues captured here!

\*Please see Acknowledgements, pg. 30

## Not Just Heroes

Workers in healthcare are heroes, they say -  
 "Thank you for walking into danger's way."  
 But my days are now spent at home via Zoom  
 The only codes I run are for virtual rooms.

I love counseling patients, even if just through their phones  
 When video-chat works, I can see into their homes.  
 My patients call me a hero as well, to be fair  
 "I hope things are okay for you docs down there."

All of us are heroes in a broad sense, no doubt -  
 We help our patients through crises and usher them out.  
 But with COVID19's specter ever still in view  
 The jobs of us heroes now belong to a few.

Thank you to those on the front lines as we speak,  
 Returning to Moffitt-Long, week after week.  
 You don both PPE and courage over your clothes,  
 And so you're not just heroes. You're the heroes' heroes.

Rahul Banerjee, MD, Fellow  
 UCSF Health

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## April

A cruel COVID month  
 trying our resolve  
 leaving us gasping,  
 for breaths of answers

Reclusive doldrums  
 songs that are not sung  
 Hands- they hesitate  
 Mouths- masked and unknissed

Did the Fates forget,  
 to weave golden threads?  
 transforming despair  
 into radiance

Yet we laugh through glass  
 our voices fragrant  
 Hearts immeasurable-  
 redeeming us all

Lorraine Hart, Personnel Operations Manager  
 UCSF Health

## Dear George

Sunday afternoon at the gym  
 reading about home funerals  
 and laying bodies on ice  
 I thought of my father  
 recently passed  
 and began to see  
 beauty in the young white man on the rowing machine  
 and the Afro-Caribbean dad lifting weights  
 while his sunlit daughter  
 pedaled the elliptical.  
 We are all trying so hard.  
 Bless us.

Denise L. Davis, MD, Professor  
 SFVAMC

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## For the World Has Gone Quiet Now

Mesmerizing sunshine flits through the glass,  
 Beckoning like a mother does to her child.  
 Come. Come outside, the golden siren calls.  
 Warmth seeps into the ground, heralding winter's last steps  
 As spring dances and floats her way in.  
 But the streets are empty, not a human to be seen,  
 For the world has gone quiet now.

Little green spears push through the dirt  
 Where the morning dew welcomes their birth.  
 Even the bees are rejoicing, buzzing among  
 The silky pink petals of the royal sakura trees.  
 But there is no one to enjoy the sweet fragrance  
 Before the trees shake off their petals like snow,  
 For the world has gone quiet now.

A little fox wanders into the backyard  
 Where the neighbor's little girl would usually play  
 Among her mother's favorite yellow and red tulips.  
 The creature's bright eyes look piercingly back  
 As I gaze upon its rust colored pelt and curious tail.  
 Mother Nature breathes more freely than she did in years  
 For the world has gone quiet now.

Tian Yuan (Tracy) Chen, Staff Research Associate  
 UCSF Health



## Elegy for Two Dead Men

One: a refugee from Cuba.  
 Always in white, skin black and smooth,  
 Fitting the mold from bottom to top:  
 White leather shoes, white pants, white linen shirt,  
 Crowned with a Havana, of course.  
 The other: tall, lanky, happy and old.  
 A former ball player in the West Coast Negro League.  
 Pitched for the Sea Lions  
 'Til he threw his shoulder out of its socket,  
 And could throw no more.

The first: always smiling, laughing even.  
 Gold sparkling from a tooth.  
 Bejeweled with bling like epaulettes  
 From his favorite pastime: Reno with Maria  
 The second: never sure of his age,  
 Either 93 or 88,  
 His Louisiana birth certificate,  
 Unable to read it.  
 But he knows it bears false witness.  
 Keeps his daughter's phone number safe:  
 Pearline - etched on the inside brim  
 Of his omnipresent baseball cap.

The former: still alive  
 'Cause he quit tobacco 25 years ago  
 After being filleted open to plumb his heart.  
 Proud of his medical survival skills,  
 And grateful for his doctor.  
 While smacking his big round belly,  
 Pregnant with hope and worry.  
 The latter: still alive  
 'Cause he quit smoking 25 years ago  
 After being told his lungs are vanishing.  
 Owe my life to my doctor,  
 So he says and so he believes.  
 Now chained to an oxygen tank,  
 Not sure if it's worth it anymore.

The first funeral, more like a celebration  
 The swollen, resting man in tuxedo  
 The slide show above the casket  
 Portraying the arc of his life.  
 A skinny man on a Cuban beach,  
 And then a bigger one, here.  
 Photos of him smiling wide on his couch,  
 A nephew to his right, a cousin to his left.  
 Generations visit his living room,  
 And so on, as his belly grows.  
 But then above his right shoulder,  
 As he sits like a king,  
 And above his left shoulder,  
 Displayed on the screen,

Again and again,  
 And framed on his wall  
 Appear one of my twin boys,  
 And then the other.  
 In soccer outfits, on one knee, with a ball.  
 Maria, how can this be?  
 Don't you remember?  
 You gave us those photos.  
 They are like family to us.  
 I don't recall, I say.  
 I don't recall.  
 It's OK.  
 You have so many patients.  
 But none like him.

Driving through the Fillmore,  
 My twins riding the back  
 astride their tiny sister  
 In her car seat.  
 Look--there he is, the ball player,  
 Washing his beloved Studebaker  
 As if it's 1950 still.  
 I roll the window down and shout, L.C.!!  
 He saunters over, an athlete's hobbling knees  
 Dragging his tank.  
 My, you have beautiful children.  
 The second funeral - Pearline had called  
 He'd collapsed outside his apartment  
 They said he bled into his brain.  
 There was nothing they could do.  
 I could not attend,  
 My clinic schedule booked  
 With fellow sufferers, fellow survivors.

Two brothers: Resilient,  
 Living in parallel,  
 Struggling in parallel,  
 Full lives behind them.  
 Now both suddenly dead  
 Within days of each other.  
 Leaving behind their doctor.  
 How can it be that these two men,  
 Bedeviled by society,  
 Could become the favorites  
 Of their doctor?  
 What can fill the absences,  
 When I am robbed of my favorites  
 And their love is lost?

Dean Schillinger, MD, Professor  
 ZSFG



## The Things We Bear Alone

Some things were not made to be borne alone:  
the impossible dance of Anna's hummingbird  
returned to the nectar of the crimson snapdragon,  
the surprise of the first scent of night jasmine,  
the circle dance of the bluebird pair, side-looking,  
honeybees chanting over new lavender,  
sounding their Om resonant into the garden.

These things we were made to bear together:  
to hold our gaze to the beauty that breaks our hearts  
for even as it enters into us, we cannot embrace it all.

