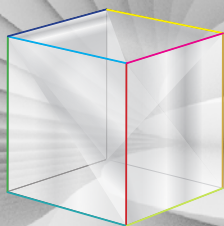


TIME WITHOUT TIME

Life in the time of Coronavirus:
How did you spend your time in isolation?



Belgrade 2020

TIME WITHOUT TIME

**Life in the time of Coronavirus:
How did you spend your time in isolation?**

Belgrade, October, 2020

Publisher:

The Red Cross of Serbia
Simina 19, 11000 Belgrade
Phone/fax: 011/ 26 22 121
e-mail: serbia@redcross.org.rs

For the publisher:

Ljubomir Miladinović

Editors:

Natasa Todorović
Milutin Vračević

Proofreading:

Uros Smiljanić

Cover design:

Petar Andrić

Print:

GrafoIN

Print run: 300

ISBN 978-86-80205-81-6

*This project was funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNFPA.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TIME WITHOUT TIME

Miloš Janković, Gordana Vlajić i Majo Danilović..... 7

COVID-19 VIRUS EPIDEMIC

Nataša Todorović, Brankica Janković 9

1. How did you spend your time in isolation?

Mira Lilić..... 11

2. The Isolation

Helena Himel 15

3. Life in the time of Coronavirus

Iskra Jovanović 19

4. How much is ten (10) Serbian dinars worth in Serbia today?

Miljana Stojiljković..... 21

5. In the middle of nowhere

Petar Brkić..... 25

6. Bye grandma, I am going to Rotterdam

Radmila Manojlović 27

7. Corona, isolation, falling in love

Biljana Benić 29

8. In solitary confinement

Svetozar Nikolić..... 35

9. How did I spend my time in isolation in the time of Coronavirus

Tibor Šipoš 37

10. News for Day X, Month Z, 2020

Stefana Miladinović..... 41

11. Medicus

Ljubica Zlatović..... 47

12. How did you spend your time in isolation?

Jelena Masnikosić..... 49

13. A song in the time of Coronavirus

Miroslava Mira Cvetković 51

14. This is my story

Boško Barjaktarović Kaludranin..... 53

15. Breaking dawn

Slavomir Zelenkapić..... 57

16. How did you spend your time in isolation?	
<i>Ljubica Kostić</i>	61
17. Masks and distance	
<i>Aleksandar V. Pavlović</i>	63
18. Life in the time of Coronavirus	
<i>Slobodan Stanković</i>	67
29. I am thinking	
<i>Milica Bjeletić</i>	69
20. Life in the time of Coronavirus	
<i>Dragan Savić</i>	71
21. There is no doorbell	
<i>Krstina Spasojević</i>	73
22. My dearest	
<i>Mirjana Životić-Vanović</i>	75
23. Ray of sunlight	
<i>Mirjana Antić</i>	77
24. My Serbian family	
<i>Zlata Jovanović</i>	81
25. Thoughts in the time of Coronavirus	
<i>Ljubica Staničić</i>	83
26. The whole world in my room	
<i>Vesna Milanović Simičić</i>	85
27. Inspiration from dullness	
<i>Sava Grujić</i>	91
28. I sincerely admire	
<i>Dragoslav Banić</i>	97
29. How did you spend your time in isolation?	
<i>Mirjana Ranđelović</i>	99
30. My family, my freedom	
<i>Jelena Martinović</i>	101
31. Gone are the days of fear; Goodby Corona;	
I do not want Corona to scare me	
<i>Božica Velousis</i>	103
32. Friendship in the time of Coronavirus	
<i>Vinka Bojković</i>	105
33. Angels in the time of Coronavirus	
<i>Ivanka Novaković</i>	107
34. Jelena and Jana	
<i>Miroslav Zdravković</i>	113

35. How did you spend your time in isolation	
<i>Danica Šmic</i>	115
36. My life in the time of Coronavirus	
<i>Jovanka Dimitrijević</i>	119
37. Strange spring of 2020	
<i>Tadija Janković</i>	125
38. My own song	
<i>Rade Kokić</i>	127
39. The story of a virus	
<i>Preschool institution "The forest fairy"</i>	129

TIME WITHOUT TIME

The contest of the Red Cross of Serbia

At the time after the state of emergency caused by the Coronavirus epidemic, when the Red Cross of Serbia in cooperation with Commissioner for the Protection of Equality announced a contest for the literary work entitled “How did you spend your time in isolation?”, none of the three of us, jury members, hoped that so many works would arrive, because it seemed that the call for competition went quite unnoticed, which was understandable given the situation caused by the pandemic in the whole society.

Now that the contest ended and when we, with all the hard work and not an easy assessment, have the winners of this competition; now we can fully comprehend its significance for our citizens to which the figure of over two hundred submitted works from all over Serbia can best testify. It is evident that the creators of this contest made sure that this action, let us call it that, is successful, as all the other actions the Red Cross of Serbia organizes and implements with its partners, regardless of the objectively insufficient media coverage of this exceptional and great idea around the fact that disease and isolation, in this way, can be overcome and defeated by writing. The diversity of works - both in form and content as well as in scope and structure, and, as the most important we emphasize - the age diversity of those who participated in the contest (from primary schoolchildren to our fellow citizens who entered their ninth decade of life) put the jury in unenviable position. The need for people to overcome fear, loneliness and isolation was sufficient inspiration for the eldest, while

love, compassion, and the desire to help was a sufficient motive for the youngest. With all that and without it being imposed, there was a sense of solidarity; and not only the intergenerational, reasonable solidarity but also general, civilizational, the one that transcends the boundaries of family and nation and becomes, so to speak, universal and planetary. The joint conclusion of the jury was that the oldest and the youngest were the closest and the most devoted to each other in this joint struggle. This is precisely why our unanimous decision on the first five awarded contestants tried to mirror this unity.

Miloš Janković
Gordana Vlajić
Majo Danilović

COVID-19 VIRUS EPIDEMIC

The Covid-19 virus epidemic brought with it global uncertainty, panic and fear. This crisis, especially during the quarantine period, affected the social interaction between people. At the time of the epidemic, it is required to keep physical distance, but maintaining social connections and close dialogue with other people is also vital, as it is important to find the meaning in these changing living conditions. An example of finding the meaning and strengthening resilience is the book “Life in the time of Coronavirus: How did you spend your time in isolation?”, which was created during the days when many were prohibited to leave their residence. The writing was an opportunity for our citizens to describe in a creative way, through a written work or a poem, how they organized their lives in isolation, what activities they carried out, as well as to express their thoughts and feelings during their stay in isolation. The stories and poems in this book are not only an expression of creativity, but they are also the representation of resistance and psychological support to an author as well as to a reader, and the expression of courage. On this occasion, we thank all the participants of this contest, the members of the commission, and we owe special gratitude to the United Nations Population Fund, which supported the contest and the publication of the book with the most successful works.

Nataša Todorović,
The Red Cross of Serbia

There are many fears, from COVID-19 onwards, and a man is only one small human being. The fears must be defeated - overcome, every day. We need to find ways to last and to be free even when there is not much reason for optimism and when that freedom is not the kind we enjoyed yesterday. We learnt a lot or at least we should have learnt during the COVID-19 virus pandemic. The number of the works submitted to the contest we announced made us happy because it seems that we managed to motivate some of our citizens to write, to create and to win. Writing is obviously therapeutic, especially in turbulent times. It is both courage and a special kind of contribution to the culture of memory. There is nothing as effective as a personal story for the salvation from oblivion. And we should age actively and organize life, even when we do not have that many activities available to us. The time of isolation at the beginning of the pandemic was a time of great challenges for some quite ordinary things in life. Our gratitude goes to everyone who participated – they helped both us and many who will read this. We should all find strength and courage and put pen to paper (some for the first time in their lives). Gratitude, of course, also goes to UNFPA which has recognized and respected what we do for years. It is no small thing to have such associates and friends.

Brankica Janković

Life in the time of Coronavirus, How did you spend your time in isolation?

Frequent rains and the cold have passed, that prevented opening of the windows and walking outdoors. The spring days started, still stingy sun lures me out. I have often sat by the window and watched the grass in front of the building where the daisies and dandelions raised their heads high. There was a smell of spring and Easter in the air. Since there are a lot of trees in front, we hear the twittering of sparrows, inviting my canary to answer them with a twit and a song. Clearly, all this evokes beautiful memories of old days. I was enjoying but this daydreaming quickly stopped. The thought crossed my mind, here is an uninvited guest. Usually when guests come, at least they bring flowers, but this uninvited guest brought discomfort and bad thoughts – virus, vicious Corona. I said to myself, “Wait! You heard that there are restrictions around going outside. Think.” I talk to myself and here I am in isolation, patient and obedient. Two-three days passed in organization with the children and that was resolved; then my self-organization began. First I finished a sweater for my granddaughter, then I committed to doing something for myself. I singled out piles of books that I wanted to read but never had the time for. Pure joy. Along the way, I wrote something and scrolled through what was already written in order to finish the preparation for the tenth book, provided there is money for it of course. Because the money I received as government’s assistance, that will go for something else. There is something left to help those who have less than I do. Sometimes I knead something and send it

to my great grandchildren. Some time ago, the older great-grandson who was also in isolation, told me: "You know Miro, those rolls you made were not so good." When I asked why, he replied: "You put too little jam in it." I start every morning with a song and it's nice, because I have another beautiful day ahead of me.

All the cupboards are tidied up as well as everything that was waiting in line for a long time. I have to commend our young neighbors who wholeheartedly helped; we organized smoothly with the agreement. Our building echoed with laughter and questions "If you need anything, just let us know."

I watched the news only in the morning and mourned every deceased person, regardless of where in the world they lived in, color of their skin or their mother tongue, because at this moment everyone runs their fingers through same soil, the same sun shines on us all and everyone has the same color blood. As much as this virus is destructive, it still united us in efforts to help each other. And in the end, I see that quarantine period is shortening, and everything will slowly fall into place. Life is getting back on track and I am just wondering: "Will this friendship and assistance between us endure? Will we hear in passing: "Good morning my neighbor, how are you doing?" I answer: "I do not know, how about you?" I am still looking forward to every greeting as much as to a new flower, of any color. I wholeheartedly ask you to convey gratitude to all the youth, to all the doctors and other dedicated staff as well as to young volunteers and tell them: "One grandmother Mira loves you, and she would like to be able to give health and love to the whole world. It is too bad that my arms are short so I cannot give you all a hug."

This is how I spend my days; I believe I spent them well and usefully. I did a lot for myself by being

around books; I did not feel loneliness even though I live alone. And you, when all this is over, you should find a helping hand so that if you stumble, you have someone to hold on to; someone who will occasionally bring you a flower which I believe you did not receive in a long time. Whisper: "Let's dance the tango of our lives." So much from me, stay healthy; we will meet in a park some time and I will know you by your smile. I just wanted to send you my greetings, to all of you who helped us stay on our feet, and most of you could be our children.

I love you with unwritten songs

I love you with our age,
With unfulfilled dreams
And sometimes with silence
Then our soul speaks,
Quietly inside us yet loudly
Thank you for allowing us
To dream together

And to feel that we are what we were – humans.

Mira Lilić
New Belgrade

Isolation

The Isolation is a garden that introduces you to yourself. For the rare few individuals, it is the imagination beyond the reach of negative thoughts.

- Does that mean that I need to find my garden? It is often the case that it finds you.

- How will I know that it's the real one?

- The "real" one takes you home. To the place where you are the safest. In a hug. Of those who love you.

- Mom, can you tell me what fits in one hug?

- A hug is a suitcase full of little things that remind you of who you are. Everything you carry in your heart fits in a hug.

- Can a hug hurt?

- Luna hugs don't hurt, people do. The ones you could not understand.

- How do people who understand each other find one another?

- Some are still looking for each other. Some never find one another. Only they who know what they want, get what they are looking for. Only those who take care of their garden, water it regularly, feed it - enjoy its benefits.

- And those who never find each other, are they to be blamed for that?

- It is not their fault, Luna, it is their responsibility. Because they chose for themselves never to be found.

- Do you know what you are looking for?

- Of course. Love. Garden.
- Okay. Where will you find it?
- That's why I am looking for answers.
- The thing is that the answers are inside you.

I decided to write a novel, a novel that I will leave to my children one day. A bunch of questions and answers, in case I do not get to tell them everything. In case they find themselves at a difficult turning point in life with doubts. In case they are not sure if they are making the right choice.

I want to leave them a roadmap. A roadmap that could guide them through life.

That is why I named the fictional girl and the main heroine of the novel Luna. Moonlight. So to illuminate all those in times when they need it the most. I talk to her and learn from her. About how to become a better writer and an even better person. I am trying to give her the answers she is looking for. Answers to her (once and if need be) and to all of you.

She asked me when do people give up?

I told her that only those who have nothing to fight for give up. And they do so when they forget all that that makes them who they are. When they lose themselves.

How does one lose oneself?

By stopping to believe.

More and more, the love faded among people and photographs became increasingly receptive. There was a paradox. Alienation among people. I don't want you to be one of them and that's why I'm writing.

Love is everything that cannot fit into these lines. That moment when you close your eyes and daydream, while your hand is in a hand of the one who is ready to daydream with you. The one who is willing to believe in miracles. Because of you and for you. That love is

a sacrifice. A long walk in the snow with his hand in your pocket. And with one warm hug that happens in the moments when he feels your cold body. That love is that look that no one can take away from you, because it lasts. Awake, you dream. Without a word. You are silent, but you hear. Everything that you might never say out loud. To those who know how to love, love is everything. Love is the only right answer – to all questions.

