

QUARANTINE

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G also known as B died the other day and there were some serious obituaries. G/B was more punk than the punks...G/B was the godfather of industrial culture....G/B lived the past two plus decades of her/his life as pangenderal. Early footage of G is not pangenderal....it is militaristic. It is not only about crowd control it is crowd control. G/B bought into essentialist gender stereotyping....male aggressive and violent female gentle and communitarian. G became B to stop being G...s/he became s/he to no longer be a he as he had been a horrible he to not only the women in his life. G/B began as a terrorist and ended as a flower child. What is the cutoff point for accusations? What is the cutoff point for forgiveness?

A few days prior to the concert I decided I wanted to go see EJ. I had never seen him live before and never even thought about seeing him live until I saw his bio movie. I found myself realizing that I liked many of those songs and also that I liked the man. I thought the concert would be really Vegas but it wasn't. E was the singing piano player for a rock band. This required some adjustment as I had eaten a cookie anticipating kitsch or camp or whatever. But E kept playing and singing from his catalogue of nearly fifty years and most of it was really good. Sure there was some treacle and of course EJ has always been a silly old monarchist and of course he wasn't really saying goodbye to the yellow brick road as shortly after this evening's concert he announced more dates. Some people just can't retire or stop performing and E is most certainly one of those people. I do wonder if his hubby ever gets a word in but the hubby is after all a consenting adult so there. E talked to the audience... he broke the fourth wall. I like the fourth wall because for me everything live is theatre but E is a popular entertainer not an actor or dancer. He talked about his AIDS Foundation and I couldn't decipher a bloody word he was saying and I don't think it was the drugs. But it was a memorable concert. E's guitar player had a black and yellow striped Les Paul and the set was very Wizard of Oz... even as E always sat down to play the piano and then walked around the stage not out of vanity but in order to stretch and preserve his back. E preserved more than his back...his voice isn't what it used to be but what the hell. The event was and then wasn't spectacle. But it was pleasantly iconic and it didn't break my bank account.

I think about JC and then by extension MC. I often think about these artists who were this couple. JC never 'came out', and neither did MC. Even though everybody and their dog knew about their relationship, which lasted for three four five decades. This is almost a durational performance. Granted, JC loathed nationalism so therefore also

identity politics and so on. His disdain for identity politics and nationalism got him into trouble... his dismissals of jazz raised the ire of not only black nationalists and music critics. But JC and MC did stay together forever like so many gay male couples. How did they do it...how did they sustain their relationship? Were they actually monogamous? Was one or more of them a compulsive park cruiser or bathhouse queen? Did they do combinations? Was one if not the other into trade? Was JC a secret transgressionist...did an act or desire have to be forbidden or illegal for him to do it? I watched the current documentary titled after Mr. C. JC, MC, and their friend and collaborator RR are really quite typical gay artistic types; but that is perhaps only among themselves. In relation to whom did they remain closeted? Well, AW of course? Didn't RR and JJ once refer to AW as being too swishy? AW couldn't have passed for straight if he'd been paid a million dollars to make such an attempt but JC wasn't exactly machismo incorporated himself. Yes, perhaps it was the competitive art market and the fifties and JC's disdain of nationalism which refused identification and proclamation and telling everybody the obvious. Not quite timeless, but hardly unusual let alone scandalous.

JB died today. I was typically killing time on Social Media and there it was...a posting from CH including a profile of JB and his painting practice. I responded 'Oh shit! Such a great painter and a lovely man.' With the limitations of language with regards to expressing emotion what else could one say? Well, people who knew JB could traditionally agree to meet for drinks or some sort of memorial gathering but an epidemic is now in full bloom. During this epidemic people have been instructed to practice 'social distance'. Individuals should stay six feet or more away from each other. Needless to say, restaurants and bars are closed. I phoned a friend who knew JB much better than I did. My friend isn't on Social Media as much as I am... she rarely posts anything because my friend CB is not one to talk unless she has something to say. JB had a heart attack. He was in his upper sixties...his lover HS had passed a few years ago on fucking New Year's Day and he had been dating a very sweet man who used to work in the extremely useful hardware store next to my own home. I hadn't known JB was gay or queer or whatever until maybe six or seven years ago. His painting veered in and out of abstraction. He had never been a fixture in HIV-related fundraisers or queer community themed exhibitions. He was modernist. He painted, scraped much of the initial paint away, and then continued this process until he thought it was finally right. But he wasn't a cranky anti-social modernist. He was a guy I always enjoyed bumping into and gabbing with. Those days are over because JB has died and people cannot bump into each other and talk. So I poured a glass of red wine and drank it by myself. As I slowly drank the glass of wine, Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata became entrenched in my head. Not one of my favourite pieces of music... it has been played and played to

death and it is not formalist enough to become pleasantly ambient. But I wondered why the Moonlight Sonata had become stuck in my head and I realized that I associated that music with dying. I remembered that the last time I had found that music stuck in my head was during the days when my father was dying.