Tom McNalley, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health

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## Friday the 13th

Horrendous morning news  
Beauteous morning light  
as dawn breaks above  
the State of Emergency

A tweet calls this  
"the boomer remover"  
and for a moment  
I am able to laugh

Evolution  
skies have been scraped  
Revolution  
Earth has turned  
Dissolution  
Seas are rising  
Resolution  
Fires consume  
what is no longer necessary

When all we cling to  
has been lost  
or shaken

Can we loosen our grips  
open our minds and hearts  
accept a new paradigm

and step into the new day  
grateful  
and unafraid?

Redwing Keyssar, RN, Director of Patient &  
Caregiver Education  
UCSF Health



## Mount Zoom

I look outside the window  
Sun rays dancing on my desk.  
Where did the day go?  
Where is my usual zest?

I miss Mount Zion adventures. Instead  
I spend the day on Mount Zoom.  
Thank you for listening, he said.  
Of course. I move him to the waiting room.

It's cool and crisp up here  
Waiting for the next patient to log in.  
What will they bring with them—sadness, anger, fear?  
I hear you: it's lonely right now in this skin.

Mount Zoom silence stretches on  
It's normal. It's hard. I'm with you.  
Strong eye contact present. Add that to the exam  
Blinking. The sun is brighter here, too.

Feet in home slippers. A familiar guide  
For the trip up the mountain.  
Have enough for this trek: open heart, adaptable mind.  
Breathe. We're together now. Time to listen.

Irina (Era) Kryzhanovskaya, MD, Assistant Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Unmasked

Knock it off, COVID, you're cramping my style.  
Need milk? Wear a mask, line up for a mile.  
Disruption and chaos, complete disarray.  
A vacation to Europe? Sorry, no way.

Telecommute, they said; we'll meet via Zoom  
I can't focus at home, there's simply no room.  
The Wifi keeps crashing, my husband is terse  
Our kids climb the walls; can it ever get worse?

My petulance is tempered only by shame.  
My cup runneth over, how dare I complain?  
I'm healthy, employed, with a roof overhead  
While our sisters and brothers hang by a thread.

So many worse fates than to shelter in place.  
The virus reveals our collective disgrace –  
A glut of self-interest and inequity.  
COVID, open our eyes; let change start with me.

Kay Wallis, MPH, Health Education Specialist  
UCSF Health

## The WhatsApp Thread

I learned to be a doctor in New York  
On pigeon-spattered streets  
Among the kaleidoscope of languages.  
I used to run there.  
It was my home,  
now it is ground zero, again.

My classmates write at East Coast hours.  
I read their texts once, then again,  
The words wrap themselves  
Around my arms and legs  
Then crawl under my flesh  
and start burning.

I went to see the patient.  
No one suspected.  
He started coughing while I was in the room.  
I wasn't wearing a mask.  
I'm afraid for my wife, she has a lung condition.  
If I bring this home, she could die.  
Should I move into a hotel?  
They say the head of the division is out, being tested.  
They say 70% of the tests come back positive now.  
They say we are running out of ventilators.  
They say they're drafting pediatricians and  
ophthalmologists  
and radiologists into medicine service.  
They say they're graduating fourth year medical students  
early  
so they can go to the front lines.  
They say they're emptying the dorms to make room  
for the doctors who will get sick.  
We don't have enough masks.  
We don't have enough nurses.  
I want a hug.  
I cannot touch.  
I am afraid.  
They say.

I try hiding from the words at work,  
Safe behind the shield of immediacy  
Burrowing deep into familiar routine,  
My snug sisterhood of scrubs.  
But shifts do end;  
I have to go home.

I try running from the words,  
Up Twin Peaks, along the ridges,  
At wild speed through green-tunnel Glen Canyon.  
Hawks soar here, not pigeons.  
I try to run long enough, hard enough  
So I'll be too tired to dream.

Finally I give up.  
Let the words in,  
let them burn.  
Feel their fear, and despair  
But also their ingenuity, courage, and hope.  
They burn, but they warm.

Natasha Spottiswoode, MD, PhD, Resident Trainee  
UCSF Health

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## An Oncologist's Deliberation

Pandemic strikes, and health care-wise,  
We henceforth must prioritize.  
Yet as we do, to ask 'tis fair:  
What means this, then, for cancer care?

Our testing, treatment ground to halt;  
Brings newfound stress, tho' no one's fault.  
We pause on chemo not for cure;  
And try our best to reassure.

For those who come, come forth alone,  
Oft frail, with loved ones joined by phone  
To talk of scary things unseen,  
No shoulders there on which to lean.

With cancer trials slowed for now  
To those with no more options, how  
Can we convince as not essential  
Studies hinting of potential?

Thus, "stay at home" stirs great debate  
The health care risks to those who wait  
In viral times, for not a few...  
This "C" word now spells something new.

Andrew Ko, MD, Professor  
UCSF Health

## Lay Low, Stand Tall

Wir werden aufstehen. We will get up.  
Récupérer le monde. Reclaim our world  
e adoreremo. And love each other

我们在一起的歌. Our song together

우리는 춤을 출 것이다. We will dance

美しさで. With beauty

מאִימה רחוק. Far from horror

الكراهية عن بعيد. Far from hate

nuestros poemas y lágrimas no serán desperdiciados. Our  
poems and tears will not be wasted/

As we discover a world unknown, may we know we are  
together/

May we trust ourselves and judgment/

Let us join in our grief  
In our fear  
And in our suffering/

To face this new world, a world always becoming, just as  
we are.

\*Please note: Translations in English appear for transnational purposes

Lauren Kaplan, Staff Researcher & Writer  
ZSFG

## An Oncologist at Home

I hold my own hand  
Tightly – as if it were yours  
Bad news via Zoom.