Helena Himel

Ecka

Life in the time of Coronavirus

It's morning. I open my eyes grumpily and glance out the window. The same sight: empty streets through which only the occasional whistling of the wind echoes. If it weren't for the time of Coronavirus, one would think she was dreaming. But that is how our lives changed suddenly, in a couple of days and weeks. Because of one invisible enemy – the virus.

Worldwide, it's the same as here. Empty streets, empty cafes, empty parks and schools. Only the hospitals are overcrowded. At every moment, the number of both infected and deceased is increasing. There is no traffic noise, no sounds from factories. The world fell silent. The deadly virus has silenced us all. We are all inside the houses and no one is allowed to go outside. And maybe it came to us only as a warning, as a warning to all of us. If you are wondering why, there are many examples that could be the answers to that question. Many of the countries are at war today. They are in conflict with each other. They consider each other enemies. Nowadays, young people are preoccupied with social networks. They don't notice their family. Sometimes when we are honest with ourselves, we notice how much we neglect ourselves and our family.

That is why Coronavirus is here with us now, to teach us what true wealth is. When it appeared, no one was buying gold nor expensive cars. Everyone was buying basic necessities, most of all fruits and vegetables. They are vitamin rich and that will protect us from viruses and diseases. That is the true wealth. In our health and in the health of those we hold dear.

Imagine what it is like now for those whose loved ones are lying in beds and how, at any moment, someone might tell them that they may never get up again. That they are gone. Hospitals turned to be places of prayer, much like churches. These are places where one can see more sad looks than anywhere else in the world. The Coronavirus is that what brings us closer to our families, but it also separates us. Why does it separate us? In order to teach us how much a hug after a long time is worth. The value of every moment spent with a loved one. The value of every human contact.

The planet is finally recovering. The Himalayas are visible for the first time in 30 years because there is no longer a haze hanging over it. The pollution is reduced. When we take a closer look: we are in fact the deadly virus of this planet. We are the ones destroying it. Let's stop with that. Let's team up. To end wars. Now we have a common enemy. And we have many others: injustice, hunger, many other dangerous diseases. Maybe we can beat them all. But only united in a common goal.

I know this will pass. One day it certainly will. But the question is whether we will come out of all this as better persons. You know the saying, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Let this be our motto. For us to come out from all this as stronger personalities and better individuals. Let's unite and overcome the enemy. Let us defeat the virus and finally learn what we should be grateful for. Corona might be a deadly virus but it may also be a cure: for our selfishness, for our hypocrisy and lack of compassion.

Iskra Jovanović
Prokuplje

What's the worth of ten (10) Serbian dinars in Serbia today?

The city of Nis. Middle of March 2020. The first week of the state of emergency declared on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

I leave the emergency headquarters of one of the city municipalities repeating in my head the delegated duties for that day and carrying in my hands a form with data on the older people who need assistance. After checking the right address on GPS, I head to my destination and soon arrive on the spot.

I ring the bell at the main front door and wait for someone to come out, however, nothing happens. The doors are left ajar; I open them and read on a small board on the right the names of families and individuals residing in these premises. I slowly walk up the stairs on the left to the first door; an older lady, who called the call center requiring some kind of assistance, should be living there. Without a mistake, I ring the bell and patiently wait for her to come out. However, again, there is no answer. I knock and call her by name. I approach closer to the door and finally hear a light walk around the apartment. Slowly opening the door, an older lady appeared holding a few crumpled banknotes.

She addresses me with a degree of discomfort: "I am sorry child, this granny is deaf and blind. Were you knocking and ringing for a long time?"

Noticing the lady's poor health, I try to introduce myself by speaking loudly while at the same time showing my identification card. I approach a bit

closer (respecting the recommended distance) so as to detect the kind of assistance she needs while patiently explaining that there is no problem due to a short delay.

The older lady can't hear well and almost shouts as she speaks while the thick glass on her spectacles reveal she has problems with her eyesight as well.

She says: "Here is the money, get me two loaves of bread, it will be enough for few days. And one paper. There should be enough money for that much."

"Okay. Tell me what kind of paper?"

I thought it was a plain white paper she wanted so that she could write a letter to someone who's far away and who she misses in this difficult situation which has no clear indication of ending. Someone who would be here instead of me now to help her and give her a warm and encouraging word.

"Toilet paper, one of those rolls."

And she explains where I may find both types of goods.

"How much does this service cost?" she asks anxiously.

"Zero dinars. It won't cost a thing. See you soon."

I leave, I do my shopping, I come back in about ten minutes. All the time on my way back I am troubled with thoughts about how many people there are in Serbia today who count coins for basic necessities. I arrive back at the address and the older lady is already waiting for me impatiently on her doorstep with a smile on her wrinkled face. I carefully hand over the purchased goods and return the change after which we finish the little things around paperwork, that is, records that are part of the daily report for the headquarters. The older lady takes ten (10) dinars from the change and with a shaky hand gives it to me saying: "Here you are for

helping me. I don't have any more to give you. I did not receive my pension yet."

"Absolutely not, I told you our support is free of charge. And you will need this again for groceries."

"Take it, take it. Buy yourself some chocolate."

"Absolutely not, I can't take other people's money."

"Child, take it for good fortune, for the health."

I persistently refuse, but the goodhearted older lady is more determined and she timidly pushes the banknote into my free hand as she slowly pulls back to enter her apartment, waving at me along the way.

Still reeling from everything that just happened I leave the premises and step on the sidewalk holding those ten dinars in my hand. I think about what can be done with that amount of money? In the past few decades, economic opportunities (or rather – mostly missed opportunities) in the field of monetary policy and generally on the market in our country brought about the decrease of Serbian dinar's value day by day. Probably this older lady remembers better times when our national currency had greater value.

It's morning several days later and I reach the checkout counter at a store. I place the selected items on the conveyor belt, a classical morning purchase. The cashier scans and announces the total, meanwhile I open my wallet to pay for the goods. That banknote is staring at me from one of the wallet's compartments - I am haunted by a memory again, as in all the previous days when I opened my wallet. The whole story, already told (written) goes through my head. Within few seconds, as much as it takes to pay and pack, the thought flashes through my mind: "Do I need all of this that I just placed on the conveyor belt, paid for and packed? How many people today will not be able to buy

basic necessities?”

And so I decided not to spend the donated banknote. It is not because its market value is low, but because it will be of great value to me.

It will be a memory of this state of emergency and the many people I had the opportunity to meet in the previous month and a half. It will be a reminder to me that there are many people in this country who are in a difficult health and financial situation, without anyone close who could help them; and a reminder that the government does not pay enough attention to them... or it unknowingly or/and irresponsibly completely forgot some of them, focusing on some less important things, which I will not go into right now since it requires a larger paper.

It will be a warning to me not to spend the money on something I don't need. I hope for you too. It will be a reminder to me that a little to you means a lot to someone else.

Miljana Stojiljković
Niš

In the middle of nowhere

In difficult times of Covid-19,
I wonder where I am,
I am not there,
I am not here,
Not up,
Nor down,
In the middle of nowhere,
Do I exist or not,
In the middle of nowhere,
I am here,
I do not know where I am,
I am nowhere,
In the middle of nowhere

Petar Brkić
Beograd

Bye grandma, I am off to Rotterdam

Bye grandma, I am going to Rotterdam. We escaped. We escaped from Corona and the walls, like birds from a cage, to my grandma's in the countryside. Into freedom.

The morning woke me up sending the sunshine and the birdsong. Dusan, my twin brother is still asleep, as well as my older brothers. Let them sleep a little bit more.

I look around me, in front of me, a green meadow shiny with dew, covered with yellow dandelions, the blue sky with shiny white clouds, like little pillows. What are these colors, how come I haven't seen them before?

Luna is barking cheerfully, she is playing around me and calling me to go to the river; the river that my grandma calls the living river. There are two rivers: the living one in which there are little frogs, crabs and fish, and the other one, which should not be approached, it is not alive, there is nothing in it, it is polluted.

Luna is jumping through water; she is leading me to my grandma's whirlpool; my grandma puts a pump in it to water the garden. In summer, Dusan, me and Luna will swim; oh, it will be so nice when Corona passes, when we are not refugees anymore.

Well that is Grandma's way of making fun, she is happy, she has company in isolation. I'm going on a trip with Bent again in the summer. My dad drives a

road cruiser, huge, it's equipped like a spaceship, and I keep him company. I'll put on my sunglasses, fasten my seat belt, take a selfie and send my grandma a message: "Bye Grandma, I'm off to Rotterdam." And grandma asks: "Where is that Rotterdam of yours? I keep forgetting. Where is your atlas for me to renew geography?" Everything will be fine, when all this is over, when we start school and when everything is as it used to be. I am going to wake up Dusan, Vujica, Jovan and Lazar.

Radmila Manojlović

Arandjelovac

Corona, isolation, falling in love

I live with my daughter, son in law and their son in a two-room apartment in Bezanijska kosa. I will turn 65 in October. Considering that my daughter works as a doctor in the children's ward at the Health Center, and that I am a cancer patient, it was decided at the family meeting that while Corona ravages Belgrade it is best for me to stay in special accommodation. Ruzica, a good friend from my youth, decided to get away with her husband to their cottage in Grocka, letting me use their apartment in Dorcol. I felt a bit rejected, but still the desire to preserve my health was stronger, so I accepted the offer. Frightened and obsessed with the new life situation, I did not pay attention to Ruzica's last words, when we parted at the doorstep, as she left me the keys; the words uttered with her frequent, warm and witty smile: "Oh, this may be an opportunity for you to meet doctor Stanko."

Alone in someone else's apartment, I could not divert my attention away from TV and frightening news from Italy and other countries. It seemed to me that the predicted biblical end was coming. Hearing about the destruction of lungs with Coronavirus affected patients and their struggle on ventilators for every breath, I remembered my grandmother's words that at the end of the world we know, people will fall prostrate on the street and the living will envy the dead due to their miseries. The care for my daughter's health settled me down completely beside the couch so that I did not have the strength to go to the window. My four-year-old grandson, my greatest joy in the recent years, stayed with his parents. I have been a widow for

five years and all my thoughts were focused on my only daughter and her little family.

I get sad every year when spring wakes up and when days get longer and trees spread their hair next to our balcony and some birds sing a song of joy in the glory of the sun; loneliness cries out painfully inside me. While everyone was planning vacations, I found reasons in some material needs around decorating the apartment, only to avoid the explanation of how afraid I am to travel anywhere alone. I was always persistently silent among a large number of people and it was difficult for me to approach strangers. I had the best time with my husband during our September stays in Greece.

During our meetings, walks we had once in ten days, Ruzica carefully persuaded me, so not to hurt me, to find some lonely man my age and share with him at least those annual trips. She talked about her neighbor, a retired doctor who stayed a bachelor, also a yoga instructor and India enthusiast. Although I've never admitted it to her, I gladly listened to her talk about him. But when I read his essay on the Internet on integrative medicine of the future, in which the key word instead of "cure" will be "love", doctor Stanko completely won me over. My common sense told me: "He is not for you, you are such an ordinary woman, you've been focused all your life on practical work, an engineer by profession, thrown into this world to help people live off their work; doomed to overcome constant lack of money and the feeling of loneliness and misunderstanding by using your skills and efforts." My husband worked in a shipyard as a ship fitter and he was retired early due to the illness. India is so far away from me.

"What are you doing? Did you manage? You sound so sad. How is your family? Well, why don't you visit the neighbor, doctor Stanko? At least you can go to the

store and maybe there is no one to bring him a loaf of bread. You have books about India on the shelf, they are wonderful, read them and think of Stanko. Well, at least you have never been a coward.” – Ruzica encouraged me in a telephone conversation.

Yes. I concluded myself that it is no longer possible to live in fear and melancholy. My daughter sent me some fabric from home, so I started to hand sew the masks. I slowly pierced a needle through the fabric and pulled it out, stitch by stitch. My mind slowly unraveled and the decision was made, tomorrow I will knock on the doctor's doors.

- “Good morning, I am Vera, your new and, hopefully, temporary neighbor from the apartment above. Ruzica talked about you and asked me to check how you are and whether you need any assistance with shopping considering that I am not old enough for complete isolation.” – I said quickly, ashamed to look him in the eyes. A short, resolute, not quite gray but bald man stood in front of me at the door.

-”Ma’am, that’s nice of you, you can buy a bread for me, yogurt and a newspaper “Blic”.

- “Okay” - happy that my offer was accepted, I almost ran down the stairs, letting the blush penetrate the already hot skin of my cheek.

So every day, at nine o’clock, I rang the doorbell of Dr. Stanko. Knowing that he is a vegetarian, sometimes I would surprise him by buying some nice vegetables, without him ordering it. My daughter mostly gave advice to the parents of children suffering from common seasonal diseases over the phone from the office, so constant care for her health no longer preoccupied me. I started reading literary works about India, travelogues, esoteric books, a book about Ayurveda. In shops, I

lingered next to the shelves with exotic spices and I could hardly retain myself from buying them, at least the ones I've heard about. About ten days later, I dared to offer my new acquaintance risotto with curry and a lot of vegetables, I made based on a recipe downloaded from the Internet. The man was touched and I shouted ecstatically: "Ah, that magical India. I sincerely hope that the hospitality of the country and even more so, its numerous, honest souls will drive Corona out of it." Being still afraid to take a better look at his face, I could not even notice his mocking expression, if there was one. Sometimes we talked about a drought and I was not surprised by the doctor's frequent moaning about good harvest and already sprouted plants. I desperately started to wish for a real spring shower; a shower that will wash deserted streets and revive the silent birds but that will also calm my reemerged, long-suppressed enthusiasm. In my mind, I saw a rain curtain, carried by the wind, pouring down the lush vegetation of Indian forests. Life and destruction at the same time. It takes time for June monsoon to arrive.

