

Oh, My Darling Quarantine

Miguel Paolo P. Reyes

mpreyes3@up.edu.ph

Dying These Days

Maybe, if it hadn't been so sudden, there would have been less discord and disjoints. There wouldn't be any guffawing avatars telling me that I will be missed. There wouldn't be any sincere condolences from a cartoon rabbit with my former roommate's name. Maybe my friends wouldn't race to tag me in their status updates on my passing. Maybe my death wouldn't have aroused a distant cousin's inner vigilante, who'll be so disappointed that he can't bring the damned virus that killed me to justice.

Well, had I been told
That the hour was nigh
When my mother would truly know
If paying those premiums was worth it,
I probably wouldn't have ghosted the world

I probably would've shared the knowledge of my upcoming demise to the hundreds who saw that photo of what I ate for lunch today. I'd probably be declared Nostradamus 2.0 on the evening news; every selfie would now be a portent, each like a prophetic endorsement. Maybe every like of every post about my death would be construed as a type of prayer, seeking intercession by someone who, in life, had previewed the inscrutable.

REYES
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The Department

He's a literal scream.
That is,
He's a linguistic formation
That makes absolutely no sense.

But he's newly tenured,
Unlike our forever adjunct
And our token Marxist gadfly
Who happen to be one person.

Oh, I'm sure they'll retain the one
Who's seen Cymbeline at the Globe
And the one who went to Princeton
Who says "Foucault" with much élan.

They only have to swear to keep
Our holiest of commandments:

You shall not slay your father
Unless he is truly dead,
And you shall cite your colleagues' work
As much as you cite your own.

[After the late EG, 2020]

Redecorating in April 2020

We transferred the wall clock
To somewhere more central,
Closer to the ceiling
Above our brand-new houseplant.

It really changed things up;
We could glance up from all corners
To check if it's nearly time
For the curfew horn to blare
Or for help to come in dreams
And other scheduled tragedies.

But as the days became weeks,
All that damned clock told us was,
"We're all still tumbling through time
Though we're staying, stewing, in place.

Miguel Paolo P. Reyes is a university research associate at the Third World Studies Center, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines Diliman. His poems have appeared in the *Sunday Times of the Manila Times* and on the walls of his childhood home. His fiction has appeared in *Plural: Online Prose Journal* and *Nanoism*—which, sadly, have ceased publication—and the *Sunday Times* and *Diliman Review*—which, happily, are still around. With Joel Ariate Jr. and Larah Del Mundo, he co-wrote the book *Marcos Lies*. With Luisa Gomez, he has a son.