

A working mayor

An exhausted president

Out-of-touch rich folks

Haikus during community quarantine

Carl Lorenz G. Cervantes

Foreword

Aware that this was going to be a historical event, I decided to create a Twitter account where I could document my experience of the quarantine. I initially hoped that this project would be what would keep my sanity afloat amidst a global pandemic. The first few days were easy writing: everyone was reacting to the pandemic in different ways, which gave me easy prompts for my poems. After a while, though, cabin fever got to me and I lost my motivation. So, I collected the poems I had written and put them away, still hoping that, eventually, I could contribute to the growing body of pandemic literature.

These poems document the quarantine adjustment period: the first fifteen days. These poems are news reports, coping methods, and dreams. They must, however, all be placed in a Philippine context. Some of these poems are in Tagalog. Also, most of these poems originally stated the names of those who said certain things that I found to be somewhat out-of-touch. I have opted to indirectly refer to them instead of say their names outright. (The historians of the future would have to do more work, were they to study these pieces.) Lastly, poems that had profanity are censored.

I hope that the casual reader finds some amusement in these silly poems (as we all went through the same thing), and that the future scholar finds it relevant and useful. A lot of these poems are of mundane things, because those are the things that happened. On the one hand you have the more obvious and terrifying news of sociopolitical descent into madness and the collapse of economic structures. On the other hand, you have the long, quiet days where we all waited for this pandemic to finally end. Frankly, as I write this, I am already tired of being part of a historical event.

Carl Lorenz G. Cervantes

24 July 2020

Rizal, Philippines

March 14

Coronavirus

It dies when you clean with soap

Please just wash your hands

Tanginang veerus

Sa'n ba nakatira yan?

I-quarantine na

President orders

Community quarantine

More military

All flights were cancelled

Classes have been suspended

No one in or out

Crowded groceries

Wouldn't it be ironic

If you got sick there

Cainta lockdown

Stuck in this small, quiet town

I will lose my mind

I met with Bunny

When will I see her again

She's just in Pasig

March 15

I watched the sunrise
I was reading an art book
All things are normal

More military
It's like a zombie movie
People in danger

March 16

I am really bored

Closed malls, bars, and restaurants

I want to go out

Video chatting

Just drinking with friends online

It's called e-numan

March 17

Dream:

Restaurant quarrel

There was a handsome young man

Changed into my dad

March 18

I made a Twitter

So I can post some haikus

To keep me busy

The Cat has spoken

Breathe in, breathe out: namaste

Oh, motherf***ers

Just one month to go
Nobody will get hungry
the speaking lizard

Guys, to be honest

I'm so stressed out with the news

Day in and day out

Oh, Pasig mayor

The leader that we need now

(Yung hindi trapo)

Reflection of wealth

Why don't you just stay at home

In your nice, warm bed

So, the tweets are here
She just wants you to chill
While others suffer

Thank you, ma'am VP
Free shuttles for the workers
Thank you, frontliners

This is difficult
Thirty days of quarantine
Really damn horny

Can't order food now
She doesn't know how to cook
So get some canned goods

Really, really bored
Looking for some good drama
Maybe I'll make some

March 19

So what do we do

About the cancelled classes

We're not all online

So much privilege!

Sometimes these "influencers"

Are influenza

Why would you name your baby

After a death and disease

Why "Covid Bryant"?

Stuck in high school thought

Death is inevitable

But they will be missed

I do the cooking

And yes, I do the cleaning

It's a stellar job

People spreading stuff

Lady O says it's not true

Bored conspiracists

They're looking for love

Auctioning themselves to find

A subtle syota

Everyone's angry

Not everyone has a Heart

Just be "positive"

A strange afternoon

I am feeling feverish

I hope it's not bad

No transportation

Commuters are walking home

It's very unsafe

An old newscaster

What are you trying to say

Absentee VP

Bizarre opinions

Suggestions that don't make sense

Everyone's tired

Actions ring a bell

This is not yet a campaign

Just go do your job

Spending time alone

The thoughts are getting louder

Terror and pressure

Only the fourth day

People are going crazy

Will we last the month?

Already tired
Of the futile politics
Let him do his job

Dirty, empty street
They ask me to just go home
This street is my home

Dream:

An uncooked chicken
A wall made of laughing skulls
A map and some gum

Bad ibuprofen

Anti-inflammatory

Worsens the sickness

The traveller says:

“Humankind is the virus”

Kindness is the cure.

People posting tips

It's helpful but text heavy

Who's going to read it?

Elephants and wine

They had an ele-fine time

This time, they'll forget

The bad blogger says

“Pasig mayor, pabebe”

Now, she's pabobo

Listen to these boobs

Here's her suggestion, charot

It's realistic

Now, riots and thefts
We are all losing our minds
Hunger and pressure

Big monsters in May
Pestilence and death in June
Rapture in July

March 20

Dream:

Two shape-shifting hounds

An escaping assassin

Magic and warfare

So the president

Wants LGUs to stand down

A threatened mayor

The president says

Quaran-teen or Quaran-tine

He looks so tired

Nothing else to do

I need more stimulation

I'm tempted to drink

People out-of-touch

It affects my sanity

I have to ignore

Oh, Bel of the ball

Serve those who pay their taxes

You don't get to choose

She has disappeared

She was defeated, for now

People fought for truth

March 21

My father feels sick
Could just be anxiety
He expects the worst

My mother has said
That “tapping” your body parts
Boosts immunity

Grim news this morning
There’s COVID in Palawan
They’re out and about

The noise of neighbors

They are all angry and bored

Yawning and fighting

Days are too damn long

I'm stimulating myself

Porn and alcohol

“Manahimik ka!!”

Noisy dogs and angry shouts

My neighbors are wild

We're separated

Long distance relationship

Cainta-Pasig

Really, really bored

Anything spicy out there?

I need some drama

Am I so hated?

How many friends do I have?

Darker, louder thoughts

Notice me, damn it

I just need some attention

I am so damn bored

I'm agitated

Nothing to do or to say

It's like I can't move

I am spiraling

Like s*** flushed down the toilet

Time for a breakdown

It's slowly spreading

How many cases are there

Do mass testing now

March 22

Dream:

A police arrest

Class divide and crocodiles

Some classroom sessions

Dreams getting vivid

Fantasies getting stronger

The bored and the rich

Books are no comfort

Online movies are boring

I feel pathetic

Oh, is it Sunday?

Indistinguishable days

It's just one long day

Too lazy to dream

No exciting fantasies

I just feel empty

VIP testing

Damn, politicians

You exposed yourselves

March 23

Dream:

A juicy rumor

A blow to my self-esteem

A lengthy phone call

Dream:

Fake guns, real threats

A man was shot in my house

The bullet went through

Political scheme

He wants more special powers

Executive force

March 24

Dream:

Crushed by a jeepney

My ass had a hanging s***

Carried on a chair

I am productive

But it doesn't feel that way

Because I'm not paid

I don't want to shave

I think I'll grow this beard long

It's getting itchy

March 25

Political dad

You don't deserve our pity

People are at risk

March 26

Things going to s***
Not sure of anything now
The worst will come soon

I'm melancholic
Now nothing seems to matter
Real cabin fever

March 27

Dream:

Fire and robots

We're fighting in the kitchen

Annihilation

I'll buy a chicken

Today is mama's birthday

I can go outside

March 29

Dream:

An honesty shop

The school is filled with people

How do I get home

March 30

Dream:

Hospital zombies

Legend of the carabao

Kids of Manila

Where is Duterte

He said he'd talk around 4

President, absent