Today was the first day since the quarantine was announced on which I had to do my laundry in a public laundromat. I wasn't sure if the nearest poorly maintained public laundromat would be open.....an alternative in the Kensington Market area has closed down indefinitely. But the regular laundromat was open, albeit without the wash and fold service. The woman who was usually on the premises in the afternoons was not present but her absence didn't bother me at all. As I arrived and quickly found an available washing machine a woman asked for help changing a loony into quarters. Since this isn't an especially difficult thing for someone to do as long as the change machine is working or full I hesitated. I was on the verge of telling her to maintain social distance...like at least six feet. But I let her hand me her loony and then I gave her the resulting four quarters. She thanked me as if I had help her won some sort of jackpot. Then she started babbling. At first I thought she might be on her phone but she wasn't. I thought she might be an actor playing a street person who was rehearsing her monologue but I doubt it. This person was the real deal.....she was also drunk. She finished a can of beer and opened another, offering me some which I refused. She talked to herself and I couldn't hear any recurring patterns to help me decode what on earth she might possibly be talking about. I was relieved when she went outside to smoke a cigarette. Then she unfortunately returned. Damn this epidemic... this quarantine. Usually when I go to that laundromat I put my clothes in the machine and then take off to the nearby bookstore, which of course has closed indefinitely. And the weather was damp and wet so I didn't feel like taking a walk in the nearby park. The woman's continuous voice became intolerable. I was worried that she might become violent. I was and I am more worried that this quarantine might last indefinitely. Fortunately, after I finished the wash and put all my clothes in a drier, the woman left the laundromat. My cycle finished before she returned, if indeed she did. So I moved quickly and then carried my laundry out onto the street...into what I was now referring to as the demilitarized zone.

Last night decided to contact a friend about another old friend who is in rough shape. A former heroin user who now drinks too much and it's going to kill him....his liver plus more. This person is a highly idiosyncratic artist. I will phone the friend who I contacted about the friend who is in rough shape. He is not the only one. I miss what I call café society. I miss gossip in addition to witty personal conversation. I think I miss this aspect

of life the most, being a flaneur who encounters other flaneurs. There are other things I miss like movies and art galleries and sex...of course all the recreational centres are closed and I don't disagree as to why they are. Although with COVID-19 I am detecting too many echoes of AIDS-related hysteria. On social media I see postings about how the absence of people in certain not only urban centres is benefiting the environment. This really gets my back up. I think of radical earth first types who considered AIDS to be an example of nature making a statement. I remember Zero Population advocates who thought AIDS was highly convenient. I remember also my own flirtation with zero population growth mentality....there are too many fucking people in the world and that is a huge problem. I still sometimes think there are too many people in the world because so many people are idiots. But the idea of someone making decisions as to who is vital and who is expendable is known as eugenics and eugenics are part and parcel of totalitarian ideologies et cetera. I see people posting comments made by Texas Republicans about the expendability of old people. I'm no spring chicken myself and I'll go when I decide to go. I went to an alternative bank today as my own bank is closed. Do I have flu or cough symptoms? I was in and out quite quickly and some of my own bank's staff were now working at this alternative bank. Essential services keep on keeping on. So do people, at least for the time being.

I leave my lodgings twice sometimes thrice a day. I live a block away from one of Toronto's busiest intersections and the streets are deserted. When I walk to the nearest grocery or to Shoppers Drug Mart or one of the takeout roti places I feel somebody is watching me. Not pedestrians but my somebody invisible. I'm sure there is overhead surveillance in effect although there are no airplanes. There are no visible drones. But something is happening that is creeping me out. Somebody is waiting to pounce when you walk past another pedestrian and the width is not the prescribed six foot distance. People are going to start getting arrested for walking too close to each other. Maybe if cars were banned then people could walk on the streets and keep distance more efficiently. But COVID 19 actually privileges drivers. You're alone in your car you don't have passengers you can avoid the public transit which I have managed to avoid for ten days now. Although I hear the buses and subways are also deserted. When this epidemic peaks, and it hasn't peaked yet, people will be housebound. I will have to arrange for food deliveries. I am not looking forward to this inevitable edict, to put it mildly.

Now the word on-line is that parks have been closed. The option of taking a walk in the park...is it still an option? Or is it that cars can't enter parks. Do I want to walk to the

nearest park only to find that I can't enter? No, I don't. Language is getting confusing. Stay home...does that mean your groceries must now be delivered? There are people on-line talking about the good side of staying home. That's all fine but not everybody has a home. Not everybody can stay indoors. There is talk of making some streets car-less so that people can walk at a safe distance from one another as many sidewalks are not wide enough. I could support this decision...not that I have a vote or anything. There are so few cars on the main streets and probably the side streets as well. I live on a main street near a major intersection and there are hardly any cars, even though the keep your distance from people command actually benefits people who drive everywhere and who avoid public transit. I have avoided public transit for eleven days now and I don't drive.

GK died today or yesterday or recently. There was a posting on FB. The cause of death was not included in the obit. Did GK die of COVID-19? Did that virus intersect with other illnesses he may have been living with. GK was an actor who I hadn't seen for a long time. I used to know him when I composed music for theatre productions. JK phoned me this morning as he had promised that he would. We caught up, both frustrated that our mutual interests like seeing art or experimental cinema were currently forbidden. JK and I talked about AF, who I had phoned yesterday. AF was coping with the current situation without too much difficulty. AF had survived AIDS after all. It is now over twenty years since HIV/AIDS had become a manageable condition or syndrome for many PHAs, rather than a death sentence. But of course people still die from HIV-related causes...a lot of different people for different reasons. Not everybody can afford retro-virals and not everybody is in any sort of activist loop. Today I bought some new edibles. The store I buy from is a members' club of sorts. It sold edibles before edibles became legal. Now weed is considered an essential so weed stores are open in parallel to liquor outlets. For whatever it is all worth. I remember being surprised in fall 2008 when I returned to Canada and the customs agent asked me if I was bringing cannabis into the country in the same tone as with liquor or cigarettes. No no and no. The customs guy asked me other questions. He asked me why I was in Berlin for two weeks and nowhere else. I guess he thought I must have been working. Ha ha I wish I had. Now I wish I was...working..

