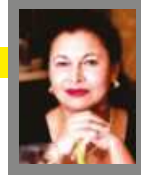


**THOUGHT CRAFT**

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# This too shall pass

COVID-19 has changed our lives. Many seniors have not set foot outside their homes since April. They have sent away many of their staff, have tested and retested their essential employees, and have stopped socialising, except through Zoom or other media. Some brave souls have ventured out for special occasions, but by and large, we have all decided that discretion is the better part of valour.

Some would call this new way of life a challenge, especially for the young. They want to go out and enjoy life, and this is an onerous burden to be borne. They bemoan the lack of lunches, teas, and rich dinners. The rich clothes and jewels are wasting away in their closets and safes, while the days pass, long and mournful.

On a different tack, I am deeply impressed by the degree of common sense exercised by everyone in our country, from executives to the rickshaw pullers in the streets. Everyone has a mask and tries to practice distancing, insofar as it is possible.

For this, we are grateful to the foundations, the NGOs and civil society in general, for their constant reminders to exercise caution and observe appropriate safety measures.

For those of us who are retired or frail, or need to avoid going out, this period of isolation is a time to be creative, to re-educate ourselves in history, literature or poetry, to paint or learn to play the piano, or to read all the books we meant to read, but never could for want of time.

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I have given up books, except for gory murder thrillers. I have also taken to a bit

of baking, with mixed results. Someone else has discovered the joys of house cleaning, and yet another person has taken up intricate embroidery.

At other times, it is pleasant to just sit by our windows, or go up to the roof and admire the surrounding views. It is cheering to see the comings and goings of daily life, to listen to the clanging of hammers on the building site next door, or watch workers sitting in a spaced-out circle on the pavement puffing on cigarettes and enjoying cups of hot sweet tea.

I am heartened by the quality of their laughter, and their jokes and cheerfulness in the face of hardship, hard labour, and probably many other deprivations. Truly, the human spirit is magnificent in its sheer indomitability.

Despite all of life's adversities, including this unfortunate time of COVID-19, the world itself is still a beautiful place. The clouds are a different shape every day, outlined against different coloured skies, violet, periwinkle, or just pure heavenly blue. At night, the moon shines icy white, but

on other nights, it might be a golden crescent moon against an indigo sky. No photo could ever do justice to nature's unsurpassed beauty.

And the glory of the rain! There are few sights as charming as rain falling on trees, the gentle patter of raindrops, and the thunder and the wind. Unfortunately, the floods resulting from excessive rain bring devastation to the country and its people in some areas.

In the villages, children rejoice when it rains, and run out to dance in the warm showers. In the city, the best way to enjoy it is to go up to the roof with a large umbrella and just sit there quietly and listen to the music of the rain.

Sometimes, we forget that we too are part of nature and creation. While there is time and opportunity, we should appreciate our world and enjoy an hour or two of utter peace, whenever possible.

Life is surprisingly short, and no matter how many years we might live, it passes in a flash.

In the hurly burly of life, we forget that we shall not pass this way again.

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