

## **Lockdown Letter to the Muse**

**By Julian Matthews**

Dear Muse,

When I write you a socially distanced poem, I know the meters between us won't matter. My mask will be down, and I won't hide the words reaching out to try to bridge this aching divide. It will be one less measured rhyme between your tearing eyes and these cheerless times. And there will be no pressure on you then to divine the deeper meaning between the blank spaces and the line breaks.

This forced isolation is like being inside our own guilty, gilded cages. We are like hermits hermetically sealed in our hermitages. We are pixelated presences in password-protected Zooms. We sit on our asses behind glass screens as if in a prison's visitor room. And we hold back from opening our mouths in mock silent screams.

Oh, the emptiness of it all. I feel voided in this dance of avoidance between us. I revile this vile vicariousness! This vacuum of virtuality! This vulgar vagary of vacillation! I grow weak, as the months turn into a whole wasted year without your embrace, my love. And my ear yearns to hear your warm whispers, to touch your soft resistance, to lie in your grace.

The virus is now the boss, dictating this formless Great Pause. All my consonance colludes to elude me. My rhythm has lost its reason to be. My poems are metastasizing into a prosaic sea.

But I continue crafting them for you. Anyway.

Even when the stanzas are all in disarray. I cannot let this covidious curse break our covert code, our constancy of purpose, our precious covenant to stay true to The Verse.

So stay strong, and no more silent for long, my muse, my mistress and master.

Forever, I remain your forlorn, fallen, and failing poetic servant.

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