Vanessa Kennedy, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health



## Alone

Lonely, tired, destitute he sits  
At the same corner he always sits  
As the virus swarms through the city  
Forcing people indoors  
Forcing restaurants closed  
He sits  
At the same corner he always sits

He is already home  
Here at the heart of the city-  
Businessmen walk inches past his feet  
Their briefcases nearly brush his nose  
Parents push strollers  
Through his space  
Little eyes poking out  
Surveying this man,  
This man in his home outdoors

He wonders now, where,  
Where the people have gone  
Why stores that once lit his corner  
Are now dark  
The bustle of the city, of his home-  
Are now quiet

When he staggers to the hospital  
Because he can't catch his breath  
And he's sweating in the freezing cold  
Feverish and tired  
He asks the doctor  
“what's going on outside?”  
He didn't know

He didn't know about the virus  
The invisible force that  
Haunts the streets of San Francisco  
Haunts his home  
That now haunts his body  
No one told him

When we checked our email  
Listened to the news on our TVs  
We were told to go home  
And stay indoors  
How could he know  
With no phone and no TV  
Disconnected and alone  
He is the forgotten  
The overlooked  
While we rush our children, our parents, our friends, our  
neighbors  
Inside  
He is left outside

In a few short days  
When the cough abates  
And the fever settles  
He is sent “home”  
Back to the corner he sits  
At the same corner he always sits

Caroline Nguyen, MD, Resident Trainee  
UCSF Health



# SHELTERING

## Shelter-in-place is a tiresome phrase

Shelter-in place is a tiresome phrase  
That sounds too sane for these aberrant days  
Like physical distancing or hunkering down  
Or naming a virus after a crown  
Six feet and masked, that's what we observe  
All in an effort to flatten the curve  
With hurting all over that rips up your gut  
The so-called new normal is anything but

R.A. Russo, MD, Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Untitled

A self-reflection of my shelter in place  
The federal Governments COVID response is a disgrace  
Practicing gratitude to alter my mood  
Working from home I'm struggling to not eat all the food  
Staying cooped up all day has my emotions displaced

Nicholas Clem, Post-Award Manager  
UCSF Health

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## Sonnet-19

The world is huge and my apartment's not  
Unlike the sky my room is low and tight  
Surrounded by the things that I have bought  
Unlike my walls the clouds are pure and white  
The cushion on my couch has sunk so low  
Thy bottom hath not left in many days  
My dog looks longingly out the window  
On my lap now more than ever she lays  
Forced fresh eyes to observed within my place  
As good as working for UCSF  
And while you cannot right now see my face  
I feel as though I have it all the best  
    Yet while such beauty is out in the scene,  
    My kitchen floors have never been so clean!

Nicolas Marley, Administrative Analyst  
UCSF Health

## Shelter in place' O' Shelter in place

Shelter in place' O 'Shelter in place ....  
Are trying to make my life slow?  
But the life is going on with a nice flow, sun is shining with  
full glow.  
Plants are still going to grow, winds are still going to flow.  
You are just a temporary slowdown, you cannot bring our  
moral down.  
We will walk hand in hand, science will send virus away  
from our land.  
Kids are still playing with a smile, everyone is in their  
home for a while.  
Some can go outside for a walk, it is just a none other than  
a nature talk.  
Nurses and Doctors are working day and night, they are  
helping society in this fight.  
Scientist are researching the cure, they will not stop until  
they are not sure.  
All Healthcare professionals are our superheroes, they  
bring sickness to zeros.

Monika Deswal, Sr. Clinical Research Coordinator  
ZSFG

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## Life Suspended

The small packet sat on the shelf,  
for months, unnoticed;

life suspended, not quite alive  
but surely not dead, simply waiting

to be awakened with warm water (not too hot),  
a pinch of sugar, and a dose of inspiration.

A warm loaf of freshly baked bread;  
we shall rise again

Mitch Feldman, MD, Professor  
UCSF Health



## Gimme Shelter-in-Place

(With apologies to the Rolling Stones)

Oh, the COVID is threat'ning  
 My very life today  
 If I don't get some shelter-in-place  
 Oh yeah, I'm gonna fade away  
 Surge, children, it's just a shot away  
 It's just a shot away  
 Surge, children, it's just a shot away  
 It's just a shot away  
 Oh, see the fever is sweepin'  
 Our very street today  
 Burns like a red coal carpet  
 The virus lost its way  
 War, children, it's just a shot away  
 It's just a shot away  
 Surge, children, it's just a shot away  
 It's just a shot away  
 Cough, dyspnea!  
 It's just a shot away  
 It's just a shot away  
 Cough, dyspnea yeah!  
 It's just a shot away  
 It's just a shot away  
 Cough, dyspnea!  
 It's just a shot away  
 It's just a shot away yea  
 The COVID is threat'ning  
 My very life today  
 Gimme, gimme shelter-in-place

Carl Grunfield, MD, PhD, Professor  
 SFVAMC

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## Here's My Haiku

Sheltering in place  
 Just me and my shadow here  
 O' to see a smile!

Matthew Lin, MD, Assistant Professor  
 UCSF Health



## Boy Wonder

NO School bus  
 NO Friends over  
 NO Playgrounds  
 NO Baseball

YES Homework  
 YES Zoom  
 YES 6ft. rule  
 YES Bored

MAYBE Soon  
 MAYBE It's over  
 MAYBE A hug  
 MAYBE Pizza?

Lorraine Hart, Personnel Operations Manager  
 UCSF Health

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## Stolen Time

When patients no-show  
 Sweet kisses from my toddler  
 Telehealth from home

Diana Thiara, MD, Fellow  
 UCSF Health

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## Stuck Inside

I gotta get out!  
 Exercise levels lower  
 Stress levels higher

Mini fights with mom and dad  
 At least there's indoor fitness

Nora Hazenbos, Clinical Research Coordinator  
 UCSF Health

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## Priorities Haiku

Sheltering at home  
 I should clean out my closet  
 Better Call Saul wins

Cecilia Populus, Administrative Officer  
 UCSF Health

# CONNECTIONS

## My Little Buckaroo

Each passing day I have  
I live, I love, and laugh  
And cuddle close to you  
My little buckaroo

Sherrie Yang, Fellowship Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## Beyond this Moment

Your mind is a ticking time bomb, and your flesh, a holding cell, you can't escape it.  
But If you could just look past the fleeting moments,  
You'd hear the distant whisper that calls you home.  
You'd taste the harmonies that make our mouths quiver  
You'd feel the collisions of sun-kissed waves bathing our malnourished souls in Hallelujahs  
and then be overcome by that burning sensation of nerve endings on fire for more.  
If you could just hear past the explosions, the ones demyelinating neuronal spaces of your mind  
You'd inhale gospel filled knowledge where every page flipped produces words that leap out like gazelles,  
beautiful articulations- attachment points connecting you to me...connecting us, to our community.

Anael Rizzo, Staff Research Associate  
SFVAM

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## Haiku of a Nurse

Lungs gasp deep for air.  
Loved ones cannot hold your hand.  
I will stay with you.

Tian Yuan (Tracy) Chen, Staff Research Associate  
UCSF Health

## Novel Thought I

Yesterday, I was trying to open  
A glass door without touching it  
Trying to stick my sleeved hand  
Behind the door handle  
And pull it open.

As I struggled,  
I looked up and saw another person  
On the other side  
Trying to use their sleeved hand  
To push the door open from their side.

As we opened the door together  
We looked with gratitude  
(almost love)  
At the other.  
We needed each other to  
Get through that doorway.

