

# A Critique of Coronavirus

Elana R. Osen

Why did the quiet descend?  
Does this plague not know  
that apocalypses come with fanfare,  
wails of lamentation,  
howls of wayward dogs,  
explosive blasts?  
Or, maybe, silence.  
Just shop-window glass crunching underfoot  
puncturing the eerie nothing.  
Not quiet.  
Never quiet.

Why does the sun still shine?  
Can it not see what transpires  
from its lofty throne  
above the Earth?  
Read the room, sun.  
Now's the time for greyscale filter.  
Or, maybe, an eclipse.  
One last blinding ray of blazing flare  
to scorch the land,  
to boil the sea,  
to serve up *des hommes brûlés*  
to whichever vengeful deity  
dines with us tonight.  
Not sunshine.  
Never sunshine.

Why can I smell the tulips?  
I thought the virus  
wiped olfaction from our  
paltry list of powers?  
Or, maybe, smoke.  
You know, from voracious flames  
feasting on our foliage and flesh,  
the smog of industry,  
of mushroom clouds.  
Why does that not sting my nostrils?  
Not flowers.  
Never flowers.

Why does life go on inexorably?  
Is Ragnarök not supposed to happen  
around now?  
Where are the horsemen?  
Where are the double gates of Paradise?  
What a lame apocalypse:  
we've been sold a lemon.  
Or, maybe, pop culture eschatology  
isn't all it is cracked up to be.  
I thought the zombies would be roaming  
all my haunts  
by now.  
Not life.  
Never life.

### **About the Author**

Miss Osen is a Specialty Registrar in the ENT Department at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, London. Her professional interests include ENT and history of medicine; extracurricular interests include composing bleak poetry and flash/sudden fiction.

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