I baked cookies every day; vanilla cookies, stuffed apples with walnuts, syrup biscuits, Indian almond balls, chikki, gulab jamun.

"Mom, this isolation works wonders on you, you have never made so many good and unusual cookies. Little Nikola is drowning in them and every day he is waiting impatiently for his father to take a new batch of cookies from you." Encouraged, I used to make even two different batches per day. I would hand out cookies to Stanko in a green porcelain bowl without waiting for any comment. The empty bowl he returned

to me and his “thank you very much” were joy enough for me. On the twentieth day, I found a red rose and chocolate in a bowl. “Oh, you shouldn’t have,” I just whispered and it was no surprise to me he had them in his apartment. Although I wanted him to invite me in, I believe I discouraged him by going up the stairs quickly. He once asked me to buy half a kilo of coffee, which worried me a little as I knew he only drank tea, but I ignored it, happy that there is still hope for a real encounter and true acquaintance.

It has been announced that older people can go for a walk during curfew. A few days have passed. After 6 pm, there must have been a complete silence in the apartment. Ready for a walk I listened to the doorbell, my hair all freshly combed, shivering like a leaf. Once my son in law woke me up from fantasizing and shattered my illusion of Stanko’s expected arrival. And one Wednesday, finally the bell. I opened the door. Stanko stood at the door wearing sweat suit and a light jacket, holding a bouquet of colorful tulips.

“Mrs. Vera, this is for you. But let me tell you right away, I’m not Stanko, I am Velibor, his cousin. Stanko is on his raft on the river Sava, and my family relocated me to his apartment since my son works in the Clinic for Infectious Diseases and I had a heart attack this fall. I’m not 65 neither, I’ll be 65 in December. I didn’t want to tell you this earlier because I liked your attention and I wanted to see you and hear you every morning. I apologize. Sometimes I went shopping myself, mostly some burgers or meat and I was afraid that you might discover my scam too soon. I am a wood turner by profession and until this crisis I worked in Krusik in Valjevo. When my wife died and as I was retired, I sold my house and a small estate in Mionica and moved

to Belgrade with my son. I miss my old hometown in which fruit trees are now blooming. If you can forgive me, come with me, tonight, for a walk in this area. “

You think I was disappointed? No, on the contrary. Something in me completely calmed down and unfolded; some warm feelings overwhelmed me and it seemed to me that I came home after a long journey. India is far away from me. I will wait for heavy May showers on the streets of Belgrade with Velibor under umbrellas. Nirvana is also possible in the spa Vrujci, after Corona.

Biljana Benić
Apatin

In solitary confinement

Morning
I'm walking through the apartment
I will need my legs
After this
if...
I look out the window
Masks are walking
Beneath some on them it peeks
A virus
Keep your distance
"Man is wolf
to man"
I turn on TV
Corona
I turn on the computer
Masks
Someone is knocking on the door
Through peephole I see
Corona
What do you want?
"I want in"
I turn the key

Once again
The virus says:
“You don’t know
what true love is”
And rushes to find someone
Who knows
The beast
Without a shame it took the name
of Sun’s corona

Svetozar Nikolić
Smederevo

How I spent my time in isolation in the time of Coronavirus

As a law graduate, I worked in the civil service for two decades, after which I worked as a lawyer in my hometown, Becej, for two decades. Throughout my career, I was surrounded by people. Since I retired 10 years ago, I tried to keep a large circle of friends with whom I meet regularly, at least once a week. In addition, I live with my family, my son and wife. That way, I didn't feel like I was living alone or separated from the world. In addition to my profession, and since my early childhood, I was actively involved in painting. I also like technical stuff. I like to solve every day technical problems the most, so I also hang out with innovators with whom I participate in exhibitions, as I too have many new ideas myself.

In this way, the isolation in the time of Coronavirus did not catch me in a lazy state nor in the boring retirement days. Even later on, in a way, I did not suffer mentally from confinement. Some technical issues prevented me from doing certain things, but I became active focusing on work I could do in isolation. I had such activities and ideas in abundance which seemed to be waiting for my isolation to get their turn. But at one point, however, I felt greatly limited. Most of my time, in fact, is filled with my painting. As the winter passed, I was expecting nice and warmer weather so that I could get out in nature and paint. I need nature, although I don't try to copy nature as a photographer might do, but I need to be in a living environment, to get inspiration for my painting, to create something

new.

A miracle happened. In these moments of crisis, a friend of mine gave me a dozen painting reproductions of Milan Konjovic, a famous artist from Sombor.

Milan Konjović meant a lot to me in my painting career. Often I say: "If it weren't for Konjović, I probably wouldn't be painting today." Back in elementary school, I saw his works at an exhibition. I was fascinated by his bright colors, thick layers of paint and especially bold and free strokes, so I concluded that if we were allowed to paint like this and if such a work is considered to be art or called painting, then I will also start to paint. From that moment on, I try to achieve his freedom and courage in my paintings, as well as to pick up that energy that radiates from his works. I experienced that such an attempt is not an easy task at all, but it is worth working on it because that keeps me on top of all happenings.

The gifted reproductions of Konjovic paintings immediately gave me an idea to paint a series of works in my studio inspired by them and I felt no need to go out into nature. Paintings done by Konjovic are living objects; to me they are part of nature as Konjovic was inspired by nature. He did not copy nature; he created as nature does; he brought something new to nature. Along the way, I was able to analyze and study his paintings, particularly how to achieve those elements that fascinated me in his paintings.

In this isolation the idea popped into my head to arrange a small exhibition, when the conditions are right, from the paintings I created in this period. In any case, I would organize the exhibition in honor of Milan Konjovic. The reason for such an exhibition could be the thirty-fifth anniversary of the creation of his portrait, which I painted as the only painter to whom Milan Konjović posed.

I can say that for me personally, the isolation in the time of Coronavirus was too short, and by the time I could raise my head from all my activities, I was already able to go out into nature again.

The one thing I missed was the socialization and direct contact with friends. We tried to overcome this problem at least with telephone calls. I realized how much even one phone call means to me and to the others in this situation.

I realized that all of my friends handled this period of isolation differently. I came to the conclusion that it was easier for those who were active; they are always doing something and no state of emergency can stop them. I think that creative work, when we create something new, keeps a person mentally balanced the most. You should never passively wait for the end of an emergency situation, but you should always focus on how to materialize your next ideas within the given possibilities.

Tibor Šipoš
Bečej

News for Day X, Month Z, 2020 (days before the day after Corona)

Moving from east to west, conditioned by Earth's rotation, in all places daily news begin as follows:

“Good afternoon, dear viewers. My name is YY, and you are watching the news for Day X, Month Z, 2020. Stay with us and watch the latest news on:

- Corona crisis for Day X, Month Z,
- where is the beginning of the end of the crisis caused by COVID-19,
- proposals for economic measures to mitigate the effects of the crisis,
- yesterday's recorded shortages (someone from VIPs)
- scientists in the YZY institute one step away from the vaccine.” A jingle.

See also in the news:

- Trump's new tweet stirred up the northern hemisphere – North Korea provokes again
- Again, the EU screwed someone, ops sorry, betrayed expectations

First report.

Speaker.

Second report.

Our guest, epidemiologist...”

And so, day by day, with more or less the same news, familiar images follow, like déjà vu and we are suddenly brought back from the hibernation to the reality by the inclusion of celebrities, in the twentieth

minute or so, normally via a video call, they share their experience of self-isolation and encourage us to endure. Culture news meanwhile report a new online premiere or a virtual tour and then sports news open with another salvo of hatred directed at football players, supplemented with a new post by a tennis player and end with the Belarussian football league. Until the weather forecast starts, the TV's been muted for a long time because who even needs to know about external weather conditions? If it weren't for the news on Easter (twice this year in seven days), I would have thought that the theory of time understood as the eternal return of the same and that Nietzsche's theory of cyclical time, are empirically proven. Well, why now in these difficult times? Let philosophers handle this, I will deal with the profane.

There are many predictions but most of them say that the world will not be the same after Coronavirus. I don't want to go into nor think about conspiracy theories. But in these days when the time is given to us, and when I say this I mean time freed from former everyday life, a thought "All we need to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us" comes to mind. A thought that was stuck to my pillow for a long time. Of course, even without Corona, it should be *spiritus movens*, but the reexamination in "normal life" occurs like Halley's Comet or it appears in a period of drastic life difficulties. Today, the frequency is equal to the number of sunrises, and if we remember where, when and to whom, and on what occasion, Gandalf said that, then it is clear to you why Tolkien motivates me every day to fulfil my day. Today I decided to be a journalist, but also an editor and no less than editor-in-chief.

My news for Day X, Month Z, 2020.

Good morning, world (choose a host according to your sensibility)

Dear viewer, spring chose this year's mid-April to prove its presence. If you missed the flowering of willow, cherry, sour cherry or plum and if you do not have a view on these honey plants from your balconies and windows, let's see the images from around the world (here it is up to you to revive your memories). With these images we bring you the latest news from Cologne, which beekeepers will rejoice in the most. To date, the collective intelligence of the insects, the intelligence of the swarm, the self-organization and the wisdom of the crowd were indisputable. A new study from the University of Cologne proves that insects can perform numerical cognition tasks, that is, they have the cognitive abilities to perform numerosity estimation, allowing them to solve simple mathematical tasks. Professor of zoology, Marin Paul Nawrot and his fellow researcher at the department, demonstrated these abilities in a computer model, inspired by honeybees. Experiments showed that insects such as honeybees can actually count up to a certain number of objects. For example, the bee recognized that six diamonds are more than four circles.

So, bees are mathematicians and with joint efforts beekeepers can collect larger amounts of honey. In addition to insects, spiders also contribute to our civilization. Although people often confuse them with insects, this type of arthropod deserves our attention again. The researchers at the University of Queensland designed a novel mini protein from tarantula venom that could be an alternative to opioid pain killers. These molecules could replace previous opioids, which often cause side effects such as nausea and addiction. The researchers from the Institute of Molecular Bioscience say that these findings could potentially lead to an alternative method of treating pain without side effects, which would be a new solution for people seeking

chronic pain relief.

Depending on the size, but also the species, these creatures can trigger hysterical reactions or soften us. In any case, rodents continue to make a huge contribution to scientific research and they seem to have a good time. This time, they did not chew on computer cables, but participated in an experiment equal to artificial intelligence, which managed to decode the facial expressions of mice.

Nearly 150 years ago, Darwin found that facial expressions in animals could provide a window into their emotions, as they do in humans. But researchers have only recently gained the tools and genetic techniques to reliably capture and analyze facial movements and investigate how emotions arise in the brain. Scientists discovered neural circuits whose activity is associated with certain emotions, using a machine learning algorithm to decipher the (seemingly inscrutable) facial expressions of laboratory mice. This study could be an important first step in understanding some of the mysterious aspects of emotions and how they manifest in the brain, the Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California informs us. And we believe that the fellow mice celebrated a successful mission with a nasal greeting and a well-deserved piece of cheese.

I believe that this exciting news shook you, that these creatures won your respect, and before we go to the weather forecast, we go live to Venice where a large number of dolphins are preparing to start a big event, in front of the audience on the surrounding balconies. These extraordinary creatures seem to have the world championship in sea biathlon in urban conditions. We remind you that organization of this championship was uncertain but the leaders of the organization, due to an unexpected change in conditions, made a historic decision - now or never, with the support of the White

Wizard!

Dolphins around the world came to this Italian city in the past few days and now everything is ready for the spectacle to begin. We believe that the citizens of Venice will record with their cameras the most interesting jumps and leaps over Venetian bridges, as well as the chase through the canals.

Another bit of news from Venice has just arrived at our editorial office, and it concerns the Venice Film Festival. According to the spokesperson, preparations for the event which will be held from 2 to 12 September are underway and the possibility that the Festival could go digital is ruled out. "The famous MOSTRA cannot be replaced by an online event." – the spokesperson emphasized adding that there is a possibility of using technology for some initiatives, but not for the entirety of the event, and that it's too early for this to be decided. We would say that despite the trends and modern technological possibilities, the festival tradition and atmosphere could not be replaced by virtual reality. New technologies for the film industry stop at special effects in cinematography.

And finally, the forecast says #stayhome. Pelargoniums and Impatiens have all the conditions for development. It is up to you to enjoy their blossoming on the terrace. We wish you a pleasant stay indoors. Goodbye."

Here, there's the news without Corona, but believe me, it was a serious challenge to find them.

Tomorrow a new day a new #challenge

P.S. The tarantula is from China

Stefana Miladinović

Beograd

Medicus

Medicus is a hero
even when he gathered herbs,
made balms,
looked for causes,
for poison-antidote.
He was a hero focused on the experiment
while the hourglass was running
We seek from him:
Breath, rhythmic heart, pulse;
We seek limbs,
Let him attach them even with his third hand,
we ask him to understand the natal condition,
and the crying of children
and the debauchery of boys, confusion of girls
We seek for a century for mother and father,
and for their mothers and fathers,
we ask from him to preserve our bright eyes
and our clear head.
Medicus is a hero,
he set off with his oath
and is still on that path.
Winner or loser –the medal goes to him.

Ljubica Zlatović
Smederevo

Life in the time of Coronavirus: How did you spend your time in isolation?