Mike Rabow, MD, Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Ode to the Toddler

A mother who once heard a sound,  
Sat quietly to not be found.  
Toddler opened the door,  
And then sat on the floor.  
"Mom, don't you know that we are bound?"

Mazie Tsang, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health



2:30 AM

It's 2:30 again  
I'm awake

Makes sense...that's when she  
Comes in  
She walks into our room  
Most nights.  
You see she wakes and needs  
Guiding back to sleep

Waiting  
Gentle breathing beside me  
The dogs shifts in his bed

Strands of news dissonant thoughts uncertain words  
Virus economy school death hardship family  
Trigger a cacophony  
Sounding and resounding in my head  
Working working working  
To no end

Meditative  
breaths  
bring  
a  
pause  
a  
momentary  
reprieve

Then...Family friends we see but cannot touch  
Illness, worry, anxiety, depression, loss,  
Opportunity, great change...  
laboring through it all at once

And now I wait expectantly  
For Isabelle to softly pad to our bed  
I will even rise to meet her

That way is clear  
Certain  
I walk her to her room.  
Kneel by her bed.  
Gently rub her head .  
Tell her  
I will check on her in 15 minutes.

I do.  
She is asleep.

Nicholas Fleming, MD, Professor  
UCSF Health

Gratefulness

Many team members  
Hearts, minds, caring for patients  
Our thanks forever

Victoria Hsiao, MD, PhD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health

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COVID-19 Haiku

Each person is a  
vector (or at least could be)  
Yet I love people

Mary-Lawrence Hicks, MSN, RN, FNP  
Nurse Practitioner Supervisor  
ZSFG

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Two Haiku-ish  
on Attention to Life

Each person deserves  
full attention to their life  
and kindness, at death

Entering the gates  
of darkness, a new life un-  
imagined ever before

Redwing Keyssar, RN, Director of Patient &  
Caregiver Education, MERI Center  
UCSF Health



## “Poor Connection”

Delivering oncologic care via telehealth  
 Leaves one wanting for a better connection  
 Of the physical, emotional, and internet variety.  
 “Your screen is frozen...poor connection,” words  
 you repeat.  
 “What a way to set the stage for our conversation,” I  
 think.

Your worsened cancer and need for chemotherapy,  
 Our shared grief, are tempered by the sounds of  
 “Yellow, yellow, yellow, the bus is yellow...”  
 Ah, the beautiful sounds that occupy a toddler.  
 Alas, he walks on screen to meet your eyes.  
 Between the internet, interruptions, and music,  
 I could not imagine that I would suddenly see  
 You laugh.

You regale me with stories of your grandchildren,  
 Whom you telephoned before our call.  
 Life is in perspective, the answer is clear  
 To proceed with chemotherapy for those who are  
 dear.  
 And with that, despite the faults, I see that our  
 connection  
 Has not been better as we share in our humanity.

Mazie Tsang, MD, Fellow  
 UCSF Health



# DISTANCE

## Six Feet Over

Six feet away from you--  
 Too far to touch  
 But close enough  
 To be touched.

Weekend walks renew  
 As we saunter  
 Separately,  
 Still beings, together.

When can we collapse  
 Into each other again?  
 How are you holding me up  
 From so far away?

So many questions,  
 Each day different answers,  
 And living with not-knowing.  
 We learn to walk new lands.

Co-Authored by  
 Mike Rabow, MD, Professor &  
 Redwing Keyssar, RN, MERI Center  
 UCSF Health

## Mom

How are you, Mom  
 Cooped up in your small two bedroom apartment in New York  
 And I am so far away from you  
 And I can't see you or be with you or help you if you need it  
 I say you are 75  
 And you won't get a vent if you need one  
 Even though you are healthy and gorgeous and laugh deep and strong  
 So stay inside  
 And please wash your hands

We both know where I would be if I had stayed.  
 I'd be in the thick of it. And you would be banging those pots and pans for me  
 on your terrace at 7 pm.  
 Like you do every night now.  
 For my friends.  
 But I am here. And you are there. And I can't help you.  
 So please stay inside.

Allison Webber, MD, Associate Professor  
 UCSF Health

## distance

we are separated by 6 feet, three chairs,  
 video and mute on my screen and yours,  
 by a mask, a gown, a shield, these gloves,  
 by invisible RNA monsters floating through the air,  
 by our downward gazes,  
 by the earth beneath our feet,  
 we are connected only by common emotions.

Nisha Parikh, MD, Associate Professor  
 UCSF Health



## Beautiful sunny day, so deceptive

Beautiful sunny day, so deceptive  
 More than a few people walking, scattered  
 With dogs and masks and tentative steps  
 Ready to distance if someone approaches,  
 Maintaining an illusionary bubble  
 Close to home and far from certain,  
 A shared separation of mutual trust  
 And reliance on all

R.A. Russo, MD, Professor  
 UCSF Health

# LONGING & LOSSES

## The Wind

Life floats out beyond the breakers-  
Let it come back to you,  
Your feet planted  
In shifting sand;  
The wind reminds you of a time when you ran with the pack  
If now the pack is gone.

Mallar Bhattacharya, MD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Picture Perfect

Picture perfect used to be  
My home, my job, and some TV  
Now I watch with fuzz and blur  
My home, my job are not for sure

Jennifer Foster-Fausett, RN, BSN, Clinical Nurse  
UCSF Health

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## Essential: A Haiku

Patient stopped breathing  
"10th one this week" said the nurse.  
Mask will hide her tears

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

## A mi madre

(Spanish with English translation by the author)



Mujer de atípica fortaleza  
Nunca pudiste esconder tu sencilla grandeza

Madre de firmes corajes y agallas  
Emprendiste tu propio viaje derribando todas las vallas

Te fuiste sin avisar  
Sin opción a acompañar

Te fuiste segura y a paso ligero  
En tu afán de encontrarte con Dios primero

Me dejaste fría, me dejaste en penumbra  
Pero aún siento la tibieza de tu luz que alumbra

Me dejaste fría, me dejaste en sollozos  
Pero recordé que me regalaste experiencias y años gloriosos

Ilumíname desde allá y abrígame con tu amor  
Prométeme que así será y te prometo que ya no habrá dolor.

## To my mother

Woman of an atypical strong-ness  
Could never conceal your humble greatness

Women gifted of courage and guts  
You decided to undertake your own trip and follow God dots

Without saying a word  
You left me alone

You couldn't wait for me  
I couldn't reach you and see

You left me in total uncertainty  
But I still feel your shine and tepidity

You left me in total gloom  
But, I remembered your dream was watching me bloom.

Guide me from there and embrace me with your infinity love  
Promise me you will and I promise my pain will be gone.