Staying home and indoors is not good. Today there is some sort of noisy operation happening outside. Not construction but maybe someone's hydro? The truck is parked and humming beside the roti place where I have been talking out from. No tomato in the paste, please. Some people like staying home...noise or no noise. I enjoy solitude but only up to a point. I appreciate the option of not being solitary. A city health official says

that a third of the city's people with CIVID-19 are under forty. Well, there goes the mercy killing for old people argument. Somebody I like is going nuts across the city but I don't want to take the transit system. I hope somebody living closer to ES can buy her some groceries. So many people semi-outside on social media. There are the friends and not so much friends that one bumps into every day. There he is again with his alphabetical lists of bands that he has seen. He and he and he and then finally a she has risen to the challenge. I yielded to temptation. Stuck on the letter Q. I never saw Queen. Harmless on line meme between a bunch of geeks and a few girls. Other postings I avoid. They all contradict each other. Going out is okay if done safely. Going out is a mistake and should be literally forbidden. Well then, it's too late. I might be a goner...I go shopping without a mask or gloves. Maybe I am a goner.

Although now it's sunny and warm, the first part of the day was a heavy rainy one. I decided to take advantage of this by working on my taxes for the outgoing year. The deadline has been pushed back a month, which now strikes me as being optimistic. My neighbour who is a musician told me that proof of certain income is necessary for freelance musicians and other gig artists to get a rebate for lost income from Toronto Arts Council. Presumably that proof of yearly income is found by means of the necessary bureaucrats looking at tax returns. I am not eligible for this return but I am working on my taxes because I am certain that a rebate will follow from my filing. I remember when I couldn't deal with taxes and didn't file for years. I was stupid. I probably could have been getting refunds although for years I had a steady part-time service job which made my situation complicated. Word was getting around almost three decades ago that the feds were tracking down artistic types who didn't file and I decided to square up when I was in a financial position to do so. I made out the largest cheque I have ever made out and then spent all the following summer dreading the mail. It's actually my taxes for the current year that could be weird. Other than pension and annuity, what income? Everything is canceled or indefinitely postponed.

Last night somebody who clearly spends more time on social media than I do was posting about a country or folk singer who is in critical condition with COVID-19. JP is in a New York hospital and New York is right now about the hardest hit city in the world except for possibly Mumbai. JP has many other people... praying and requesting that others pray. JP is a singer or songwriter who has never been on my radar. He has a reputation for authenticity and I am chronically suspicious of people who market themselves as being authentic. Still he is probably a decent fellow and certainly not somebody who has made a fortune by marketing themselves as being 'authentic' or sincere or honest or similar adjectives. I try to think of I've ever heard JP and I don't

think I have excel one of his tunes was covered by BM in 1973 on her first album. BM was trying to prove that she was a genuine singer and not merely a campy novelty entertainer. It's good to have a long term plan if one chooses to remain in the business. Leave the options you are not using now open for possible later use and so on. But people have now started posting tracks by JP as if he has already died. I have seen this happen before, like a few years ago with TP who was no relation to JP. The man is not dead yet. Who says the man might not get a break or a turnaround? Do not pronounce people dead until they are certified dead. I remember all too well similar examples during the AIDS pandemic. Somebody hasn't been seen for a long time doesn't mean they're dead it could very well mean they have relocated or even recovered and moved somewhere else where they can reinvent themselves. So by all means pray and burn candles for JP but his death is not a foregone conclusion even though 'critical care' certainly does not sound promising.

Aside from phoning people selectively and bumping into my ex's boyfriend en route to the laundromat yesterday afternoon, I don't see people. But I do feel a visible member of society or community or whatever the word is. On-line there is a community. On-line is about killing time...about a functional existence. But it also involves players...repeating players. There's EG yet again being a public Samaritan. There's BF again quite rightly pointing out double standards regarding sexual assault or harassment allegations. And there's TM with his conspiracy theories. COVID -19 is not the real reason everything is being shut down. In a week or two the real reason will be shockingly revealed since isn't COVID-19 just a flu? Conspiracy theories only interest me when they're clearly ridiculous. There are so many wackjob conspiracy theories about the Kennedy assassinations and a few of them are even entertaining. And then there are those people who redecorate their limited accommodations so they can look spiffy on Zoom. I'm personally past the point of such redecoration. Limited cramped abodes are a fact of life for so many people but prior to the quarantine there was the option of leaving one's home for an extended period as there were so many things one could do outside of one's home. This of course is a different matter for those who don't have homes. Cities are designating unoccupied buildings as refuge for the homeless. But it will only be a drop in the bucket.

The local borderline tabloid announces as its cover headline that Pride will be either canceled or postponed this year due to COVID-19. The city's announcement was made yesterday that all public events in June would be canceled so there we go. Of course The Sun is happy....no more Pride Day. Well, Pride lost its purpose years ago really.