Last night I woke up at three o'clock. I don't know? This has happened repeatedly, several times. An unpleasant feeling of fear and uncertainty follows the awakening.

Memories of waking up for shopping, when darkness, silence and queues in front of the store seem unreal, frightening. Like a horror movie! A meter or two away from each other, we stand disciplined and resemble the cruel days of the Second World War. You forget what you need to buy, either out of embarrassment, fear or the guard standing in front of the entrance who strictly, as the greatest authority, scans everyone with a word of warning. Of course, you can't shop without a mask and gloves.

The older citizens, people who have already been punished for not being able to leave their homes, don't they deserve to sleep peacefully until dawn. There is probably a therapy which makes the awakening difficult? They could also do their shopping at seven o'clock, when they could calmly take their medicine and head to the store.

I can't say anything nice about this decision. And as a cherry on top of the cake, the minister announces on television that this leaves some time for the shopping center to be disinfected after the pensioners?! From what? Weren't we "protected" in our apartments, how are we supposed to be dangerous?

The saddest thing is that we did not feel spring, the smell of flowers and grass, the sun that gives strength, vitality, life. How are we supposed to live? Are we meant

to live?

We gave all the love, strength and years to our children and the country. I understand a disease that is cruel and that can destroy the older population, but respect, understanding and our need to breathe some air, the right to still feel alive!

When I first went out during the permitted time, I was insecure and unhappy. And it was not only me, but all my peers who were walking slowly, who were running away from each other so as to keep safe distance. Not to mention the damaged health during quarantine because the bloodstream, the skeletal system, nothing worked. And what about medical checks that were necessary?

Now I look forward to the smell of flowers, the cherry blossom branches, the blue sky, the view on the river and the calm flow of the water. And I will not allow to anyone to take away my right to live the rest of my life as a free man. The disease will pass, and what about the human dignity that had been defeated!?

Jelena Masnikosić

Belgrade

**A song in the time of Coronavirus
(with verses by Branko Miljkovic)**

I am not afraid of you,
of you who light the fire and feed the days with it,
like a predatory crow.

I know how to manage

and to the infinity of my being I vanish.
Who are you “a hero” from a hidden place,
To commit crimes so dishonestly and not at all
chivalrously?

Did you have to strike on grandparents,
written off, weak and feeble?

And I am one of them.

I will clear my hearing with my silence,
with a gentle song theme, with an unfulfilled dream.

The dream will not suffer because of you,
nor will my imagination be silenced.

I will find a string of gold at the bottom of my heart –
“I will walk towards myself as towards my goal.”

A bird full of dawn wakes me up,
spring washes the face and opens the windows,
You did not manage to do evil to the water,
nor to close the way to the “innocent swallow”,
to a stork.

I don't want to listen to your storm.
I will swim in the spirit - with the current.

I defend myself from you with Branko,
 "I will not give this sun in my eyes"
with Vasko, with all the poets who say
 Life is a song and so it defies death,
I do not agree to shut myself up in fear, in a cave;
 "I will walk towards myself as towards the goal."

Miroslava Mira Cvetković
Smederevo

This is my story

He spoke to her in odes, she addressed him with smiles, touches and kisses. Their love spread the waves of silence swaying through the sighs. Needless to say, it was love. No - that was something more, something like a blend of waves and heat that grips the kisses of the coast. The cry of laughter and the beauty of sighs. It was the love of speech and unspeaking, the love of two languages - Serbian and the silent. It was the love of a mute girl Milica and a beautiful well-mannered young man - Milan, paved with happy emotions on the verge of tears and moans. Something extraterrestrial, heavenly.

There was not much passion or angry touching in their kisses. Just light patting, as if not to ignite the fire, and to hurt the beloved being. It looked more like kissing, like the scents that are inhaled, the cry of happiness. As they walked through the Newlyweds' Square, admiration, sighs and trembling echoed. She was tall and thin, swaying her slender body as the breeze moves young raspberry branches. Her hair was spilled with the colors of the stars illuminated by the sun while the wisps of hair fluttered hiding the edges of the lips stretched into a smile. Her silent cries were complemented by the joyful cooing of doves, arms stretched for a hug and then lowered to her hips. Some said - she is a fairy lady - while the others hesitated in disbelief. However, all of them gave her looks - some passionate, mostly young men, and some sarcastic and envious, mostly the better halves.

Milan loved Milica, ah - what does it mean to say he loved her? He couldn't imagine life without her. His very influential parents initially did not support the relationship, but as time passed, and as they got to know the angel in the form of a virgin, they relented. They loved her as if she were their daughter. Their only son had an open path for happy celestial voyages, the ones obtained only from holiness. The handsome young man, always in sportswear, looked impressive. Every girl was breathless at the sight of a handsome blue-eyed guy with beautiful brown hair slightly down his shoulders. Milan had a master's degree in informatics; he was successful and very rich for his age. He did not ask his parents for money, but created it himself with his ability.

Milica's parents lived and worked in Italy. Milica was also born there. In the city of love where once upon a time Romeo and Juliet laid the foundations of SACRIFICE FOR LOVE. Milan escorted her to the airport in Belgrade. She had to go to Italy because her mother was ill. Her father briefly explained to her in a message that it was a mild stroke, that it was not urgent for her to come and that everything will be fine. However, Milica was so attached to her mother that she simply had to come and visit her. She had to make sure that her mother was well, that her life was not in danger.

Two weeks later, Milan was sitting in front of the house on a wooden bench which his father made with so much love so that he and his dear Jovana could sit and every day greet passers-by they knew. An old custom from Vojvodina. He held the letter in his hand, half crumpled by his trembling fingers and half wet by the tears that dripped like autumn rain, quietly and incessantly.

Minutes, hours passed, and his stillness, mixed with numbness in his legs and arms, destroyed him.

Stanko, his father, appeared at the door of the yard, staring at his only son. He approached him and saw a scene that he will remember for the rest of his life. His son, a handsome and stout young man – in an instant there was an emptiness that turned him into a victim of love. He took a wet letter from his hand, a letter soaked in tears and began to read to the end of the sentence which was so deadly, difficult, horrible ...

MILICA DIED FROM CORONAVIRUS

Boško Barjaktarović Kaludranin
Zlatibor - Vlaovina

Breaking dawn

I'm thinking now where I will arrive tomorrow at the
breaking dawn

What awaits me after this night uncertain of Corona
Perhaps her village will encourage me
Varda...

Black mountains

Or the path of remembrance to remote Arsici...

Local beauties lure

It takes the whole night to reach there...

To see my beloved one somewhere

Bozman is close...

Was her grave moved there

Up on the hill next to her mother and father...

I did not want that twist

Come back, my beloved one...

Until when do we need to stagger through the
wilderness

I went to meet you...

You escaped from me through death

I hurry uphill...

Years go by and heavy steps follow

Tired shoulders carry the burden of old age,

I'm running from hell,

Will Corona reach me...

High flames, their licking tongues

Death spreads from a prison ...
Where will I arrive at our breaking dawn
On Bozman or in Bosnia...
Soon I will have no dilemmas
Varda frowns ...
The mountains are rising ...
The memories don't scare me
The memory path is getting longer ...
The nights of this plague, Corona, are silent
Three graves turn into one by a miracle ...
In a dream, anything is possible
What happens not in reality
Bozman is close so I can visit Visnja, the ban does not
allow that,
The imagination surpasses the road,
Stay at home, they ordered so...
Break the measures and indulge yourself in a song
That is what remains for the old poet ...
To visit the deeply mourned grave
The breaking dawn is waiting for me...
I will surrender to it...
To a reality instead of a dream,
You can't forbid me to do that ...
You will not take away my song and my dream,
Corona will pass...
The hope and I, we are not unreasonable and
stubborn.
The sun shines on Varda and the Black Mountains ...
The dawn awakens everything again
An ascended cemetery on the hill ...
Will it meet me as it always does,

Through memories I arrived...
The next morning shines over Arsici,
My beloved travels with me...
Behind us Varda remained proud and far away
For her and me ...
I hope I'll have a better dream the following night
The command does not apply to him nor my personal
prison offense
The memories will revive Her again...
It will surely happen,
For my spirit to strengthen in difficult times ...
The break of day comes with breaking dawn.

Slavomir Zelenkapić
Kragujevac

Life in the time of Coronavirus

How did you spend your time in isolation?

Cosmic forces have launched a terrible plague on the human species, Coronavirus. The whole world is imprisoned in quarantines, in the prisons of their own homes. Social communications were interrupted. Shadow rulers, thinking that the Satanists had finished their work, alienated people from each other. People accepted the terrible quarantine in silence; the news reported on death cases in all the countries of the world.

Two people who once knew each other met again, got to know each other, got to know themselves again. A desire from the youth. They experienced each other in the right way, like two brilliant minds striving for each other in a desire to remain eternally united with their pure souls, freed from physical of the youth.

They found themselves like two halved apples, after many years to be one of God's apples again. God's fruit from the Garden of Eden unspoiled by the first sin of Eve and Adam, they shine as the unique creation of God. Corona surprised the whole world; it brought terrible death to someone and it brought me a universe of happiness.

The most beautiful world of love. Because the most beautiful places you can be in the time of the Coronavirus are in someone's thoughts, prayers and heart.

Ljubica Kostić
Beograd

Masks and distance

Their village does not recall two locals being stuck in the hospital on the same days. You don't go there just like that, but only when it comes to the crunch, when things go south or when something snaps inside a person. By that time, almost all pharmaceutical possibilities for therapeutic treatment are exhausted and there is no other way out but to go to the hospital for general service and repair, under a surgical knife and professional medical care.

Prior to that, all sorts of traditional medicines and methods are most often used. In the early days, when it was a critical situation, people went to neighboring village to see certain grandma Pirika, so that she could potentially heal a patient with her abracadabra method. A patient would wear a hat and the sorceress would chant around him holding a bundle with a dried bat's tail. Today there is no grandma Pirika but many products of domestic traditional medicine are in use.

Firstly, on the eve of Vrbica, uncle Aleksa, who entered the eight decade of his life, was taken to hospital in Vrbas. After the Easter holiday, the godfather Peter, who was just in the midst of his sixth decade of earthly existence, was rushed to Novi Sad hospital. He was the godfather of my good friend from the village, so I called him godfather too.

Uncle has multiple health problems that correspond with his age: kidneys, sciatica, high blood pressure, prostate, rheumatism, sclerosis, heart, hemorrhoids... For several days his wife was giving him acacia honey;

she was smearing his chest with goose grease, treated him with chamomile and nettle and served him lukewarm goat milk. Uncle wore long pants, drank a teaspoon of olive oil, drank two glasses of blackberry wine, soaked his forehead with komovica brandy wraps and sweated under the temperature. His daughter brought him buckwheat flour and pillows stuffed with buckwheat, and they got their supplied of reddish brine from the neighborhood. The whole house smelled of Sumadija tea, and less often of yarrow or rosehips. The family was relieved when a hospital test showed that the uncle tested negative for the dangerous COVID-19 virus.

Two years ago, godfather Pera had a light stroke in his own house and that was a blessing in disguise because his wife and sons immediately called the ambulance service, which then took care of him and took him to the hospital. Now, other symptoms suddenly appeared: body temperature of 39 degrees, a light sore throat and cough ... The family wondered if he had caught Coronavirus in Backa Topola, where he was employed? For a couple of days, he took garlic cloves and diluted apple vinegar, wore thick woolen socks and had lunch of boiled sauerkraut with horse meat. In the evening, he drank a large glass of mulled wine and steamed his feet in hot water in which a few leaves of broadleaf plantain were dipped and a spoonful of sea salt was added. The sons brought whey, and the woman cooked sherbet with cinnamon and propolis. Godfather Pera had a family that stood out with honesty, loyalty and value. When they heard the whistling from the patient's lungs, the alarm went off and they took him directly to Novi Sad, to the hospital's triage center. Although the first test was negative for the virus, he remained in the hospital due to severe bacterial infection.

The whole village talks and speculates about the

fate of its locals, estimating that they will be kept and treated in the hospital, probably until St. George's Day. Both diagnoses are critical, especially at a time when the deadly virus is circulating, so people weigh the risks, divided into skeptics and optimists. The information is scarce, unreliable and approximate. One thing is for sure: due to the declared epidemic of Covid-19, any visits to hospitals, let alone patients, are prohibited.

Not even the closest members can access the hospital, and they are aware that this ban will last surely until the end of the summer. At the very entrance to the hospital circle, they handed over, winking, chocolates, citrus fruits and coffee for the medical staff in order to appease them to look for their patients twice as hard.

And how it is for our patients, I can only guess. The mobile ones raise the green blinds and watch from high windows in vain as only the white coats pass by. Employees wear gloves, their faces are covered with masks and some with visors; and when moving around, they make a distance between themselves, a reasonable distance, without grouping... Immobile patients are waiting with discipline to stand on their own two feet, eager to go home in the arms of their loved ones.

Driving through the village, on my way to Subotica, I stopped by the godfather's house and found his older son on the doorstep, ready for the work at the stables. I put on the mask and took a three-step distance, then inquired about the patient. I did not receive specific answers about my Peter's condition nor reliable information about the fate of the success of his treatment and recovery. I took a few thousand out of my pocket and gave it to the boy for him to have it for this week, in case he goes back for his father and brings him home. I leave with greetings and good wishes, in the hope of future good and encouraging news about Peter. This gesture of mine means a lot, because the family is

already fed up with declarative oaths of sincere hopes and wishes for the health of their dear Peter made by all those close and distant who are curious.