Narda Serrano, Research Finance Administrator  
UCSF Health



## Innocent Zoom Bomber

There once was a toddler on Zoom,  
Who always managed to find the room  
With patients to appear,  
No thought of mom's career.  
Oh joy, let the telehealth resume!

Mazie Tsang, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health

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## Another zoom meeting, pt. 1

dark Irish dive bar  
as my virtual background  
rather there than here

David Weedon, Academic Assistant  
UCSF Health

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## Zoom From Home

Work here and work there  
Work in my underwear  
Be careful on Zoom

Zachary Concepcion, Administrative Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## Shelter in place

Working from my house  
Communicating by zoom  
Thankful for my team

Nicholas Clem, Post Award Manager  
UCSF Health

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## Spreadsheet

staring at the screen  
rows upon rows of figures  
my eyes glaze over

David Weedon, Academic Assistant  
UCSF Health

## Are you lonely?

Texts, likes, Internet  
We believed would do the trick  
Our hearts still want more

Hugs, jumps, random hallway "Hi!"s  
It's alright, they will return

Nora Hazenbos, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## Full House: A Haiku

A kid is screaming  
Mom's stress is thick as Dad zooms  
Everyone is home.

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## Sweatpants, a Haiku

Sweatpants, oh sweatpants  
Now worn during all Zoom calls  
Matched with dressy tops

Jennifer Lee, Fellowship Coordinator  
UCSF Health



# VIRTUAL LIFE



## Bare Necessities

My WiFi and zoom  
Life's new bare necessities  
The ties that bind me

Julia Adler-Milstein, PhD, Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Lighting

Zooming with patients  
Do I really look like that?  
Need better lighting

Victoria Hsiao, MD, PhD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health

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## The Mum: A Limerick

There once was a stay-at-home mum  
Who also did all-day-long Zoom.  
She never got done  
Either work, gym, or fun  
And she loathed the mere sight of legumes.

Meyeon Park, MD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health

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## New Mantra

Daily Telehealth  
I only see your ceiling  
Can you hear me now?

Mazie Tsang, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health

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## The New Norm

The Brady Bunch squares  
Talking, listening, muted  
Zooming, the new norm

Jeannie Fong, Health Education Specialist  
ZSFG



## The Park

Took you for granted  
my blissful green Park  
now you are Central  
Golden in my mind.  
Where to unravel  
the impossible  
unknown of this time,  
in separation?  
Tell me the answer  
you great trees of old,  
help me, oh help me  
to find my real home.  
Your branches reach out,  
without doubt you stand  
green fecund jungle,  
eternal, divine.  
They whisper, fear not:  
Flower in desert  
Sing your dismay  
Grow beyond reason  
Take comfort in us  
walk, endless our paths,  
each flower each leaf--  
This Season shall pass.

Lorraine Hart, Personnel Operations Manager  
UCSF Health

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## Early March

Pacific trillium flowers,  
signaling spring.  
Three white petals, oval,  
three green sepals, lance-shaped,  
a whorl of three rhombic leaves.  
Trillium, floral  
triangle, minimalist bloom of  
spacious redwood groves  
and resin-scented coastal forests.



The novel virus spreads,  
turns people inside.  
Trilliums bloom unconfined in deserted woods.  
When shafts of light pierce the canopy, the bright white  
flowers flash against the rain-softened soil,  
dark as coffee grounds.  
The petals age to pink or deep  
rose-red, then fall, unwitnessed.

Simona Carini, Programmer/Analyst  
UCSF Health

## NATURE

## Heaven's Above

What an amazing sight;  
Have you ever seen such starlight?  
Come outside – quick – hurry.  
Look, over there, there's Mercury.  
Yes, better keep some distance between us;  
Just below the moon though, that must be Venus.  
Maybe because there are fewer cars  
We now see the bright redness of Mars.  
No matter which way you turn  
Stars as bright as the rings of Saturn,  
Though that may have been a helicopter  
I just mistook for Jupiter.  
No, it's far too far away that Neptune,  
We'll need make do with our own Moon.  
Have I forgotten earth?  
No, choose your own rhyme – mirth, re-birth.  
Oh I know they're not stars but planets,  
Nevertheless let's just pretend  
Before starfade brings all this to an end.

Natasha Curry, Nurse Practitioner  
ZSFG

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## Gratitude, Attitude, Fortitude

No morning alarm.

Immense gratitude  
for this gradual awakening  
for the space  
between dream and reality  
where heart and soul  
filter truth from confusion

Grateful too  
for the silence

only interrupted  
by morning birdsongs

Redwing Keyssar, RN, Director of Patient &  
Caregiver Education  
UCSF Health

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## For the birds still singing in the quiet city

Six clear notes, one trill  
My loss of words for your  
sweet body of music

Mary Salome, Digital Communications Supervisor  
UCSF Health

## Anxiety in General

When the blackness swallows you,  
 you can either shiver or eat it back.  
 Creating an uncertain torus that sinks  
 in two dimensions. Ouroboros.  
 The tail gets eaten and the head gets fed but  
 don't you understand this is just self-medication?  
 With work and worry.  
 With scrolling and tweeting.  
 With crafts and cleaning.  
 With beer and wine and fancy food.  
 With prayers and herbs.  
 And of course, the guise of the search for Truth.

Andrew Ikhyun Kim, MD, Resident  
 ZSFG

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## Far but close

Courage in those eyes  
 Our hearts feeling hugged by you  
 Although you're quite far  
 Through that mask we see your smile  
 We thank you healthcare workers

Nora Hazenbos, Clinical Research Coordinator  
 UCSF Health

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## Strange Times

We live in a time where masks make us faceless  
 And an illness can make us tasteless  
 But we keep heart  
 Despite an empty BART  
 Knowing our will to persevere is tenacious.

Peter Kaminski, MD  
 UCSF Health

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## Home Schooling

"Next episode please!"  
 Paw Patrol theme song blaring.  
 Half an hour of peace.

Tien Peng, MD, Assistant Professor  
 UCSF Health

# COPING & COURAGE



## Hero Attire

Heroes don't wear capes  
 scrubs, gloves, masks, strength, tears, and heart  
 My heroes wear those

Jennifer Lee, Fellowship Coordinator  
 UCSF Health

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## Anticipation

3 in the morning  
 Awaiting the next shrill page  
 Building up courage

Peter Kaminski, MD, Clinical Instructor  
 UCSF Health

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## The Reality

TV and sweatpants  
 Messy hair is upon us  
 Lots of yummy food

Anjali Garg, Assistant Director  
 UCSF Health

## That Which Shall Not Be Named

The C word, the D words, the P, P and E words.  
 Won't say them, can't make me, not windward nor leeward  
 The alphabet soup of a new lexicon  
 Good riddance I bid you, pandemic be gone!