For years it has been a big corporate event. As a queer I don't need the calendar to inform me that I am a queer. So I react to this headline with a shrug, really. I anticipated this and other cancellations would happen. So on the last Sunday of this year's June I won't be self-agonizing about whether to put in an appearance or not. Putting in an appearance means heading over to Buddies In Bad Times in the late afternoon seeing at least a few of the usual gang and enjoying three or four pints usually one complimentary courtesy of the wonderful PW behind the bar. And now I had to call one of my oldest friends who has a printer so that I can mail by 2019 taxes to the government. It is in my self-interest to do so, so I will do so. Tax deadlines have been moved back by a month so this is hardly an urgent matter. On Sunday I needed to give myself an assignment, so I filled out and calculated my taxes. It's all about being a citizen even when I can't physically interact with other citizens.

Bulletins keep popping up that the provincial government is going to make social distancing or physical distancing or whatever it is called more tightly defined. But the list of rules that follows these bulletins or announcements is the same as the list that's been spelled out over the last two weeks. What might be new are the reports of cops and other authorities becoming more aggressive. Cops seem to have been getting greater authority to zero in on two people talking and then demand to know if they are a couple or housemates. If not then they should not be talking to each other. So what about people who literally need to make brief but significant personal exchanges. They are not all drug dealers or political conspirators or whatever. Draconian rules about limited social contact may be well intended but they are easily abused by cops who have nothing better to do. Cops or other civil authorities are not unlike customs agents. The actual rules or orders from the top are so vaguely defined that individual agents can run amok and those in power will just shrug and say that the agents are simply doing their jobs. And meanwhile I hear that MV is drinking himself to death. MV literally overdosed on vodka and had to be sent to a psych hospital as other wards wouldn't deal with him because he has infections. One doesn't have to be Einstein to realize that the suicide rate will increase during this current pandemic. It has also been noted that spousal assault incidents are increasing sharply. This is numbingly predictable and disgusting.

For some unknown reason road repair still goes on, even on the minor side street that my building corners. It is now late afternoon and the sound drones on...and on. I did manage to have a nap after braving the post office so I could mail my tax form to the man who will scan it and email it to the proper authorities. A once well-known soul singer named BW or on his birth certificate WW passed yesterday from heart conditions at least technically not related to COVID-19. I remember BW for a song called Use Me

with its great clavinet riff. I wonder if the cabinet player had a writing credit.. probably not but it's such a great hook. BW was eighty-one so he did have a pretty good long run. Meanwhile the deaths projection for Ontario is too damn high and it is a paltry number with respect to projections for the entire planet. I read in today's old fashioned newspaper that Sweden is not participating in social isolation to the degree that every other nation in the world seems to be. Stockholm has not shut down. I wish the citizens of Stockholm and Malmo and the entire country all the best as the shut down here has become beyond unbearable. I wish I had some sort of wonder drug that could put me out for three months. And then, if I awoke from my beautiful slumber and this lockdown was still in effect, I would take another hit that would last another three months, and so on for as long as necessary.

Debates about the pros and cons of wearing a mask have become more and more vehement. Save the masks for front line hospital workers... I can support that priority. Wear something over your nose and mouth because there are people one will pass on the street or sidewalk who may be asymptomatic but still carriers. Yes, I can support that too. So today I decided that I would wear a scarf over my nose and mouth every time I had to go outside. And with cannabis now be classified as a non-essential, I decided to stock up and buy more edibles. I have little time for weed but edibles are fun. If I have to stay at home there is nothing better to do than eat half an edible and listen to music whether be nineties 'trip-hop' or dark ambient streams of scores for horror movies never actually made or Steve Reich's Music for Eighteen Musicians as well as many more possibilities. So I walked around the corner and lined up. I am a member of this club that may or may not be legal. It took at least half an hour to be admitted but I was in and out in about two minutes at the most. The club gave me their card for which I can place an order by phone as the store will be shutting down for an unspecified time now. Then on the way home I noticed a man approaching me on the side street sidewalk who would mirror my movements. I would move to the right and he would move to the left. He kept doing this as we got closer to each other. He was half my age and I was worried. I managed to ask him if I could help him. Before I requested that he let me get by he coughed toward my face. I had my scarf over my nose and mouth. The scarf is probably what he was ridiculing.

I emerged from my shower and shampoo and began getting dressed after making my second cup of tea. I put on a white shirt I wear once a week. While I was donning this shirt and wondering why I was wearing a dress shirt during self-isolation, the phone rang. It was my ex from a smaller Canadian city. I asked him to wait for me to get dressed. Did I really have to get dressed at this very moment? Well, I didn't want to be

on the phone for half an hour with a dangling shirt I suppose. He has been housebound for longer than the COVID-19 decree due to leg problems. Two different couples bring him food so he never has to go out. So I describe the demilitarized zone with the six foot or two metre separation rules and he can't quite take it seriously. He thinks authorities are exaggerating. I don't think so. He thinks of AIDS and of course I do too except that AIDS was happening to what authorities considered to be disposable sub-populations and COVID - 19 is happening to diplomats and homeless people alike. I lose track of the aging musicians who have tested positive and are at least stabilizing and not dying...JP and MF and others. I think Prince Charles has tested positive and he might finally become king in his seventies when his mother dies but what if he dies first? Monarchists are surely fascinated although thankfully my feed is not characterized by Anglophile monarchists and Canadian nationalists. And the weather today is quite lovely. This is exactly the sort of say..it actually is Sunday....in which seeing a movie and than walking home with dinner along the way home would be my usual agenda. But here I am....housebound in what is not a house.

