

#SonnetCoronaProject  
Selected Poems

37.

Overfill the mornings, kill the afternoons  
with uphill climbs on trails I failed to tread  
as a girl, when the unturned earth in the depths  
of the park held the promise of peril, or so I dreamed.  
It seems that sudden solitude has fortified  
my drive—my mind lithe with lyric lines  
that wind around the blocks my body clocks  
at every quaking hour. The sour breath  
that blew my chance of falling hard in love  
has gone and sweetened in my own mouth—safer  
there, where cults of personality can't bust in,  
the discipline of oneness winning out.  
Another bout of partnership could strike.  
My store of dread at the ready if cases spike.

43.

Sometimes it winds itself, resists decay  
like treated teeth sinking into sweets undaunted.  
The pawnshop I sauntered into on a lark  
displayed the watch up front near two machetes,  
while the broker slurped a bowl of thin spaghetti  
in the back, his hunger abruptly moving.  
The expansion band slipped easy down my hand,  
gripped my wrist the way my father did  
when he was angry. I laid the cash and left.  
No guarantees, only value I assign  
each day I wear it. Submerged in my black bathtub,  
stoking winter fires, I taunt its will to tick.  
Between me and my timepiece, a dead heat.  
This business of outlasting's got me beat.

44.

This business of outlasting's got me beat.  
Reading cover to cover, those days are over  
far as I can tell: compelling beginnings  
suffice where once they only lit the match.  
The lines that catch in my throat don't stay long,  
even the godliest ones. Doesn't stop me  
from starting, and starting, until the bedside lamp  
goes to half—its dimming glow lulls, a safer  
dark setting in ahead of threats that take  
the reins tomorrow. Before the room goes black  
I scan the back of the uncracked book that tops  
my pile: peregrine falcons and the man who tracks them.  
To cede your mind to the consciousness of a hawk—  
there's a story I could get behind without a thought.

48.

To stanch the bleeding sun I pull the curtain. The gauze soaks through,  
whets my appetite for raging light despite my thwarted efforts.  
Fine, night's up, I get it. Cocktail hour's dunzo,  
you don't have to tell me twice like last time.  
I see you, saffron blossoms, the ricochet  
of your bursting life off my casement windows,  
and I raise you one highball filled to the rim  
with coffee. Iced, if you must know. So, proceed.  
On this side of morning after, I'll lead with questions:  
What do I need to learn today, to start.  
Pull the card: Reversed Temperance—a bit on the nose,  
though the winding path in the background does resemble ours.  
A call for learning allyship, that's what's on the table.  
In a perfect storm of outbreaks, an invitation to stumble.

68.

I breathe through lies to keep my blood from boiling.

Spoiler alert: it doesn't always work.

To circumvent this climate rife with toxins  
sometimes calls for maverick methods.

Yesterday I made a pie crust from scratch,  
not a reinvented wheel by any stretch,

but an unexpected dose of easy mastery—

DoorDash be damned, I'll do it all myself.

Didn't they sell us in the eighties that we could?

Would you believe a team's on track to put an end  
to menopause? What if the laws of nature are obsolete,

the big cheat of middle age looking to get caught?

Fraught questions. For some a threatening prospect,  
what's waiting to be born where dust collects.