When Shelter's a tune, six feet merely space  
 And cars, but not meetings, zoom place to place  
 Kids learning again in a teachers' embrace  
 While carefree & coughing & touching their face

When sit-ups are means for flattening the curve  
 And traversing the sidewalks no longer takes nerve  
 When 'social' we celebrate, not banish in shame  
 Even then I will NEVER call out your name

You had your moment, brought us to our knees  
 Spikey nucleo-packs did as they pleased  
 Economy tanking, death tolls were rising  
 Job losses, food lines, and proselytizing

'Twas not with foresight nor malice you acted  
 As nature pushed sideways and forward, and backward,  
 Just RNA force with a body redacted  
 Traveling the world in a TIE-fighter capsid

Soon we will breathe and regain composure  
 Mourn the lives lost via viral exposure  
 But what we have gained in this fear you have caused  
 Is the gift of life's slowing from mandated pause

We hunker as families, while terms like 'essential'  
 Regain proper standing in the great differential  
 Less things to look at, new focus, not dizzy  
 Each day we're no longer interminably busy

A presence, awareness, and peace in a moment  
 The blur & the buzz are missing components  
 Forever the question, to thank or to blame?  
 We ask of this thing which shall not be named

Heather Nye, MD, PhD, Professor  
 SFVAMC



## The Crown

Crown not familiar faces and ones we do not know.  
 This is no throne fit for the fearless, or the friend or foe.

As we are told by Ryan:

"In the hills giant oaks Fall upon their knees  
 You can touch parts You have no right to"<sup>1</sup>  
 Crown of the Methuselah tree.  
 When giants such as Murray fall, despite their storied size,  
 New ones from their shadows rise, new ones rise, new ones  
 rise.

This script of ill sick sovereign  
 In single strand of robes, repeat,  
 Has chosen us and we not it  
 And so we rise to meet.

As we are told by William:

"Heavy is the head that wears the crown"<sup>2</sup>  
 And heavier for the heart that fades lonesome in the gown.  
 Robbed of touch and isolate by protective shell,  
 "On this side my hand, and on that side thine.  
 Now is this golden crown like a deep well."<sup>3</sup>

This ill sic erat scriptum sovereign  
 In single strand of robes, repeat,  
 Has chosen us and we not it  
 And so we rise to meet.

As we are told by Petrarch:

"The crowning grace of humanity" resides in that called  
 love  
 And so we lift each other up, to rise above, and rise above.  
 Through afferent and efferent, radiata will transmit  
 All we learn and all we do. We shall not sit. We will not sit.

This ill kept sickly sovereign  
 In single strand of robes, repeat,  
 Has chosen us and we not it  
 And so we rise to meet.

Ours is not the luxury to choose the when or why.  
 Ours is the strength to choose the who and the how to try.  
 We look to each other and to north for all that is our guide.  
 The crown may try but won't succeed to rob us of our pride.

1. Kay Ryan, Crown. 2. William Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part 2. 3. William Shakespeare, Richard II.

Ben Rosner, MD, Associate Professor  
 UCSF Health

## The Only Cure Until

“The only cure for grief is to grieve.” -Earl Grollman

The only cure for grief is to wail from the bottom of your soul  
To cry salty tears  
Until you are thirsty and can't breathe

The only cure for grief is to scream at the top of your lungs  
And to smash things  
Until you collapse on the pavement and see stars

The only cure for grief is to consume sweets  
Or to not eat for days  
Until you are unrecognizable to yourself

The only cure for grief is to wonder how to cut off a leg  
To signal your inner state to the world  
Until you can stand up again

The only cure for grief is to collapse on your family  
And to seek lost connections  
Until you find hidden memories to bandage your heart

The only cure for grief is to confront your fears  
Of hearing her laugh, seeing her face, feeling her near you  
Happily watching your daughter dance

Until you wake up and she's gone again

Meyeon Park, MD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health



## Quiet Desperation

A howl.  
A silent midday howl behind a convenient mask  
that doesn't hide the horror coming from my eyes.  
An unstoppable, unmistakable stream of tears trying to  
come out,  
but what for?  
How many times have I cried before?  
It didn't change anything.  
I blame parts of me as if they were different people,  
I regret the past as if it would solve something.  
The howl has a name,  
and the curse of the faith keeps me on howling,  
silently,  
like an infidel's prayer.  
Midday, midnight, midmorning, midafternoon.

A howl in quiet desperation.

Gabriela Greenland, MD, Postdoctoral Scholar  
UCSF Health

## Determination

Rising, relentless, tide of fear  
Surging, synchronous, wave of death  
Invisible, unknowing  
Mourning souls, cascading sorrow

Hasten, listen, guard the truth  
As oppressive shadows darken  
Black, white, day, night  
Cannot hold on

A flicker of hope fractures despair  
Turn, turn, beat the tide  
Tireless hours morph into minutes  
Precious time, precious lives

Constantly, stave off slowing down  
Keep on doggedly making ground  
Wretchedly working, not saving face  
Determination wins this race

Valerie Carp, Clinical Research Analyst  
UCSF Health

## Resilience

Life is not fair.  
And life is not easy.  
But no matter how many times you get knocked down,  
You never give up.  
Your whole life people try to control you.  
And tell you what you can't do.  
That you're not good enough, you're not smart enough...  
But no matter how many times you hear it, just never give  
up.

Some people seem to coast through it all.  
While others struggle their entire lives.  
But no matter how hard you try and try and try,  
Just never give up.

You feel like no one understands you.  
You feel like the whole world is plotting against you.  
You keep trying and failing, trying and failing, trying and  
failing...  
But you never ever give up.

Resilience is standing up in the face of fear.  
Resilience is standing up when people tell you to sit down.  
And no matter how much it hurts and how much you want  
to stop trying,  
Don't.

Just never give up.  
Never give up.  
Keep pushing. Whatever you have to do. No matter how  
long it takes.  
Just never give up.

Never.

Paymon Bagheri, Administrative Director  
ZSFG



# HEROES & HOPE



## Heading to Austin

He is The Storyteller. A book with greater detail and truth every year.

I am drawn to turn its pages, read the chapters again, healing myself in this art beyond price.

He pauses often to listen. Hears voices of confused new arrivals and comfortable old friends.

Knocking at the window, they call his name. Certain of the warmest welcome.

He recognizes history in faces from around the world. Masters good humor in every language.

Understands which families have been saved. Grieves for souls who are among the lost.

He dares to touch people. Responding to courage, they remember character and compassion, authentic as his vulnerability.

Lumps are explored. Throats soothed. Catastrophe averted.

He risks everything to lift others, tender heart filled with their success. Personal record.

Family man. Trusted coworker. Best friend. Brother. Nurse and Champion. Hope and Future.