I woke up realizing yes it is Monday and I have to do laundry. I was dreading the nearest laundromat which is poorly maintained even when there isn't some sort of epidemic. But although maintenance was not happening the laundromat was tolerable. There was only one other person there and he didn't talk to himself or even babble on his phone. I filled the washing machine and then walked to the nearby park and back. Then I waited for the cycle to complete so I could load up the drier. The laundromat was painless which was a small but significant victory. I remembered the days when I lived with a cat....twenty five years ago. I wondered how I would like having a feline companion now...with this quarantine in effect. I think I would veer wildly between appreciating the duties and distractions the cat would demand and provide and then resenting my one living companion being this animal who really had no clue about the current situation. And then I thought that no...cats are not clueless. Cats would kill their humans if they could. They are from the same lineage as lions and tigers and all the other large feline predators. Cats would likely be annoyed that they haven't got their apartment or even their house to themselves. They would be pissed off that their humans were always home. I haven't had a cat for twenty-five years. I don't think humans should 'own' cats when humans are killing off the big cats. I do wish that domestic cats would morph into lions or tigers and devour their humans. I really do.

I still apply to overseas festivals that are scheduled for later in the year but might well be canceled. I supply my VIMEO link and then send old school DVDs by snail mail. I need

to make more DVDs and I don't have Nero or some other duplication system on my laptop. So I use Face Book to contact hive mind as to who might have something as old-fashioned as a DVD burner. I get some positive responses. Then it occurs to me that meeting friends at a distance would be necessary and would gloves also be necessary in order to pass the master DVD to the other person and then retrieve the resulting duplicates. Hand contact is forbidden. A friend wants to meet and talk at a safe distance. Is that possible? Meanwhile the Prime Minister of Not So Great Britain has been rushed to the intensive care unit. He has the COVID-19 virus. His job involves a lot of handshaking. Here we go again with hand contact. Because his response was almost as slow and stupid as that of the American president there are people who want Boris Johnson to die. People compare COVID-19 and AIDS. But AIDS was infecting and killing members of what governments and cops and their flunkies considered to be disposable communities...faggots and junkies and Haitians. COVID-19 is happening to politicians and diplomats in addition to the homeless but also to front lime medical workers who of course are utterly necessary in order to nip this thing in the bud before it gets worse and worse and worse.

I am hearing something that sounds midway between ambient music and somebody practicing either the violin or a heavily flanged electric guitar. This sound is not outdoors but it is outside my own place of residence. It's not emanating from a car radio because it is not something passing through. It is occurring in the time span of a piece of recorded music. Is it recorded or 'live'? Does somebody have a studio across the street? Do such facilities still exist? Is there somebody living across the road who is practicing their instrument? The city workers who have noisily been digging underground are not there today. My neighbour KQ says they are 'researching' a planned subway of which I can't remember the name of the line but for which there is intended to be a station at the nearby major intersection. I suspect I will be gone by the time this project is commenced let alone completed. I'm feeling more and more like I didn't anticipate this siege or quarantine. I did not stock up on reading material although I do find books that I need to re-read or never could read. I feel like analogue ghosts are quarreling among themselves at the expense of the humans who have never quite progressed from reliance upon those ghosts. I am feeling very analogue and expendable today.

In the middle of all the COVID-19 related news stories was a headline that Bernie Sanders had suspended his campaign for the Democratic National Party presidential

nomination. This of course would leave former vice-president Joe Biden as the nominee. Reactions varied as to whether or not Sanders would personally support Biden, or to what degree he would support the nominee. Would some of his supporters vote for Trump against Biden? More to the point, which percentage of Sanders supporters would vote? Sanders himself was an outsider with regards to the DNP. Outside candidates tend to be knocked down by party bureaucracies, although the current Republican president Donald Trump was an outsider to the GOP. Sanders had run against Hillary Clinton in 2016 and was considered by party insiders to be a divisive force. Third party candidacies have a checkered history in America. Did Ross Perot prevent Al Gore from succeeding Hillary Clinton's husband in 2000 and thus enable George W. Bush to win for the Republicans? Did George Wallace's 1968 Southern third party candidacy help Tricky Dick Nixon win against the predictable Democratic nominee Hubert Humphrey, who was himself challenged by upstart senator Eugene McCarthy for the nomination? Wallace had been a Dixiecrat.... a Southern Democrat and a blatant racist. Nixon had his own Southern strategy and used it to win the job. People talk about the two party system being a reality and that only candidates who can win should run. The same people in Canada think the New Democratic Party are in cahoots with the Conservatives to undermine the natural governing Liberal Party. And if I were American would I hold my nose and vote for Joe Biden, who seems to be senile? Yes, I know, the age factor and Sanders is two years older although Sanders doesn't space out and say embarrassing things in public. Biden has also been accused of being a sexual assailant and Trump for his part has bragged about being one. I think a lot of Americans will be working their options out in the voting booth, if they even bother to go to the voting station. I also suspect the Democrats are throwing the election.

