

# Staying in with COVID Sivvy

by Crystal Hurdle

She'd be horrible  
let's get that clear up front  
unlike the colour of her mucous

in early stages of sinusitis symptoms  
she would use up that window  
ever narrowing  
to party hardy  
knowing she'd be bed-bound for weeks  
with stuffed-up dead head raging fevers

worse than small children in playgrounds  
worse than transmitting bat and bird vectors  
she'd be an infection mechanism  
her whole body a ready syringe  
from the tips of her toes to the top of her head

with her brown roots  
up in the air  
Sivvy and her hair!  
an updo ponytail, in coronets  
long blonde like the girl  
in that old Faberge shampoo commercial  
you'll tell two friends  
and they'll tell two friends  
and so on  
and so on  
the TV screen erupting in multiple frames  
trajectories of transmission

Sivvy's lank hair horse-like when Alvarez smelled it  
even then she reeked of flu contamination, mutation

a mad bad Typhoid Mary  
whispering love and contagion  
into yet another new boyfriend's ear  
why she needed so many of them  
The graph reveals cases going up and up!

after a long monologue more nasal than usual  
hand to sweaty hand, French kissing  
moist laryngeal whisper to lure victims closer  
PS I'm contagious, pass it on

the pestilential Plath carrier  
No desire to flatten any curve  
sheds fetish DNA and sore-throated sequins  
on a red carpet to nowhere quickly anywhere

she unprotected from villagers in gloves and visor masks  
she unprotected from the bees, from the potato people  
yes, but more so  
they from her

hive mind mentality  
handshaking to seal the deal  
index case  
Victoria Lucas  
heck, look to her  
Sivvy no patient zero  
always has to be first in everything

penicillin does nothing for a virus  
but she'd demand more and still more  
cocaine sprays antibiotic resistance  
codeine, nose drops, pyribenzamine  
tiskets in her up and at 'em skipping basket  
lined with homemade hankies  
not just a two bed-sheet cold  
sick-bed food snipped  
to bite-sized pieces  
swallow, gargle, choke

she'd be the source of her own transmission  
no sneezing into an elbow

would flagrantly pick her nose  
odious olfactory organ  
lovingly expound on the viscosity  
the colour  
the turgidity  
essence of putrescence dabbed behind one ear  
pestilential perfume  
the mucous, its crusted jelly so jewel-pretty  
she'd collect germy globules in bud vases  
drop in insolent secreting flowers for the sickbed tray  
actively injecting infection

never mind if this overachiever were pre- or asymptomatic  
social distancing not for her  
quarantines only of her own making  
when she hunkered down  
in writerly self-isolation

in the early days of her and Ted  
delighted to quarantine with him  
for longer than fourteen days  
at least a full month  
try for a pregnancy  
replicate, multiply  
exchanging oxycontin for oxytocin

Ted's lack of hygiene less writerly not artful  
fingernail scrapings and dandruff on his desk  
Sivvy would attack with spatulas and plates  
Ted's befouled secretaire, his black pen, fabulous fomites  
the love of his pheromone-y pong  
careful what she breathes in  
inspire so close to  
expire

cooking exotic recipes  
sustaining him affectionately, lavishly  
like a mother bird feeding her young  
I know you like your sweet and savoury Sivvy  
Here's a loving spoonful  
a couple of droplets for flavor  
Sivvy's secret sauce  
she would stir her brew  
of contagion

making sure she used again and again  
the same spoon  
with which she tested for  
more sugar? more salt?

A spoonful of Sivvy helps the medicine go down

and he  
like others before him  
begging bowl in tremulous inflamed hand  
would come back for  
...more