Mary Gray, MD, Professor  
ZSFG

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## Shelter: A Haiku

I'm alive aren't I?  
Sunrise, sunset. I see both  
Wait this out and live.

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

## Six Word Story

The world rages. Flowers still bloom.

Karen Valle, Research Data Analyst  
ZSFG

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## I Marvel At You

I can't see behind your mask  
but I know  
your partner and your kids  
your mother and your father  
your ancestors and the stars  
breathe  
into you

I can't see behind your mask  
but I see you  
heal and console  
assess and plan  
lift and bend  
protect and mend  
and go back again  
and again

I can't see behind your mask  
but I know superheroes and  
pandemics got nothing  
on you

Christopher Bautista, MD, Assistant Professor  
UCSF Health

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## The Helpers

We answered the clarion call  
A disaster we hoped to forestall  
With little PPE in reserve  
We flattened the curve  
Our community weathered the squall

Evan Walker, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health

## Tenacity

Inside that boarded-up pub  
 Memories of a milestone birthday with friends  
 Whose faces celebrate in my mind  
 In the snug with wine and joy  
 Flirting with bourbon

Floating on a vacant bay  
 Memories of long glides over glass  
 One seal hiding whenever I glance back  
 Pelicans soaring, cormorant wings stretching in the sun  
 Shallow leopard sharks circling under my board, a rare sight

Playing the hollow concert hall  
 Sounds of every favorite song  
 Broken horn section, lights swirling with the beat  
 Windmill orbiting a dreadnought guitar  
 Lyrics fill the void

Within that idle ballpark  
 Memories of the luckiest day I bumped into  
 The right party at that exact moment to meet  
 Baseball heroes up close in person in the outfield  
 With big hugs of gratitude

Inside a peaceful apartment I isolate in solitude  
 Online with far-away family, shindigs and sing-alongs  
 Cooking, baking, inventing silver linings  
 Happy walking distance to the Bay  
 Sunshine, spring blooms and breezes  
 Together again in real life soon

Erin Hartman, Project & Editorial Manager  
 UCSF Health



## Rising to the Top

People wearing scarves and hats,  
 Retweeting articles while on the train.  
 Taking off winter coats and mingling after five,  
 Believing we were safe on the other side.  
 Dropping the ball to ring in the year,  
 Making resolutions and hoping to adhere.  
 Having to open doors to ecstatic campaigners,  
 Only seeing broadcasts of red and blue blurs.

Slowly creeping onto the front pages,  
 A singular man testing positive among the cases.  
 Everyone still having conferences and hikes,  
 But with an open eye and ear about the spikes.  
 Before the purple tulips bloom and yearly sneezing,  
 We realize that something has arrived.  
 A silent death reaper that culls its victims,  
 With no bias as to who it finds.

Water, toilet paper, beans become valuables,  
 And having extra 0's in the bank becomes a divide.  
 A woman sheds tears who can't find any diapers,  
 An Asian woman recovering from her chemical burns.  
 Glued to the news with different reels of the same item,  
 Death, shortages, and pleas are on the rise.  
 Peering outside the windows for a sense of connection,  
 Crossing their fingers with only hopes for positive action.

Yet small acts of kindness begin to appear.  
 Youngsters with grocery lists from neighbors to shop,  
 Countries having extra masks to drop,  
 And a huge collective community 8pm cheer to top.  
 Even with an invisible enemy to detect,  
 Doctors in blue make their rounds.

Nurses know no bounds,  
 And essential workers continue to astound.  
 Heeding professional advice,  
 Having online meetups and happy hour spice,  
 Making odd changes to daily life,  
 A downward slope that lessens the strife.  
 Grateful for those on the front,  
 Battling and risking their lives,  
 Not knowing if they might have to say goodbye soon,  
 To the little one or partner in their life.

Until we reach the big zero,  
 We cannot concede.  
 For while we distance and listen,  
 We save another life.

Christine Chang, Clinical Research Coordinator  
 UCSF Health



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## Frontliners: A Haiku

A line of white coats  
Gloves, masks, and strength are their tools  
The heroes are here.

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## Hope

We must find the good  
During uncertain matters  
Stay brave and hopeful

Anjali Garg, Assistant Director of CLIIR  
UCSF Health

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## COVID-19 Tanka

The crisis has reached us, changing all aspects of life  
Heroes in the news, each does their part  
Mindful being, be kind, share your peace

Michele Tana, MD, Associate Professor  
ZSFG

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## Resist: A Haiku

Silent sickness moves  
The world stumbles in panic  
But hope is stubborn

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health



## The Man Who Stayed Well

There once was a man from Polomas  
Who didn't get any Coronas  
He avoided the bug  
Not by taking a drug  
But by listening to those with diplomas

Jim Schlies, Computer Architect  
UCSF Health

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## WFH

Working from home, I  
Overestimate the great  
Power of sweatpants

Andrea Gonzalez, Program Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## Tiger King

There once was a guy named Joe  
Who couldn't decide on one beau.  
He bought a few cats,  
Challenged Democrats -  
By the end, he used up his ammo!

Laalasa Varanasi, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health

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## Confessions of a Toilet Paper Hoarder

Standin' in line at the grocery store  
Kinda regrettin' what I done before  
Lookin' at everyone's twisted up faces  
Guess I didn't really need all them 35 cases

R.A. Russo, MD, Professor  
UCSF Health



## LAUGHTER

### Baking Haiku

Every day I bake.  
What's the deal with sourdough?  
I can't wear my pants.

Meyeon Park, MD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health

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### The Unleavened Curve

A plague, from the Far East  
Spread by man, hatched by beast  
Starting a trend  
That seems without end  
Leaving us all, searching for yeast

Robert Thombley, Data Architect  
UCSF Health

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### Toilet Paper Blues

Standin' in line day after day  
Hopin' to avoid a makeshift bidet  
How odd to succumb to such a dumb issue  
As procuring a few lousy rolls of tissue

R.A. Russo, MD, Professor  
UCSF Health

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### Quarantine Groceries: A Haiku

A trip to the store  
Why did I think I needed  
8 packs of Charmin

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF

## Untitled

There once was a sneaky pandemic  
Whose ruse was to make us frenetic  
We're sheltered-in-place  
And restless for space  
Hermetic, yet peripatetic

Jenica Cimino, Quality & Safety Program Manager  
UCSF Health

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## Working from Home: A Haiku

Working from home now  
Staff meeting in the morning.  
Will I need pants? Nah

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## The COVID-19 (a rhyming haiku)

COVID-19 sucks  
Stay in to avoid its yuck  
Don't gain weight. Good luck!