I didn't realize until yesterday afternoon that today would be Good Friday. I have rarely paid attention to Good Friday. In previous years I have found out the hard way that many stores and other municipal activities are closed on Good Friday and also Easter Sunday. I am not religious in any traditional sense and neither are my friends. Nobody I know shuts down for Good Friday or engages in religious services, at least nobody I know talks about doing so. I do remember thirty five years having a terrible hangover on Good Friday and writing a short story called Bad Friday which became the basis for a collaborative videotape that hasn't exactly stood the test of time. The COVID-19 lockdown or quarantine causes this day to be no noisier or quieter than every other day. Cars are on the main street that I live on as much as they were yesterday. I did hear stories about long lineups at major grocery stores and beer stores yesterday afternoon as not all essential services are open today and they certainly won't be on Sunday. But I've had that Morrissey song Every Day is like Sunday stuck in my head all day. Aside from the fact that it is a beautiful song despite its pro-nuclear bomb lyrics it isn't unusual for me to get this song stuck in my head. But Morrissey's title is incorrect. The title he

really meant to use was Every Day is Like Good Friday. I never understood why Good Friday. I guess the crucifixion was necessary for the resurrection.

This is the Saturday in between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. It is just another day. I take in endless contradictory news about the epidemic, I have a nap, I get on the social media. I can't help but notice that many artists are uploading work onto social media links. The galleries and the theatres are closed so good for these artists for their initiatives. JS from Vancouver posts a current programme and I revisit his video HJ. HJ is a collage of youth and sex and it is briefly graphic. It is a sexy video which I appreciate on a slow afternoon. And then the sharply hilarious BM has posted a document of one of her performances. BM is a friend who I have seen perform many times. She maintains my attention for a long time which is more difficult to do on a tiny laptop than in a gallery or theatre. BM walks a very tight line between personal observation and narcissism. She uses narcissism rather than getting herself caught up in it. This is an important distinction. It has been remarked by RK and other theorists that video art is merely narcissism...I guess meaning performative video art as there has always been agit-prop right from the medium's get-go. I guess RK is referring...I haven't read her essay for eons now....to the fact that video artists enjoy watching themselves like they get caught in front of the mirror and never move to alternative positions or perspectives. BM talks about herself but not only about herself. Her work is autobiographical and then it isn't. BM has made my afternoon for which I am very grateful to he

It's Easter Sunday and indeed it is slightly quieter than yesterday was. There are fewer cars whose sounds I can detect. I had to go out for groceries and my usual small grocery was out of Neilson's Milk. I walked another couple of blocks and the small grocery shop was closed I guess for the holiday or just because it is Sunday. I had to go to Shoppers' for razor blades and they didn't have the Neilson's I use. So I ate cereal with the remaining amount I had in the refrigerator. Earlier today I walked past a local barber shop where a sign on the food indicates that there are no tools on the premises. Yesterday I walked past a bar where a similar sign makes it clear that there is no booze or cash on the premises. Yes, somebody might break the window of the front door and help themselves. There has been no looting because nobody is in the streets to do the looting. In my neighbourhood I'm seeing some small businesses hoarded up and I'm sure there are many more in the central downtown core as well as in the suburban

boroughs. It is now mid-April and many small businesses will be unable to pay their rent on the first of May. The idea of lifting the quarantine at that date now seems absurd as the shutdown is scheduled to continue until the end of June and then probably indefinitely longer. Again I find myself referring to the city outside as the DMZ. Now I have to go out in the DMZ. But for exactly which wars has there been a ceasefire. I know globally the United Nations has called for ceasefires during the epidemic. Does this mean that when the epidemic is declared to be over wars will resume immediately? There is an eerie sense of calm before the storm, even though there is a worldwide storm occurring. Is the entire world now like the eye of a hurricane?

Another Monday afternoon and today the laundromat was painless because it was so quiet. Two other people came in and then left. I didn't take a walk after putting my clothes in the cycle because there was light rain and I couldn't think of anywhere to go because nothing is open. Today is Easter Monday which is sort of a holiday. And there are stores and even takeout joints closing on Monday and they didn't close on Mondays prior to COVID-19. I read newspaper accounts of horrible conditions in seniors' homes... COVID-19 related deaths on top of complete negligence by owners. I have an upstairs neighbour who may be slowly dying or who may just be spending her last years bedridden with palliative care. This is a person I've known for a long time about whom I have very mixed feelings. Sometimes I resent the fact that her Public Service Workers tie up her piss shit and diapers and then deposit the contents in washrooms used by myself and other tenants. I find myself wishing my neighbour would move into a hospital or a home and then I check myself and applaud that she is staying out of hospitals let alone dysfunctional nursing homes. In the homes employees are catching COVID-19 and having to resign and new staff comes in who don't know what they're doing and of course its all at the expense of the seniors who are residing in these cursed homes. So I find myself admiring my neighbour who will ride it until she can't ride any longer and who will die on her own terms when she's good and ready to die.

Today I used public transit for the first time in over a month. I was nervous about the prospect of doing this, but it wasn't difficult. The shuttle buses were not exactly overcrowded so it was easy to sit at a safe distance away from other passengers. A flashing light on the front of the bus instructed people to use the middle door for boarding. The drivers must be protected from possible virus carriers, which is sensible enough. I would up with two free rides as I do not have a Presto payment card and there was no machine on the bus to take people's cash for proof of payment. For obvious reasons passengers can't move too close to the driver so fare boxes and

transfers are verboten. So I took my free ride so I could visit my friend SMB who was doing me a favour. SMB had a DVD duplication setup at his work place where he had just had a meeting. We had discussed that I could access his duplication setup. I took advantage of his generous offer and we chatted from a safe distance. This was the first time in over a month that I had been in the same room as one of my friends in the world outside of this building that I live in. It was quite enjoyable but I knew that it could not last for very long a duration. So I took another free ride home and then indulged in an afternoon nap.