I was still a little apprehensive, but I drive my Fabia in the fourth gear, then change it to the fifth, to drive away the hidden care for the godfather. Already Subotica?!

Aleksandar V. Pavlović
Bečej

Life in the time of Coronavirus

As a person with a disability, very early on I realized that I have to spend more time and work in order to achieve at least something. Being accustomed to constant struggle and adjustment, the life in the time of Coronavirus changed my usual rhythm, but it was not hard for me. I was not going out on the town; there were no visits to favorite places and business meetings but I continued to communicate with friends and associates by phone, e-mail and text messages. I also spent a lot of time with radio and television, trying to watch shows of various genres, from informative to cultural and educational shows, and musical. I fulfilled my time with books and magazines and there were other contents as well. I discovered several interesting groups on Facebook, which I joined. I regularly collected information for the Smederevo Red Cross Electronic Bulletin, which I have been publishing monthly for more than ten years; this resulted in it being published in both March and April. Having a backyard I was able to walk and to be outdoors in the fresh air when the weather was nice. I could not use the Home Help service in conditions when public transport wasn't working, but my family helped me meet my basic needs. In moments of mental crisis, I remembered that there are people who find it much harder than I do. Health workers make superhuman efforts, fighting for every human being, and volunteers in the field work extremely hard to help others. Members of the Army and the police, as well as salesmen, drivers, journalists and others, do important work to make life easier

for us. We were only expected to stay at home and comply with the prescribed measures, and members of numerous professions risked their lives for the sake of all of us. As a person with chronic diseases, I tried to adapt to the circumstances as they changed, convinced that we can only come out of this crisis if we follow the recommendations of experts and the measures of the competent authorities. Every crisis, regardless of its characteristics, intensity and duration, requires all of us to act strongly, decisively and thoughtfully. The great potential, ability, creativity, kindness and humanity of our citizens is most commonly expressed in times of crisis.

Slobodan Stanković
Smederevo

I am thinking

Early this morning, April 11, 2020, the sun caressed my ears with rays and woke me up.

Nice way to wake up, you might say. Today there are no classes delivered via TV. It is Saturday, but not just any ordinary Saturday, it is Lazarus' Saturday. Popularly known as Vrbica. In crisis situations like these, we must adhere to the recommended measures. Many things are forbidden during isolation, but some possibilities are being created as well. For example, to be at home with our families. In all previous years, our mother used to take us to church on this day; she would buy bells for us and attach them around our necks. We played in the church park, picked flowers and young willow twigs from which we made wreaths and put them on our heads. The park was full of children and the cheers came from all directions. Then we go to grandma's and grandpa's for lunch. Grandma always gives us a gift; we are looking forward to it. Vrbica is the day of children's joy, but this year because of Corona it is the quietest holiday. The great Easter holidays begin with this day. The most common question these days is how we will survive in quarantine. We will endure, we are with our family. Isn't that the essence of these holidays? Grandparents are not with us, but they will be soon. We have to save them now. Soon I will enjoy my grandma's cookies. This is what this morning sun is telling me. It made a promise and I believe it. It's already eight o'clock p.m. Something interrupted my

thinking. Those are the applauses that reach into my room. They are dedicated to all health workers who are saving someone's lives at this moment.

Tears always run down my cheeks and that brings me back to reality. They remind me that Corona is still there and that we have to stay at home.

Milica Bjeletić
Prokuplje

Life in the time of Coronavirus

Clomp, clomp, clomp, the echo of men's, patent black leather, very expensive shoes can be heard. Walking lightly down the road, an older gray haired gentleman pauses for a moment, adjusts his mask and then continues. After more than six weeks spent in house isolation, he went for a walk again, down the street dear to him. A new, unknown disease ravages the world; they say: "Older people are at highest risk!" Because of that, he had to be isolated in his apartment, on the fifth floor of a building. Alone, with neither a dog nor a cat, only with a TV set to keeps him company. But it's just a machine that transmits the image and sound; you cannot talk to it, nor can you argue with it. TV tells its story and you tell yours. And this goes on for days. Sometimes some young people stop by, bring the ordered supplies and that's it. You can't talk to them, only a word or two while they leave the goods and then they rush into new ventures. He remains alone with his sorrow and his thoughts until a new encounter. Finally, he has free time to take a walk, alone again, without socializing or contacting other people. There, at the very beginning of "his" street, where he spent the best years of his life, he stops. He looks left and right, searching for details that revive memories of his life companion; a companion which is gone. Seven long years passed, just two weeks ago, and he didn't even go to her grave. "Force majeure, she will understand! As soon as this is over, I will visit her grave and bring a bouquet of flowers!" - he thinks to himself and consoling himself. Once again he glances left - right, almost unsure if he

entered the right - his street. The street where the two of them used to walk happily and talk about everything for a long, long time. They always went for a walk on that street, in the opposite direction from the boulevard, because the noise is muted there, and then they could dive into conversation without hindrance, always holding hands. Like in the time of their youth, when they met, fell in love and spent half a century together. Now that she is gone, even this limited walk does not give him any pleasure nor consolation. The mask on his face, which makes his glasses blur, gloves and a stick in his hand, make him even more handicapped and a little nervous. Even old acquaintances barely recognize him. The ones that do, they can't approach him, because that is what the regulations require. They only greet each other from afar by raising their hands, and those who pass closer they greet him with: "Good evening, sir!" He barely recognizes them by their voice, because masks not only do they hide the face, but also change the voice. And then, sad and disappointed, he returns back to his apartment on the fifth floor of the building, with a view of the deserted boulevard, to continue his solitude, until Corona passes.

Dragan Savić
Bečej

There is no ring on my door Life in the time of Coronavirus

When and how did I realize the seriousness of the arrival of the virus in our country? The first voices come from China. I was not very interested in what was happening, to be honest, we have our domestic problems. I thought it was a virus like any other. A contagious arrow of death is fired and I am still dreaming while awake.

There is no ring on my door

Events are happening with or without my knowledge. After the state of emergency was declared, I was awakened from my nap one morning by the squeak of brakes and a thud. I went out on the street where a lot of people have already gathered and I find a vehicle stuck against the pole by the road. A young man behind the wheel repeats intermittently: "I have Coronavirus, how can I tell my mother?" One week passes then another since the state of emergency was declared, the television program starts and ends with the number of sick, infected and dead people for that day. Every day the loved ones soak the soil with their tears, there are sobs in silence and obsession with following the epidemic reports, my whole body shivers, how many fewer people are there on this planet, what is the future of humanity.

There is no ring on my door

Who was deceived, who opened the door for the virus to enter their souls, to confuse their minds and to trap their bodies with a door. Dark clouds obscured the blue sky, a man became vulnerable and darkness slowly

enters our homes. But we cannot blame the common man, now when he is suffering, for the evil of humanity. Raise the curtain, get ready to fight man, the voices of reason are reaching us.

There is no ring

The same image repeats in the morning, at noon and in the evening. Countless white beds arranged and the shadows of long white coats hover above them. God, let there be no relatives of mine, acquaintances and friends among them. Myself and my four walls, protected from the outside world, with new fashion details, masks, gloves, etc. We welcome with dignity the departure of the virus from our region.

There is no ring on my door

WThousands of people are buried in mass graves, the world is burning, the flames are being extinguished with a bucket of water. No one sent them off with dignity, no one lite a candle on their graves; their loved ones soaked the fields with tears, sobs echo in the silence, sadness reaches the sky. You can smell a candle, excavated earth, the grave diggers with tired hands return home late. There is no doorbell on my door. I am not ready to watch the sufferings worldwide; I am waiting for soldiers, in line - out of line, to drive away the crippled, blind and invisible lady, to bury her deep in the past, to free the world from the monster of the 21st century. I'm waiting, let me know, good people, if the devil itself took her to the hell. I am waiting, I am waiting, you know my number....

There is no ring on my door

Krstina Spasojević

Vinča

My dearest

It was around 10 o'clock in the morning when I received a message on Viber from my daughter: "I should report to work immediately." The thought flashed through my mind - a health worker, at home with two young children, it cannot be anything other than a call for a newly-opened Corona hospital. And so it was.

The photo she sent me a few days later could have arrived from China, because her face was not much different from the faces of doctors and nurses in the photos from Chinese hospitals. I was overwhelmed by a powerful sense of pride and I said out loud: "Good for you, my dearest."

Since then, we exchange messages rarely and briefly. I don't mind. I understand. She assured me that they had everything they needed for the protection. I'm calm.

I haven't hugged "The Lowlife and the Princess", as I call my grandchildren, for more than 50 days. Their father takes care of them. He often sends me their photos and short videos. I see that they are well, happy and cheerful. I'm satisfied.

Mirjana Životić-Vanović
Beograd

Ray of sunlight

Homo homini lupus

Man is wolf to man

On one difficult winter day, I wrote a short song “Winter mystery” so that a moment in time does not go unrecorded. The story was awarded and published; a reader told me while passing by that this is not just a winter mystery, but rather a constant mystery.

I did not comment, because the readers are the ones who have the right to their opinion. I thought to myself: “Let it not happen again!” and stopped thinking about it.

The years went by and I resignedly accept that the reader was telling the truth, the mystery is here, around us, it appears like a monster. It is always stalking us all the time. I don’t know who determines whether we will overcome it. The present moment is heavier than the previous one.

In my troubled life, I tried to enjoy every moment when a ray of light and the sun entered it. They prolonged it with my great will. Years of experience, knowledge and skills, which I am proud of, passed by. They are mine. I am satisfied with what I learned, with what I did and with what I passed on to my loved ones. Success without a reward is there, and what about life?! I am delighted with the freedom and ability to move at my age, and that gives me great joy. If someone was skeptical towards these achievements, I would not believe it.

I was encouraged by the freedom of movement, by the streets dear to me, by the pleasure of recalling memories, by a piece of warm bread, pastries and a favorite newspaper, which I have been reading since my childhood. I buy a newspaper first. That much I have; I can do that, and what about the rest? Occasionally I would become sad at the thought of being without it. No, that's impossible. Loneliness is as painful as illness, instantly it finds its way to dark thoughts. Yes, it's possible. I don't have a newspaper every day and I eat stale bread. It is now the spring of 2020!

But ... there's something you haven't figured out: neither where you're going, nor what you're going to do, nor how you're going to defend yourself. I'm constantly in front of the TV screen this spring. I survive the words state of emergency, restrictions on movement for people over 65, around the clock, with a permission for grocery run once a week between 4 and 7 a.m. I realized at that moment that my hopes and dreams were gone. Although they were very modest and they kept me from everything, this was no longer me.

I became absentminded, scared and depressed. While I was talking with the children about coming to their place, because of my inability to supply my one-member household, the news came that there was no intercity transportation. The situation was explained by different people, but with the same words, which I learned by heart, but did not understand them. Distance was required, from whom, when, how; we, the older people, we were the target, and many things that endangered my life, I was overwhelmed by nightmares both day and night. I found the consolation in TV shows I already watched. In order not to miss them, I watched every old episode too. I know everything by heart.

Restrictions became an integral part of my life. I feel that the loss of integrity, personality is tougher than the loss of bread. Without bread you are hungry, and without integrity you are lost. Someone else has to bring me the food. All my life I knew from whose hand I would take the food and I was not wrong. Now I have to take the food from strangers. Why, what for?! I don't know and I don't trust anyone. I can't withdraw my money; I need to authorize someone else.

I reluctantly write a power of attorney for another person. On what basis did a bank decide that? I don't have anyone to ask. Why, because that's the way it should be? I don't even have to go out to buy medicine, someone else will do that as well, all I need to do is call! Who and why? My illness is my sadness and my problem and part of my intimacy. Doctors take an oath in that regard. There are many unknown things.

I wonder who came up with this. I ask the walls of my apartment, but they are as dumb as I am. I recall the pension reductions. I became ill at that time. I have a paper in front of me with the amounts of reduction. Why?! I sincerely hope that this money will be returned when conscience, ethics, justice prevail.

I don't know when the awakening of that will begin. It's spring and I don't notice it; it is cold in my soul and heart. There is no will and hope of ever going out freely. Everything was taken from me. I'm not human anymore. My ten thousand steps that I successfully took every day are part of my health and survival in the disease. I took the best care of my health and I don't believe that anyone can be a better friend to my health other than myself. Whatever happens to me equals taking a bare life. My personality is ruined. I'm guilty for being over 65?! I aged in a month; I turned pale without sun, fresh air, without a reason and right. I did not deserve this. But, who is going to deal with it?

Who is interested in an ordinary little man, whether he is here or not?

I remembered the Liberation Day from the last century, which my mother talked about, about how eagerly she stepped out of the basement into a better life and freedom as a young girl. Every year she would remember it, talk about it and look forward to it. She would always mention the victims. The recent war came to my mind. Every war brings suffering, mostly of innocent people. I don't have any hopes; I am worried about my children raised in joy and happiness. I believe that life has no price and that no one has the right to dispose of my life.

I gather atoms of health and strength and utter words that resonate in my room: "Stop, return what was taken, if that can be returned. Let the voice of many be heard, the voice of conscience and justice. Don't deny me the sun."

Mirjana Antić
Jagodina

My Serbian family

On heavy shoulders
Everyone carries a cross
Let's help those overburdened
All it takes is one touch

A friend for a friend without hesitation
Let him be found in troubled times
With broken sails
Our ship sailed

Let us pledge the good with the good
To those who repay
To every evil and destiny
Let it serve in honor

Let us not destroy blood relation
Let us overcome ourselves
So that our children do not suffocate
From thick smoke of homeland

Lead the one who gives you a hand
Don't close the door on anyone
The present is given to us
Like a gold coin in the middle of the mud

With prayer and with faith
Have mercy on us dear God
Brother for brother to be baptized
And to be united in troubled times.

