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Arithmetic of Nearness

For months,
the streets resolved to sirens,
while the wind wandered
through shuttered stores
and windows that forgot
a familiar knock.

Life returned
the way dawn does.
A chair scraped against concrete.
A market breathed open.

And a hesitant wave
crossed a weathered fence.
I remember how strange it was
to hear laughter
without a screen holding it together.

Some of us returned
with silver at our temples.
Some carried names
that would never answer again.

Still, every evening,
someone swept the dust
from the sidewalk.
Someone left vegetables
at a neighbour's gate.

Someone asked,
"Have you eaten?"
and lingered,
as though the answer
could mend something unseen.

Perhaps
this is how a broken world
begins again?

Only later
did we remember
it had all begun
with a pandemic
named by a number,
nineteen.

A number
that measured our distance,
yet taught us,
that when the glowing screens
could no longer carry us,
we found each other
in open doors,
shared tables,
and voices
that no longer
needed a screen
to reach home.



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The Ambitious Coward

Heard the gunshot!
Had myself run along with the rest.
Running, running... kept my pace;
Felt everyone's hopeful gaze.
Striding forth,
With no progress.
Effort finds its cease;
My mind - heavy and breathless;
Falling short...
Deep down, echoed a whisper-
"QUIT"
- A comforting malice;
The ambitious coward obeyed it.
Fearing to face failure,
Feared not meeting those hopeful gaze,
Fearing to be a loser...
She Quit!
To embrace the very doom she'd shun.
Ironic. Isn't it?

In seeking refuge from a feared
defeat,
She built a prison of her own feat.

*Modern Humans are Nothing but Technologically
Advanced Barbarians.*