The media seems to be in agreement that nearly half of the COVID-19 infected people in Toronto are living in seniors' homes. This includes roughly half of the deaths so far to this date. The dictum of social distancing is not possible in seniors' homes since residents are sleeping in close proximity to each other in addition to sharing rooms. This situation is even worse in shelters for homeless people. And they have to leave the shelters between eight in the morning and four in the afternoon and where can they go? Restaurants are closed...so are libraries... and therefore so are public toilets. And there are prominent people not powerless themselves who see seniors as being necessarily sacrificial for some greater good...these people are old and their quality of life is no longer wonderful so best that they just die off. I think about my parents in their respective last days. My mother wanted to go into a home and my father wouldn't hear of it. She thought having neighbours just might be refreshing or invigorating. My parents never went into a home together. She died four years before he did. When it became clear that he could no longer live by himself, getting my dad into a home was an uphill battle for my brother who was his power of attorney. A week before his death my brother phoned me and asked if I consented to having a do not resuscitate sign present on my dad's bed. I agreed on condition that if he showed signs of coming around that the sign should be removed and confiscated. I think of situations not only current in which the power of attorney doesn't have a choice or the idea of a power of attorney is laughably ridiculous.

Today is a dead ringer for yesterday as well as the previous day. Way too cold for mid-April with the threat of heavy flurries. Of course I can't go out unless I have to. It's a while yet until my next takeout dinner. So it's all about killing time on line. I do notice that people are posting their music and even their films on social media...maybe I should do the same. Or maybe I can't deal with the technology involved. I've never been able to deal with technologies very well. And tonight an annual film or video or media art festival begins... on line. Will the link work? At eight o'clock I shall find out. I associate the idea

of events beginning at a specific time to be so oriented toward either live events, movies or I suppose television. I haven't watched television for a long time. Perhaps that's part of the strangeness I am feeling about having to be in front of my screen for eight o'clock in order to see a festival's opening night programme. Will there be commercials before the film starts so that people can piss or shit or get their dinners out of their systems? Will there be endless speeches thanking the arts funding structures that also tend to serve the same purpose? Pee during the endless acknowledgments as per usual. Will I enjoy the feature length film enough to sit still in a not particularly comfortable chair for feature length duration? Stay tuned, as they say on television. And what is television now? Internet streams have surely affected broadcasting. But I wouldn't know. I look at art and I go to movies. Art is spatial and movies are temporal. They start at specific times. It's been over a month now since I've gone to a movie and it was a bad movie. What if this bad movie turns out to be the last movie I ever saw in a theatre? Perish the thought.

It's Friday...not that the days of the week matter all that much anymore. I do have to recognize Mondays as I am responsible for garbage and recycling in this building. That has been an arrangement for some time now. Last Monday I cheated and didn't wear my mask while doing these chores as my mask doesn't cover my eyes but does effect my sight as I move from downstairs to surface level and then outside. At least the garbage and recycling is much smaller than it was when the bar downstairs was open. And will the bar open again? I am seeing dispatches about bars locked out of their buildings as of April 15th due to non payment of rent. Well, they have been closed for over a month now so they do not have the necessary revenue. The landlords of my building do own their own bar but still the lack of incoming revenue must be hurting. Traffic sounds almost non-existent. The burger restaurant across the street has been closed for several days now. It used to be open for strictly takeout but now there is signage that says closed due to technical problems. This might well be a cover for infected employees who have had to go into quarantine. So far I've been lucky, I think... touch wood et cetera. But there are people who have the COVID-19 without any of the symptoms. They don't know if they are infected or not. It strikes me that the more people who can be tested the better, even though the crowds will be beyond insane.

Today is April eighteenth which in Leap Years such as this one is year date one hundred and nine. This is the birth date of two significant figures in my life one of whom is still alive. It began sunny for a change but then has stared to cloud over which could mean

showers and even random snow flurries. I now have a link to watch art festival movies which I have used once today but my viewing was distracted by having learned last night that FG suddenly died. FG was a poet and writer and musician who I have known for over forty years. The first reports on-line said that FG died from a heart attack but now it seems like it was COVID-19. He was having trouble breathing and then he was gone. But now an autopsy has now confirmed that the cause of FG's death was not COVID-19. The cause of death was a pulmonary embolism which originated in his leg and moved to his lungs. I haven't really moved in the same circles as FG for a long time but I still frequently saw him outside my building having a smoke and we would talk at length. FG was always smart and subtly funny. . FG was about my age.. .he was still at least a few years shy of standard retirement home age. Who found his body and in exactly what condition? FG worked in a facility called The Haven, which provided services and support for elderly homeless men. The shelter system as well as seniors' homes are out of control. But also among younger people so many people are virus-positive and asymptomatic, and then shit happens. It seems like yet another argument for as much testing as possible. I think back to AIDS, when so many people would test positive and then nothing would happen for years and then all the shit hit the fan almost all at once. And it took forever for there the retro-virals to become available and effective. Same with COVID-19... it unfortunately appears to be.

