

Chronicle of my Curious Corona Case / Susmita Mukherjee

So for 21 days after possible infection I was sustaining without any medicine, only on fruits and coconut water. Suddenly on 30th morning, I woke up with a panic attack and called my doctor in Mumbai who immediately prescribed some pills and asked me to take the RTPCR test. Now this test had been the bone of contention for a while. My younger son who is studying to be a scientist in New Zealand, along with his school classmate, My doctor,, who is in the frontline of Covid treatment in India, had been pleading with me to get a test done. I had dismissed it as medical haranguing. I had first heard the term from my very concerned older sister, and ofcourse I was determined not to go to any hospitals for testing (Pateli) But my Mumbai doctor was not going to listen to this insane patient in Orchha. A conversation happened between him and my husband and I was bundled off to to our small but clean hospital in the village where they stuffed some cotton up my nostrils and the dreaded RTPCR test seemed like child's play.

The mask with the black hair / a poem by Sushmita Mukherjee



Take the first step,
Become your own bestie,
Your online friend, begins and ends with You in the main role,
not a cameo,
in the online film forwards of others.
I spied a homely grey haired hag,
You guessed right..in the mirror,
She smiled Mona Lisa ish,
And gestured to the dressing table.
Ah! I don't have one here in the village, just some stuff
haphazardly pitched together in my hurried exit from Mumbai,
fleeing the Virus, like a Partition victim of yore.
The deodorant smiled at me, luring me to let her cozy under my
armpits.
Sorry girl, I said,
you know, here in nature, I don't smell at all.
The toothpaste squeezed soft and sparingly,
Wants to be pushed and handled hard.
But I decline... You have more to stay in today's day..
So with wipes and tissues,
No 'khachak khachak' like our film helpers do, liberally
plucking out 5, when 1 would suffice.
Trees, wood, plants heave a tentative collective sigh...
My shampoo stares seductively at me...
I hadn't noticed the sexy gaze all these years...
No no, not today..I tease her back,
I can wait
I will use you bit by bit,

till you foam at the mouth.
And then the hair colour dibba,
Painfully reserved for the last day of the lockdown,
The colour which will provide the mask to meet the masks that
I will meet,
When lockdown opens,
I will meet another woman,
The mask with the black hair!

Susmita Mukherjee

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Lockdowned in paradise.