Zlata Jovanović
Paraćin

Thoughts in the time of Coronavirus

Life is one big miracle. Always unpredictable, always so fluttery, and yet scary and big. Life is both awakening and sleeping, peace and war. Well, it was in this last word that I was born. Back in 1942, my mother gave birth to me as the sixth child out of nine children.

We all know very well from history how difficult that time was and how difficult the struggle for survival and life were. And what we all had to endure up until today. And yet, life went on. With all the ups and downs of civilization, life happens, it is born over and over again. Just as a new spring life comes after the temporary winter death of nature. Or how after the rain the sun has to come out and make a wonderful rainbow. So after great accidents, great joy must come. I believe in miracles. When they told me, "You will never be able to have children," I pretended not to hear them and only believed in miracles. A few years later, one small miracle happened, and after three years, another. Both miracles were wonderful and it was worth waiting so many years, fighting for offspring. I have wonderful grandchildren from my two daughters and everything turned out exactly as it should. When they told me several times after difficult operations: "Rest, you are not well, you will need strength", and when they told my relatives that I would die, I believed that I would not. Because even then I knew that life always beats death. Therefore, believe in miracles, they happen every day. Life is an eternal struggle. One must not think of giving up. It is human nature to fight till the last breath. And

this global crisis is here for a reason. Nothing happens without a reason. It came here to connect people, to awaken in us dormant humanity and everything that we suppressed with a fast way of life. With all the troubles caused by the pandemic of Coronavirus, we realized that we are all equal in the struggle for life, in the struggle for a new day and all the beauties that appear to us when we hear the chirping of birds and see the first rays of the sun. Yes, we are equal. We are all under attack, no one is protected, whether rich, poor, living in this or some other country, we are all the same because we have the same goal: to survive and be the people we should have always been. We stick together as a family, we talk, we love each other. We may not have much, but we finally realize that the most important thing we have is: life. We miss going out, we lack freedom, but we are happy because we gained knowledge about how important something that we were not able to appreciate before becomes. We realized that we are not alone in the world and that we are all just humans. Nature started to breathe new lungs, everywhere in the world it is transforming and that is a great message to us, when there are no people on the streets, everything is cleaner and more beautiful. I am not worried about this condition, nor am I afraid. I know it will pass because everything passes. Something nicer, better and brighter will come. We just need patience. Dum spiro spero - While I breathe, I hope.

Ljubica Staničić
Beograd

The whole world in my room

The Coronavirus pandemic and the state of emergency, in addition to fear, crisis, grief, loss of life and great economic damage, turned out to be a kind of challenge for a journalist.

At the time of the epidemic, which happens once or never in a lifetime, based on legal provisions, I did journalistic work for Radio Television of Vojvodina (RTV) “from home”. In a situation where the whole planet stopped, I stopped too. I was thinking, how can I bring actions into my professional life when I am in isolation?! I was wondering how to place information without relying on agency news only. My eleven-year-old daughter started following lessons on Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) from home and she had many questions for me. “Mom, how long will I follow the lessons from home, when will I see my friends and how long will all this with Coronavirus last?”- Lucija asked me curiously and wanted me to give her answers and the exact date. I didn’t know the answers either, but I would say comforting words every time – Soon!!

Since we live alone, we agreed: while she is attending classes and doing homework in her room or making models, I will be working in the living room – my temporary press-office. I realized I had to have a different approach to work. I needed video editing, recordings and informants, all of which seemed impossible! The situation with Coronavirus was heating up in Serbia, and Italy was hit by a grim wave of victims of the virus. I came up with the idea to realize

TV stories from the diaspora and to edit videos on my laptop from home. The videos will be sent to me by informants from different countries of the world from their mobile phones. I designed a “relocation” from state to state following new hotspots of Coronavirus. Our people from the diaspora were my window to the world, and I was their guide on how to realize my idea. I was facing a new lifelong journalistic endeavor. I had to convince all those people to record themselves with a mobile phone, to say something about themselves and their lives and that is how a TV section “Stories of our people from diaspora during Coronavirus” was created from my room. They soon began to send footage from ghostly deserted metropolises such as London, Sydney, New York or Moscow. All these people live and work far from their families and they had a hard time with the situation around Coronavirus, because they mostly planned to be with their families in Serbia for Easter. They were glad to be able to spot deserted cities so that their parents, brothers, sisters, relatives could watch them on small screens in Serbia...

“There are no stops and walks here. Special passes have been introduced since April 15, and everyone leaving their home should have one.” - this was the initial explanation of Zeljko Koncar, an ultramarathon runner who lives in Moscow, when I asked him to describe the situation in that city.

In the meantime, more and more young people applied for volunteer work in Apatin and Sombor, and the numbers quickly rose from two-digits to three-digits.

“I’m not doing this because I’m bored, but because I feel the need to help others,” – this was the response of a young man and a volunteer, whom I asked in the store what the motive was.

Stories about humanity teach us lessons and

encourage a person to ask: "How much good did we do for others in our lives?" I wanted to report on them, I couldn't be a volunteer because I worked from home as a single parent. I felt that my contribution would be if I made their work available to the general public. In addition to buying groceries and medicines, the volunteers distributed food and chemical packages to the pensioners, some of them even donated blood voluntarily! Wasn't it a big thing they did? They did all this mostly on foot or by bicycles. In a telephone conversation with secretaries Tijana Tomasevic from Apatin and Biljana Klipa from Sombor, I successfully agreed that the communication and method of reporting on Red Cross volunteers will be through mobile phone recordings during the state of emergency. The three of us easily agreed on the same goal. Tijana and Biljana accepted the "job", following my detailed instructions, which had three imperatives: "Shoot horizontally with the mobile phone, your hand must be steady, and the sound must be clear." All further instructions for filming were nuances, and all "our stories" from this unique common situation were the first in my and their careers.

"Vesna, I've never done this, I hope it's good. I also recorded the statements of the volunteers. - Tijana Tomasevic, the secretary of the Red Cross from Apatin, said after the first recording." Each one was even better than the previous one. Stories from the diaspora have already been broadcasted. It was a different screened "oxygen", but also my "professional oxygen" to do something creative for information during the work in isolation. After Italy and the Emirates, the filming continued from Spain, then Germany, Austria, France and Great Britain, Hungary, Norway, Sweden and Russia to the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Chile and Canada. All in all, twenty unique stories from around the world! If you are wondering whether

I personally knew all those people from the mentioned countries around the world, the answer is - no!

I will tell you about the acquaintance over the phone with Alejandro Sepuveldo Hernandez from Santiago, Chile. A mutual friend from Novi Sad connected me with this Chilean, who spoke Serbian fluently during his first contact via Viber.

“I have many memories of your country and I am looking forward to doing something for the amigos in Serbia.” - Alejandro told me during our first telephone conversation. Later on in conversation, I found out that he was a member of the Organizing Committee of the World Youth Championship of Chile and the host of the Yugoslav national team, which became the world champion in football in October 1987! The elderly Chilean from Santiago was up to the task, and the information he provided from his country were interesting, and some even shocking, such as that violence against women during house quarantine in Chile increased by 104 percent!!!

I was thrilled by our athletes, who continued their lives and careers around the world. During phone conversations, which lasted up to several hours and sometimes late into the night, due to time differences, I realized we shared the same severity of a pandemic. These were valuable testimonies and stories of our musicians and artists and of those in postdoctoral studies, such as Biljana Bursac from Belgrade, doctor of biological sciences. She used her mobile phone to record how desolate Bordeaux in France looks. The old town is on the UNESCO list of important architectural buildings of Europe from the 18th century and without tourists it looked magical, showing how it resisted the ravages of time.

When you are a mother, a women and a journalist, there is always something to be done at home. But,

if someone told me that I would work at a computer and be on my mobile phone “at home” editing and writing for 10 hours, I wouldn’t believe it. And so over 80 different reports went on air from my home office. The action was all around me and at home. I had the greatest support, understanding and “criticism” from my eleven-year-old daughter, who spent time only with her mother.

It was not easy for anyone to be “non-stop” at home. It was important to have focus, and among other things, it was my job. In addition to the world, “dashes” from the home field were aimed at the work of all volunteers and their balance in an emergency situation.

“I believe that it is the obligation of every conscientious citizen, if possible, to help those who need it,” explained the Red Cross volunteer from Apatin, Vuk Opacic.

“I was motivated by the weakness towards the older citizens to do a voluntary work. They are thrilled about the support in these times which are difficult times for us all.” - Kristina Liscevic, a member of the Serbian national handball team and a Red Cross volunteer in Sombor, told me in a telephone conversation.

Their thinking inspired me. When I heard that one poor family did not have a TV, I decided to give them my own from the bedroom. The common wish of Lucija and me was for someone’s child to follow classes in this difficult time and watch cartoons at home.

“I am very happy, thank you very much, I don’t know what else to say!” - a warm smile from that child’s face deeply touched my heart. A small thing from you means a lot to someone else and it is not just thing people say. The girl is overjoyed, as is her mother, and I cried all the time on my way home and I still don’t know why.

I think that I managed to fulfill the set mission,

to be a family support and a mother, and then a professional. The people I contacted during the isolation were up to the task, each in their own domains. I learned something new and built bridges with people on different parts of the planet with trust and human attitude, which is a lesson from this turbulent time that brought us together. And you decide why that is.

Vesna Milanović Simičić
Sombor

Inspiration from dullness

As the days pass by and everything becomes more and more heated up, flared up and intense, I realize that life simply happens, passes and goes away... Just like time... They don't care about us. Time and life are the only ones doing their jobs honestly and diligently, without stopping. They perform their gigs properly. But both time and life poison you like a malarial mosquito and bite you like a flea hidden somewhere in a blanket, in your bed... Then you realize that life cannot be changed. The experience is not repeated. Everything became the past, the present is fucked up, the future, by all accounts, is even worse ... There is no more youth and a sincere smile, or a sincere friendship. There are no more chicks to grab your buttocks and to have the hungry eyes for you, when you show up somewhere with eyes that shine with sexuality, in a café or a disco, and you are so well-groomed, fragrant and clean and in no time you take some of them into darkness and show a sign of your masculinity. The thing that remains is insidious aging and enjoyment in little things... For someone it is a drink, for others it is a joint or a woman with whom he fell in love again. And when the walls press then you either love or hate. Or you are simply left with loneliness that you struggle with in countless ways... For some it is music, for some it is masturbation, for some it is a book you are reading for the 26th time... A lot of thinking remains, very little consolation and very little hope. Deception and self-deception become the greatest deceptions. Those who

lie and manipulate have no problem with that. By doing so, they raise their towers and their cults of gods. Those who don't know how, they stay down, at the bottom, attached like turd on the sidewalk, until the rain washes it away, melts it and takes it to nothingness... Of course, there are those who still look on the bright side, who, with their mockery and deceptive self-confidence, stay firmly on their feet... The life hasn't stricken them yet. Life awaits them cunningly and releases them in their indifference. Everyone gets what they deserve from life, unless they cheated and took more than they needed. But even taking away cannot be indefinite. Everything has its beginning and its end... At the end, life takes everything away... And as if you never had anything. First there are prizes and then a few whips on your butt... And that's it. Life eventually pushes you and puts you in the place you got in its order. There is no philosophy here! Either you are, or you are not! You are either rich or you are poor. Someone is rich in spirit, and I take my hat off to them. They have their faith which is great. But it all subsides, sooner or later. Perhaps that "spirit of goodness" saves you a little bit longer in the beats of time. But I don't have it anymore. It disappeared; it melted like an uneaten ice cream.

I used to laugh in the face of cynicism... I started to spit fire, like a disappointed dragon... Now cynicism laughs in my face because it defeated me, smashed me, crushed me, crumpled me... it drove me to the edge... It won, and I was left to rot in nonsense... A particle of dust... A dull echo in the realm of emptiness and murderous silence. Full of stinking prejudices and vanity... Even God seems distant. He is nowhere to be found. And I looked for him; I really looked for him. And even that wasn't so easy. He is not so stupid to answer to everyone. And the devil doesn't find me interesting any more... I don't even know who I owe

anymore nor what am I guilty of. I collected so many penalty points that it is a real miracle that I am still alive...

They said about love

A few nights ago, four people were sitting in one house. One painter, one astrologer, one musician and one poet. They were friends who knew each other for many years. It was the day after the declaration of the “State of Emergency” in the country due to the Coronavirus and two days before the declaration of the “Curfew” from 8 pm to 5 am. That meeting occurred spontaneously, without a plan or organization. Which is always a good sign... They talked about everything, and especially about the current situation, about the behavior of the human Serbian and non-Serbian kin, about the selfishness of some people who, due to the new situation, thought only of their asses. Yes, exactly of their asses, because in addition to groceries and necessities, people bought everything they could at markets and discounts, especially toilet paper. It’s as if the virus enters and exits through the ass. If it wasn’t funny, it would be sad, when in fact it was sad. All that. There we concluded how much this selfishness is rooted in us. You are buying, as if there is no one else in the world, except you and your loved ones, as if only you have children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. As if besides you and the listed people, there is no one else in this world. And so, word by word, they came to the topic of love. Is it there, in the world, is it here, is it in us...? At one point, the painter suggested, presumably in a rush of inspiration and in touch of emotions, that each of them write down a few words about love at that moment. What is love for them? The host took out four pencils and four sheets of paper. All four, got themselves down into business and in a few moments, the words were written, by all four.