Yesterday when I tried to download JavaScript so that I could watch some live streamed screenings of an annual film festival, I got trapped down a rabbit hole with a strongly suggested need to install Advanced System Repair Pro. I'd get so far in the application form and then it would become apparent that my computer was trying to make me buy something I didn't want to buy. Today I could only take so much of this pressure so I decided I had to buy the damn thing and I did. And even before this moderately costly detour I was seeing pop up after pop up. I'm sure I'm not the only person who feels that their computer is spying on them. So why am I on it all the time? Because during a quarantine there isn't that many other things to do. I didn't anticipate the lockdown to the degree that I should have and thus I didn't stock up on reading material so I go on-line to find things to read. I follow social media soap operas. Stay tuned for who is going to leap into this thread and potentially hijack it et cetera. And I wonder if COVID-19 is like AIDS in that it is a syndrome. Due to immunity suppression the body is now susceptible to infections that it wouldn't be susceptible to otherwise. Was FG's variation of a blood clot related to being COVID positive? Was he? Did the autopsy register his COVID-19 status? And meanwhile I feel surveillance is everywhere... outside and inside.

On this freshly chilly Monday morning I noticed that something other than the COVID-19 epidemic provided the lead headlines on all of the daily newspapers. What could possibly be displacing the epidemic? Well, a mass shooting in rural Nova Scotia. It would have to be a mass shooting or perhaps the death of a major celebrity or some similar earthquake. This mass shooting took twenty-three lives at last count. It happened throughout rural Nova Scotia until the gunman was shot down. The gunman wore an RCMP uniform, oddly or not oddly enough. The gunman was well off....he was some sort of dentist. Neighbours said the man had a drinking problem. The RCMP is not aware of any violent tendencies or extremist politics. At least some of the victims were former friends of the killer's. The killer's donning of the RCMP uniform is disturbing. Was he a frustrated cop who needed to take the law into his own hands? Well, that is the cliché. I have always been disturbed by people who want to be cops when they aren't. I remember in the 2003 blackout there were far too many people playing traffic cop just because the lights weren't working. And in the rest of today's Globe & Mail there are hints that the COVID-19 epidemic might have peaked or will shortly be peaking. But this is a newspaper that wants things, meaning business, to return to normal. The problem is that I wouldn't mind social distancing and restricted travel and other injunctions against pleasures to be no longer necessary.

Today seems even more closed than previous days. Perhaps this is because of the weather as the day's temperature is well below the historical norm. There was a high wind warning that seems to have subsided and there were flurries. I looked out the window and decided that my calendar was off by a month. What is supposed to be April is really March. But the days blur and so do the months. There will be at least another month of shutdown and that is probably far too optimistic. And don't plagues come in waves? I saw an online reference to a canceled General Idea exhibition at the Mitchell-Innes Nash Gallery in New York. General Idea's work was all about memes and viruses, even before HIV/AIDS. The title of the AIDS paintings and poster project was Image Virus, and the virus reference was from William Burroughs. Language is a Virus is a Laurie Anderson song title via Burroughs' novel The Ticket That Exploded. Memes are viruses. They spread as they are contagious. General Idea's poodle motif was a virus. It formed here and there so it was invincible. General Idea's Image Virus project seemed aloof even alien when the AIDS pandemic was in late eighties full swing. It seemed like a public art project divorced from grassroots activism and urgently necessary activist art. The design of the AIDS posters and paintings homaged and parodied Robert Indiana's LOVE. It was so predictable that somebody might think GI were cynically observing that LOVE, the free manifestation of love so emblematic of the sixties, would degenerate into AIDS. I remember when Gran Fury savagely satirized the GI project by

producing a poster that spelled RIOT. The acronym AIDS became a virus about a virus. Two members of General Idea themselves contracted the HIV virus and both died in 1994. And I think of my old friend FG's death by means of a blood clot and I wonder if Coronavirus is, like AIDS, a syndrome. Does the weakened or infected immune system spawn opportunistic illnesses as AIDS did and continues to do?

Again I notice no COVID-19 headlines on the daily papers. There are headlines about the Nova Scotia gunman and there are headlines about the federal government no longer appealing court decisions ruling prison isolation to be inhumane and unconstitutional and more. Was the COVID-19 epidemic a factor in the federal government finally making this sane decision? Is COVID-19 now an assumed factor in the national and international landscape? Will it be a permanent infection that no longer needs to be discussed because it is simply a fact of life? There is talk that Ontario and Toronto have passed the peak of the epidemic but nobody with a modicum of sense is claiming to be out of the woods yet. Many pundits are warning that a second wave of COVID-19 could occur in tandem with the fall and winter flu season. So will it be advisable for people to go outside without masks and mix socially? Will certain summer concerts actually happen? I highly doubt it. And meanwhile the damage is being done in the long care homes and then probably the shelter system. And fools have stupid conspiracy theories about wireless culture being the cause of the epidemic. I can think of nothing more foolish than the idea of Luddites' revenge.

This is my birthday and it feels weird. Not that I've paid that much attention to my birthdays as I've steadily aged and not so gracefully. I haven't done anything special for my birthday for a long time now but maybe today feels especially strange and creepy because I don't have the option of doing anything out of the ordinary. I don't have the option of meeting friends for tea or perhaps stronger beverages. But it's another gray day outside with a forecast calling for mixed precipitation. The calendar is at least one month slow. Probably in the middle of May there will be a heat wave and then summer. Global warming I suppose is the culprit. And COVID-19 is again a part of the landscape and not a headline. IT is being normalized even when there are arguments in favour of opening up the world's economies versus maintaining the lockdown or quarantine because people are still getting sick and there may well be a stronger wave of infections come flu season or even earlier. BM dropped me a birthday note and we gossiped about a veteran Canadian art institution and sudden staff departures and I mentioned

having a huge desire to get the fuck out of Toronto. But that is a fantasy. Am I now too old for fantasies? Will this be my final birthday?