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COVID-19 Isolation: Daily Lessons

Joseph S. Pizzo

New Jersey Council of Teachers of English

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COVID-19 Isolation: Daily Lessons

JOSEPH S. PIZZO

New Jersey Council of Teachers of English

A challenge

To enrich, engage, explain, excite

My students in isolation

Reflecting

On forcible removal

A March

From the classroom

The class

The building

The network

The ultimate reality show

Based on an unreal premise.

Shunted to the rear

Pushed away

A summer of speculation

Of supposition

Anticipated hopes for normalcy

Routine

Seasoned with excitement

With vision

A new school year filled

With holidays

With energy

With effervescence

Masked scholars

Masked emotions

Missed smiles

Eyes embracing wonder

Voices seeking comfort

Inspiration requesting oxygen

Reduction of isolation
A re-emergence of requirements
Routine
Rigor
Respect
Meetings at lockers
Expectations
Of stories
Of shared laughter
Of commonalities and connections
A temporal relief?
Will the holidays bring
Insidious tricks
Disguised with their
Baskets of treats?
Is gratitude and giving thanks
A pilgrimage
A gathering
A cruel hoax
A winter of discontent?
Can the merriment of December
The candles
The presents
The gatherings
The embraces
Become an uncharted adventure
A variant journey
Navigated
By an insidious Omicron?
Is the holiday spirit
Once filled with inspiration and hope
Now defined by an invasive
And devilish deception?
Are the fears of the Ides of March
To be revisited with rebellion?

Are the lessons being learned
Not confined simply to classrooms?
Are the pursuits of success being weakened
By the pervasiveness and fear
Of a returning unknown?
Are the lessons being learned
Teaching resilience?
Defining defiance?
Indicating a variant vulnerability?
Is the seemingly unlimited supply
Of ebullience and energy
Becoming a psychological pariah instead?
Has the coverage of curricula
Been masked
By frustration
And learned distance?
Does material matter more
Than matters of the heart?
Is the energy of learning
In teams
Diffused by distance
And directives?
Can the precautions
That inspire lessons
Be reasonably lessened?
Can the fears
Of infection and contamination
Be replaced by those
Of infectious joy and spontaneous laughter?
Can the threats and trepidations
Be replaced by sincerity
Simplicity
And congregation?
Will the challenges remain?
Does hope lie within the months ahead?

Can this COVID-19
Sea of separation
Be drained?
Can a bridge to return
Daily lessons
To routine
Rigor
And respect
Be reconstructed?
Can the once-familiar routine
Become expected
Rather than yearned for?
Can education
Finally be allowed
To educate
Rather than
Separate?
Must we settle
For a new normal?
We must create rather than cringe
We must inspire rather than interpret
We must connect before we construct
We must lessen our isolation
We must continue
To humanize
Our study
Of humanities