“Love is the most beautiful smile and a friendship. Green eyes that radiate love. Hard sex. “- the musician wrote.

“I have a love for dogs and animals. But that can’t be compared to the love I have for people. There are all kinds of loves, but the most important ones are listed. I choose my loves, and when I select them, I love them. Those loves are my “shadows” that follow me. These are my people. Those are my “shadows”. - the poet wrote.

“Love seems to be disappearing and somehow we have to recreate it. I can’t because of love, but I can’t do without it.”- the painter wrote.

“Love is when people simply love each other. Semi-loves do not exist for me and I do not acknowledge them.” - the astrologer wrote.

Then all of them read what was written. They laughed a little and concluded that they were not bad people. They concluded that there is still a little bit of humanity and values in us, which they managed to preserve in these murky times. And they have been following us for many years ... It is good that they still preserved kindness, understanding, the desire to help someone when they are in trouble ... That night passed the way it passed. With some beer, food and some brandy. Then they all parted, at some point in the night.

When everyone was gone, the host kept those four papers. He read them again and then added.

“Love is to love sincerely. To respect and appreciate. Love is to preserve what you love and to remove the feeling of hatred. Love is to forgive. Love is something that should be preserved and nurtured...” Those were the final words of this short story.

Sailing without a goal and destination

We became like passengers of some “haunted ship”, which is traveling somewhere, and its goal or destination is unknown ... We move around the yard, as

if on a deck, and we are satisfied only with the chirping of birds. They are more free than we are and I admire them. We peek through the windows, as through the windows of the cabin and lean on them, as on the ship of that same “haunted ship” ... In front of us is the ocean, which can swallow us in no time. Only if one whistle in your head breaks the strings. When the time comes, “the main ones, Admirals”, they lock you up in those small, cramped cabins ... So that they can, under the cover of night, do whatever they want. That what works in their favor.

And you, as a passenger on that ship, who boarded it by mistake, deceived and exhausted, you are silent and waiting ... You wait for the end of that shitty voyage, hoping that you will get somewhere. Preferably normal and, more importantly, alive. The only consolation in that is a glass in your hand and a little bit of hope, which is about to begin to rot ... The worst is the trickery and deception that a man can, in his despair, create in himself. Somehow you get through other people's deceptions, you overcome them, but not your own.

If I could choose, if someone asked me that question and that condition, it is certain that I would not choose it ... Thank you! That's nice of you, but still not ... I would say. But no one asked me anything ... They just slapped me like shit and loaded me on that “ship”, and after all they said: “Shut up and sail! ... If you don't like it, look, the fence is there ... And, bye-bye. “

Based on that experience, I realized that I was just an ordinary, insignificant and dirty drop in the water of that very dirty and polluted sea ... ocean ... “Shut up, stink and float if you want to live!” They did not exactly say that, but that is what they meant... And what's even crazier, I boarded that ship without paying a penny ... Only fools like me can make that mistake...I was in

a net... I could wriggle as much as I wanted, but too late ...

I'm caught ... Ah, gullible and naive creatures ... You're stupid! They blew you off like that and let you in the air ... You will disappear like a fart!

But there is one catch!?! I've always loved those dramatic twists and turns in life. Because of them, I still felt "ALIVE". And that's a good feeling. It's not good! It's perfect! So I find a way to survive ... And you? My companions?

Sava Grujić
Beograd

I sincerely admire

I have been living my humble life for a long time,
and I sincerely admire the real heroes – to you.

One project engineer of technology pays
immense recognition to doctors of infectology,
epidemiology, pulmonology, anesthesiology,
cardiology, radiology, nephrology, complete internal
medicine and other known and unknown heroes of
the fight for human life.

Lots and lots of recognition to the nurses
who wholeheartedly participated in the rescue
and

care for people unknown to them, leaving at
home

children, wives, parents, siblings.

They brought back and still bring back to life

People without any hopes
and they do it selflessly on a daily basis
and through every night copes.

For one full sigh and exhale of a person
who fights on the edge of life

they give their best: knowledge, desire,
physical and mental strength,

and at home they left a worried family dear.

What is the Nobel Prize for them,
Olympic gold medal or medal for the greatest
courage?

For them, it is one saved human life, many, many
human lives,
They are hearty and brave individuals
but they are both a homogeneous and well-
coordinated team.
That is why the windows and balconies are full of
people who greet them with applause:
Thank you very, very much.
May God give you the best health,
unlimited happiness, success and love.
Love is the basis of the world!
Love for people is in your hearts
Which burn for others and save their lives.

Dragoslav Banić
Beograd

“Life in the time of Coronavirus How did you spend your time in isolation?”

Times have changed. The whole world became cold and reckless, full of blackness and lifelessness. Is it possible that all people suddenly became strangers? That everyone only cares about their own lives. Where did the social solidarity go?

I wonder what isolation and the fight against this arrogant disease will teach us. We will either disappear or we will forever be merciless God's sufferers. Everyone says that the destiny of humanity is changing. Why do we have to suffer again? The answer is clear. We suffer to show how great we are. How merciful our heart is and how much we love our dearest. If we really love them, we will stay at home. I don't understand why we don't accept that. I'm afraid we're like some object thrown into a mass of bad, corrupt moralists. Do we have to think about money, about how we will rip off people again? People, who are looking for salvation in panic. They are afraid and I know that feeling quite well. It drags you into some deep pit of thinking. You face truths and lies. You choose honesty or punishment.

Why all this? Everything will pass, everything will disappear. We will breathe deeply. I know, it's hard to think about it. Our situation is good. Imagine living in an era of typhus epidemic, when we didn't even have food supplies and when an enemy boot was still knocking on our door. The very thought of that unfortunate event brings tears to my eyes. We are happier than they were. We see our loved ones thanks to new technology. We are alive and well; we are not hungry. All deaths are sad and full of bitterness, but no disease lasts forever. And

you, ungrateful thing of the planet, you will disappear. You won't breathe behind our necks. We will defeat you, because with hope and firm faith we say goodbye to you!

Everything passes and the water takes everything away; it will take this away too. We will enjoy nature and love again. We will hear the sounds of children playing and the sound of a gentle singing bird. I will see azure, blue and endless night and the stars that shine will become the new ideal of my poetry. We may have been insensitive until now, but now our feelings will become a gentle, subtle story about a man. Let us be people and let us be in solidarity in difficult times. Everything will pass, as foam passes through the sea.

Mirjana Randelović
Prokuplje

My family, my freedom

When they let you off the leash and when I want to leave, my refuge will be my small, violet room. And although I will be my mother's pet, I can't do without my mother's donuts and my father's anecdotes. Ironically, Coronavirus did not bring us closer, we always were. It's just that I suffer that I won't be with them when I enroll in college, but I got used to it. I abandoned my old self and let myself go. My family, dad, mom and me. They are better psychologists than any psychologist, and sometimes they are terribly demanding. It turns out that I take them for granted. But no, rather not. I know how to repay them. My dishes are excellent, even though my laughter is irritating, and very frequent, it's okay with them. Hahahaha, they got used to it. They had the honor, exclusively to be the first to try, that is to hear my freshly written literary work. My life is such that my moments with them, and my cats, are special. They bring color into my life. And I, I have a new phase of growth each year, so they understand my sessions of stupidity. I thank them for giving me endless freedom and for letting me, no matter how sad, into some other, blue-green life. I thank them for material things and I thank them endlessly for being such a good support to me.

Jelena Martinović
Boljevac

**Gone are the days of fear; Goodbye Corona;
I do not want Corona to scare me**

I have faith since I was born,
Faith gave me strength
Faith brought me back to the right path,
I created life with faith
I believe that love is eternal,
I believe that the light will win the darkness,
That these days filled with fear of Coronavirus
Will be behind us
I believe that love
Will rule this planet again.
I believe that we can all fall in love
And that we can love endlessly and sincerely.
Faith is the most important to me.
It kept us and made us brave.
We will win all the battles against the dark ones,
And we will create the planet of love again.
I believe we can unite hearts,
And sing love songs out loud.
In faith sincere,
We will all swear
That we will be loyal to it with love
And that we will win the days of Coronavirus.

Božica Velousis
Beograd

Friendship in the time of Coronavirus

We are both in our eighth decade. We've known each other for years. We are neighbors. He lives in an apartment building, and I across the street, in my house. We would greet each other when we met. He was with his wife, and I with my husband. I don't remember how it started. Years went by... My husband died first and then after a while his wife.

The news of an epidemic and later a pandemic of virus Covid-19 was for me, and for the others, like lightning from the clear sky. My daughter and grandchildren went to Kosmaj to the cottage. They called me too. But I didn't want to leave my house and a garden, which was just waking up. I love spring and I enjoy that beauty; I love to do something and to wait for the news at 3 pm which take away this good mood from me because the Crisis response team announces the situation about testing, infected people, deceased...

We, people over sixty-five years are forbidden to leave our homes. I was burdened with the thought of how these older people live in a skyscraper across the street - locked up alone ... "Good afternoon, neighbor!" I look and my neighbor is at the gate. "Good afternoon," I reply. "Come in and have a coffee; coffee usually calls for company." It is good that the man dared to go out, cross the street and come. He longed for sunshine, the green and company. That's how it started. We, the seniors, we were prohibited to go out for fifty-five days, except for the shopping at the bad time - from four to seven in the morning. From that day on, my

neighbor and I would often forget the time we were in. We admired the blossoming fruit, we counted the opening of each magnolia flower, talked about our lives when we were employed and young, about our children ... Stories about the opening of new hospitals, the spread of the pandemic to all continents, the numbers of the infected and the dead made our beautiful days of socializing pass shrouded in both sorrow and fear. In those moments, at a distance of at least two meters, we were often silent. I knew we both thought about our children and grandchildren and feared for their health. That silence and the fact that we are together, meant a lot to me. I catch myself waiting for “our hour” to come and for us to be together again. It was quite normal for me to invite him to lunch for Easter. One cannot sit alone at a table for this great family holiday. I prepared a modest lunch, and festively set the table for two. When I invited him, I felt how happy he was. He came in with a bottle of red wine. He apologized for not bringing flowers. I could not tell him nor could I find the right words to express how happy I was that he came and that I won't be alone. He was delighted when he saw dyed eggs in a decorated basket on the table. “Well neighbor, this is a real Easter! As if there was no Corona”, he said hugging me. In his embrace, I felt protected again, safe. We forgot we had to be at a distance. God himself sent him for us to celebrate this great holiday together, I thought. The epidemic was weakening. Strict measures were relaxed. I know that the epidemic is not over yet and I don't know whether it will bring back life as it was “before Coronavirus”, but these two months brought me a wonderful friendship that will last.

Vinka Bojković
Beograd

Angels in the time of Coronavirus

Days at the time of Coronavirus are slowly passing by. Tomorrow, I will do some gardening in the yard and arrange my flowers so to break the monotony. But all of a sudden this morning it snowed. Everything is covered with white snow. It did not show for the whole winter, but now. I look out the window and the snowflakes are swirling like a curtain. Nothing, a change of plan for today. I feel sorry for the hyacinth, it blossomed and colored the whole row into blue; it bowed under the weight of the wet snow. The Christmas tree looks as if it was Christmas, all decorated. Today I will read and watch a movie. My gaze stops at the skylight, on geraniums full of flowers, beautiful. I cuddle them as if they were children. A large tinted colored Amaryllis bloomed. It really doesn't care about Coronavirus. I ran out of tissues, and I really need them. I go through my handbags; I have a habit of leaving a pack of tissues in each one. And handbags, a dozen pieces. Don't worry, they are not all new, just a few pieces. Some of them are from twenty years ago. Every time I decide to throw one, I can't decide which one, and so everything remains the same. I found tissues, couple of packs, it will come in handy. And then a thought comes into my mind, there are at least fifteen cotton handkerchiefs in the nightstand drawer. They will come in handy as well.

That's how it is when you're sixty-nine. They will tell you that you need to get rid of those bags. What can I do when I am sentimentally attached to them. Even today, it is snowing again, everything is beautiful,

white, but somehow deserted. This damn virus is to blame for everything, if it weren't for it, children would scream from the street now. I stop thinking and get to work.

Today is my granddaughter's birthday. She is a grown girl, but I would like to hug her; I know that is impossible. I pick up the phone and call her. Her ringing laughter echoes on my congratulations, she thanks me, and I am all happy.

The snow stopped and the hyacinths raised their heads, the whiteness of the snow emphasizes their beauty even more. I stopped to look at the collection of angels and then I look through the windows again. Two young volunteers are passing by; I recognize the Red Cross insignia. Yes, there are angels among people, as well as those of other kind. I go back to tidying the living room. I reached the curtains; I am handing them and my feet are trembling on the ladders. These young people are smart, they don't want curtains, carpets, crochets. I remembered my mother's words, "Daughter, why do you need so many curtains?" I wasn't listening. What can I do when I enjoy that? That makes a house a warm place. I get down the ladder to take a break. The phone rings, it is my neighbor. We exchange a couple of common sentences and then she asks me if I have some homemade soap, she needs that. "I have," I reply, "well," she says, "someone will come to pick it up." I go down to the basement to pack the soap and the thought comes into my mind. Now she needs it, and this summer she told me while I was making it, "Who else does that?" "Well, I do" – I replied. She's not bad, she just likes to act like she is upper-class, nobles. What, you don't know what that word means? You must be very young, but here I will tell you. It is a person who acts as a great lady and a fashionista. I place the soap on a fence. After a while, I see it's gone. I hope no one else took it, it

doesn't matter if it did, it means that someone needs it. I will send her another one.