Jennifer Lee, Fellowship Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## March 19 (Week 1)

When corona knocked on the door  
We all felt our throats getting sore  
Who would be the next?  
Alerted by text  
That there's no tp left at the store

Jenica Cimino, Quality & Safety Program Manager  
UCSF Health

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## Nurse Igor & Labradoodle Bentley

There once was a doodle named Bentley,  
Who loved his owner intently.  
When asked by our Nurse,  
To draft a fine verse,  
He woofed this limerick consequently.

Mary Gray, MD, Professor  
ZSFG





# REFLECTIONS



## Bicarbonate Swirl

Standing here,  
outside this hospital room,  
listening to you talk about bicarbonate,  
I notice a painting behind you.  
It's the shape of a swirl  
that goes round and round -  
almost to infinity.

And,  
in those two or three seconds,  
I feel stillness.

But, looking back,  
I see your mind is running  
because this patient's heart  
is also running.  
And the EKG  
will soon be running,  
next to the oxygen,  
which is still running,  
and the IV fluids,  
which have to keep running.

And, down the hall,  
the surgery team  
suddenly starts running  
because someone's life  
is running  
out.

Right now,  
I wish you could stop and look at this painting.  
Just for two or three seconds,  
notice this swirl  
going almost to infinity.

But, instead,  
I stare at you intently  
and nod my head.

Marcia Glass, MD, Volunteer Assistant Professor  
UCSF Health

## A Remote Visit Follow-Up

Where are you?  
I thought we can't be outside  
Are those birds I hear  
Do you think the rules are not applied

I'm home  
Well, it's not just mine anymore  
Northern mocking birds, white crowned sparrows, red-  
winged blackbirds  
Take respite in the tree

Where are you?  
I thought we can't go to the beach  
Unless you live that close  
I hope that you don't cheat

I'm alone  
Well, some are headed to shore  
Seagulls, pelicans, cormorants  
Take an afternoon in the sky to explore  
I'll move so you don't hear them  
This time is to make sure you're doing ok  
I need to ask if you're experiencing any phlegm today

You can stay  
It brings me peace  
I'm happy to know they're still traveling with ease  
If I'm doing ok?  
That question feels silly to ask  
I know we are all worried about the future  
And reminiscing on the past

Time stares at the clock  
A sip of air now feels like such a blessing  
How is it already the afternoon?  
A walk around the neighborhood feels so refreshing  
I hope you take care of yourself  
Your coworkers, friends, and kin  
Dust off your old journals on the shelf  
To dig deeper than we have been

This distance is starting to feel closer  
Thanks for checking in on me by phone  
Now fly away to the next patient  
I'm going to learn how to make a scone

Maya Keces, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

## Hitting Bottom

Monk's harmonies stung  
the base notes into vertigo  
shrilling the blues  
carving deeper grooves into me  
threatening to scrape rock bottom  
generating a whole new piece  
that really swings.

Denise L. Davis, MD, Professor  
SFVAMC

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## War and Peace

We are in a war  
Against the contagion  
Of humanity.  
The breath that defines  
Life itself is merely a  
Harbinger of death.

Laalasa Varanasi, MD, Fellow  
UCSF Health

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## Haiku Meeting Notes

It is not the fear  
of hosting a new virus  
Fear of facing a human

The holding of fear  
rejection of humanness  
clouding the future

Strangers sharing screens  
connecting humanity  
new, open ways of Being

When we shine a light  
we also cast a shadow.  
Let us see it all

Redwing Keyssar, RN, Director of Patient &  
Caregiver Education  
UCSF Health



## Haiku Tribute to Dialysis Nurses and Techs

Dialysis is  
Life-sustaining therapy.  
The AHU team rocks!

Meyeon Park, MD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Climbing COVID's Hill

Reporting from my walk tonight,  
on my usual route  
multiple obstacles up the hill  
they were people  
quiet  
grim  
no lights or sirens  
but a police car  
no emergency  
but a medical examiner's van  
one light in the house  
traipsing up the stairs  
no rush  
gurney ready  
not for a hospital  
no need to do anything swift  
the house was already visited  
Life already departed  
further up the hill it went  
what's left will travel  
following gravity  
and the second law of thermodynamics.

Todd James, MD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Virus

cerulean orb  
is hurtling through the half-light  
who will die today?

David Weedon, Academic Assistant  
UCSF Health

## Alone: A Haiku

A country stood still  
The air is thick with unknown  
Who will remain here?

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

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## William Carlos Williams is Dead

William Carlos Williams is Dead.  
Parenting and professionalism  
Faith and responsibility  
Live alongside maturity.  
No asylums.  
Sober.  
Busy.  
No poetry.

Denise L. Davis, MD, Professor  
SFVAMC

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## What is reality

What is reality  
It certainly wasn't my job  
It wasn't in my dream last night  
It wasn't the rhythm of holidays I took for granted  
I'll just log back into Netflix

Jennifer Foster-Fausett, Clinical Nurse  
UCSF Health

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## Emotive being

Compassion, worry  
Restless, grateful, admiring  
Emotions running

Victoria Hsiao, MD, Associate Professor  
UCSF Health



## bird

my name is gizzard heart  
cause of death  
cardiac arrest  
lovers and children  
gone  
hosed down  
on sidewalks swept  
gutters wet  
from the buckets of stuff they call patriotic love  
my real name is bird  
talons hooking carrion  
sorting through the mess  
to find the best  
of what they left for us  
we make it into jazzzz  
making it blessed  
making it last  
making it ours

Denise L. Davis, MD, Professor  
SFVAMC

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## The Undertow

COVID-19 is  
an undertow sweeping us  
into the unknown

Mary-Lawrence Hicks, Nurse Practitioner Supervisor  
ZSFG

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## Come with me

I take my money and I take my pride  
I look for you on the other side  
I take my loss and find my way back to you  
You know I'm home

Kamran Atabai, MD, Assistant Professor  
UCSF Health

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## Grave Decisions: A Haiku

You did not listen  
Was it worth it to go out?  
Grandma won't wake up

Nicholas Slater, Clinical Research Coordinator  
UCSF Health

## From My Daughter

When you enter that land,  
 I hope you will see your beauty  
 In your children,  
 Whom I will never see,  
 The best of me  
 That I gave to the best of you,  
 And you will forget  
 Where all that grandness came from  
 And think that your fierce love is unique and brand new,  
 And that your children are a miracle.

I hope you know them  
 As matchless and singular creations  
 Of your womb,  
 Dependent solely on your breast and your words,  
 I hope you remember and embrace  
 All the goodness you gave birth to in me,  
 All that I was never able to give to you.

Denise L. Davis, MD, Professor  
 SFVAMC



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While every effort has been made to ensure  
 accuracy in printing, please report any errors to  
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