I'm finishing a deep house cleaning. The house shines and smells of cleanliness and a bit of chemistry, but what can you do, you cannot clean it without it. I look at my hands, my nicely polished nails are gone, they are all broken, my hands are dry, I have run out of hand cream. I can't be heartless to send children to the store for every little thing. It doesn't matter, I enjoy and I see the fruits of my labor, I am satisfied. And then I remembered, the other day when I was cleaning the pantry, I found some olive oil at the bottom of a bottle. This can be used instead of a hand cream. I take it quickly and rub my hands, the smell is not nice, but that doesn't matter. And only two or three weeks ago, I would choose a brand of cream, Nivea or Atrihis, etc. It is good for a person to sometimes find itself in a situation like this, in order to understand how spoiled he is and how good he is, without noticing it. We perceived all the blessings as normal. This should sober us up. But I'm afraid that when this passes, everything will be forgotten.

Normally lunch is prepared every day, that hunger from the stomach must be satisfied. And that is a kind of dictatorship, but what will you do, what must be done must be done. In the afternoon I decide to rest. I watch the announcement of the Crisis response team; the news is still not good.

Pensioners are allowed to go shopping on Sundays from 4 am to 7 am. The curfew is until 5am, but that doesn't apply to us. I think I'll make myself a protective nylon suit, I have enough of nylon. I go into action; my husband asks me what I'm doing." I am sewing a protective suit", I answer, and he laughs. Don't laugh, even the state is arming itself to defend itself, I answer. By the evening, I finish my work. Nylon coat, organdy

hat, nylon shoe bags, floral mask and gloves. It is not exactly for the catwalk but that will do. My husband doesn't know that I'm doing this for him. If I brought him an infection, he wouldn't survive.

I am making a list of groceries and on Sunday I go to the store, which is about a hundred meters away from our house. Armed with all my equipment, I enter the store, and the shopkeepers look at me in astonishment and ask me where I found the equipment. I made everything myself except the gloves that were received, that is, gifted, I answer. They ask me if I can give them the masks. Certainly, I answer. They thank me, and I'm glad I was able to help. I know all these children; they are always so kind to me. A beautiful sunny day dawned, the sound of children playing breaks this ominous silence. I watch them play, and unconsciously laughter covers my face. They are so innocent and carefree, unaware of the dangers, that is why childhood is so beautiful. It seems to me that if it weren't for the children, the sun wouldn't shine. Life is a miracle, everything blossomed, the flowers are blooming, wonderful, they really don't care about some virus. I work around flowers, especially around roses, I really like roses. I feel a bit depressed these days. This virus is showing its teeth, but so am I. I declared war on him. I'm not saying I'll win, but I'm not giving up without a fight. I take shelter in my space to avoid conflict, not out of fear, but because I don't like to argue. After all, a virus doesn't need a critic like I am. Something whispered in me that sounded like "No, how old are you?" None, I shouted. I spent them all. Honestly I heard that answer on TV and now it comes in handy. I get to work quickly because, as my mother said, "Work conquers all."

You ask me what I think of the virus. It is an imp (Uncut), I answer. You don't know what Uncut is, it's someone who is an imp, a prankster. But this one is

not kidding, and I called it that because it camouflaged well so you don't know what it looks like and where it attacks from.

I decide to sew something nice for myself today. You will ask again why do I need it. Well, I don't need it, but it doesn't matter. After a couple of days, I put two pieces of beautiful clothes in the closet. You wonder where do I get my material; well, I used to travel and buy a lot. There are materials from thirty years ago. You say that they are not fashionable, well who says that, when I wear such a piece of clothing, a lot of women ask me where I bought it. Abroad, I answer conceitedly. After all, I don't care if I wear it or not, I'll give it to someone, but while I'm working I don't think about the virus and the terrible condition. Again, the news is very bad, a lot of people are infected and dead, and doctors are dying. Some rage broke out in me. Ugh virus, I curse you, and I don't even know if it's male or female, but whatever. You instilled fear in people. Forgive me for swearing, I know it's not feminine, but it's a little easier for me when I get this anger out of me. I'll be a lady when all this is over, if I survive. And I will, I listen to everything the Crisis response team is advising.

It is morning, I have my breakfast. Before the pandemic I would drink only white coffee or tea in the morning, and that would be enough. It is lunch time. I have my lunch but I am not hungry. Dinner, and I am not hungry. It does not matter; dinner should not be skipped. Normally I have fruits for a snack, all that is needed. Oh really, my conscience pricks me. I watch TV, I have some snacks, a bit of salty and sweet. So what is this, boredom, nervousness, fear or Corona? All together my inner self replies. I decide that this has to stop and I move everything that is in front of me. I hope I will endure and resist the charms of food.

This isolation is not easy, it totally changes a person,

but we will endure. One day all this will be called “last year”. We are scared and that is good, a healthy dose of fear is normal, it makes a person to be careful and now that is very important to us.

Ivanka Novaković
Indija

Jelena and Jana

Jelena and Jana have a bright and smiling face, believe it or not, they are two best friends. They get along really well! They know a lot about each other, it's nice that such good friendships last a long time. Jelena and Jana! With music, they welcome the dawn, they are constantly fighting for their human rights with all their strength. Their joy, their happiness! They gladly share it with their friends, and they wish all the best to those who are with them. With Jelena and Jana! Life can be beautiful and long, the happiest is the one who is their sincere friend and companion.

Miroslav Zdravković
Beograd

Life in the time of Coronavirus

How did you spend your time in isolation?’

I welcomed year 2020 with special joy. I wished for a few small pleasures, peace of mind and above all that we all stay healthy.

However, the reality sobered me up in the cruelest way. The beginning of the year confronted us with an invisible, unknown, and vicious enemy. People around the world experienced the same fate. The deadly virus Covid-19 or Coronavirus has become our sad everyday life. It plagues the entire planet, attacks the lungs and takes human lives. I have often wondered these days whether nature is warning us or punishing us because we became estranged and insensitive?

We, the volunteers of the Red Cross Savski Venac, we were not scared at any moment. Our self-help group was founded in 2011, it is on its usual task every day, only in a slightly changed form. We are in isolation and we do our volunteer activities over the phone. We talk to older and lonely people. We are their psychological support so that they do not feel forgotten. We remind them to take the prescribed therapy properly and we chit chat about everyday things. These conversations relax both them and us, because a nice word and psychological support is always the most effective medicine. There is also a phone number they can call in case they need help of any kind.

The flow of my thoughts is often interrupted by my most faithful friend in isolation. The phone rings constantly and incessantly. I pick up the phone and on the other side I hear Milanka, an 85-year-old piano teacher, who tells me that she is fine, that I should not

worry and that she is recovering from the consequences of a traffic accident caused by a motorcyclist. She alleviates her ailments with notes, and the sound of the piano recovers her soul and heart. The professor leads a music workshop whose members once performed very successfully at Kolarac People's University and in the house of King Peter. The sincere wish of all of us is to listen to them again soon.

Milunka, Jelisaveta, Vera and Milojka also informed me that they received a one-time financial aid from the Center for Social Work, which significantly increased their household budget. They are satisfied. Milojka is recovering from a stroke, and Vera is feeling well after leaving the hospital.

Jovanka's daughter Rada from the village of Mrcici near Kosjeric also sends me words of gratitude because I regularly call her mother, who lives alone, and ask about her health. I recognize a lot of warmth, tenderness and endless praise in Rada's voice. Victoria from Sombor is also grateful for the help provided to her brother Simon, who also lived alone. He was a beneficiary of the help of a geronto-housewife, but he was denied financial assistance and care of another person. I wrote a complaint in one sentence and asked for him to be granted funds to buy diapers, the complaint was upheld, the money was paid, but Simon sadly passed away. All that is life...

Among our members of the Self-Help group, there are also members of the literary workshop led by the Red Cross Savski Venac. Sasha is the oldest member in terms of age and length of service. Their verses speak honestly and faithfully about the collective feeling of fear and anxiety of the unknown and evil, as well as about the feeling of life being endangered. Here are the verses: "This year Corona reigns, now I am afraid, I am old, my life may go down the drain."

I call our older fellow citizens. Peter is the oldest among them. He will turn a hundred soon. He is a

participant in World War II and the only living national hero in our country. He is always glad that I called, and his inexhaustible positive energy tells us that we will endure. I promised to visit his family as soon as the conditions were right.

Dragoslav, a strong 97-year-old, complained that he has some difficulties walking and that he is leaning on a cane. George is a bit younger, he's just turned 90, he was recently released from the hospital, he is recovering.

Painter Miloje was urgently admitted to the Emergency Center. He had a surgery. There will be more of his paintings with wonderful and warm traditional motifs. Before the isolation, Professor Vuksan walked several kilometers every day in Topcider Park. Now this 88-year-old is counting the steps he walks around the house in his backyard. He doesn't give up until he's down 400.

The telephone connection between us is not interrupted. It is extremely alive. We call each other to report a nice radio and television show. So, every Saturday from 9 am, we listen to the radio show "Experience a Hundred". It is an extraordinarily stimulating show intended for listeners of the third age. We had an exceptional opportunity to watch and listen to the world-famous Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli from the empty Duomo Cathedral in Milan. The looming disease imposed new rules and organization of life, but Bocelli's angelic voice told us that we could be together even when we were thousands of kilometers away.

I was especially impressed by our music artists who, together with their colleagues from China, Italy and Turkey, performed Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" in a modern, electronic way.

Pleasant and melodious tones awakened in me a desire to play music. As a child, I learned to play the accordion and that is why I now practice melodies every day that take me back to my childhood and early

youth. My fingers don't always listen, but I'm persistent and I don't give up. Sometimes I play a familiar melody to my telephone interlocutor to the mutual surprise and satisfaction.

We haven't forgotten math either. It is a brain exercise for us and that is why we are interested in various mathematical tricks, such as: how many times will we write number one by writing numbers from one to twenty. The answers are different, but in the end we still "agree".

I miss hiking a lot, but as I live on the third floor, I go down and climb the stairs several times every day, protected by a mask and gloves, in this way I somewhat satisfy my need to move. Walking along the steps, I am reminded Fruska Gora and the days of the snowdrops and the days of the iris on Rajac. That is how days go by. I also welcomed the end of the isolation. The joy was immense and indescribable, but it still required caution. The half-hour walk was enough to breathe in the fresh air, smell the wonderful spring scents and look at the green trees in my street.

I realized during all this time that I am extremely proud of myself and my generation, which proved to be disciplined and exemplary reasonable, respecting all the recommended measures and experts' advice.

We, the older, experienced and patient, we know that everything has a beginning and an end. That is why we are firmly convinced that Corona will also end. That is the desire of people all over the world. The words in the song sung by Tereza Kesovija also confirm: "Tomorrow is a new day and life is flowing, there is no pain or sorrow, which will not pass."

Danica Šmic
Beograd

My life in the time of Coronavirus

This spring started turbulently. My enjoyment in gathering the impressions from the celebration of my eightieth birthday, the interesting celebration of International Women's Day, the well-organized and well-attended Conference "Invisible Women" was interrupted by unpleasant news - THE WORLD IS FIGHTING THE COVID VIRUS 19. Our people seem destined to survive difficult moments in March and April. Overnight, a new life was created, not similar to the one from a few days ago. The world is upset. Newscasts became my all-day preoccupation. I watched the news on all channels. The uncertainty was great this time. I was upset, worried, but not scared. My blood pressure started to cause health problems. However, after several telephone consultations with the emergency doctors and after taking the recommended medicine, I returned to normal. When the state authorities announced the measures taken to prevent the spread of the infection in our country, I felt relieved. I reduced following of news programs to only two a day. I started to feel better and my mood improved. We are a small country and we will not be able to fight the virus on our own, our President said. Several countries offered to help us. The People's Republic of China was the first to do so. In addition to the equipment, China also offered doctors who have experience in fighting the corona virus. This news calmed me down even more and made me happy. Solidarity was expressed at the right time and in the best possible way. At the mention of China, my mind

wandered to the beautiful past, to a walk through the streets of Beijing, to sightseeing of the Forbidden City, to a walk along the Great Wall of China, etc. During my stay in Beijing, I got the impression that the Chinese are a friendly, modest and disciplined people. I secretly hoped friendly China would help us fight this dangerous pandemic. Well, that's what happened. Pensioners over the age of sixty-five were advised not to leave their homes. My husband and I, as well as members of our family, strictly adhered to all the recommended measures. I did not allow myself the luxury that individuals, who do not respect the measures of state bodies, spoil my mood and a strong belief that we will soon defeat the virus.

Due to the current circumstances, as a Red Cross volunteer, I am not able to go to an old people's home and visit those that no one comes to visit. By going there, I encourage them and shorten their time in pleasant conversations. I bring them a small present that they heartily rejoice, and I feel joy in my soul that I was useful to those people. They all follow the news and I believe they will comprehend my long absence. The days went by, the virus spread. In many countries of the world, the number of infected and the number of deaths was increasing. Other people's misfortune strikes me. I suffered for every lost life, for every man who, because of the pandemic, left this world. I know life is a struggle, but it could have been nicer and more fun than the one we had. When my husband replaces me in the kitchen for preparation of meals, I use that time for purely female jobs. I manage to tidy up his and my wardrobe, I sew, tidy up some things around the house and, fortunately, I am never bored. I also prepared a package of clothes for the Shelter for Adults in Kumodraska street in Belgrade. During the isolation, the weather was nice, so I often sat for hours and read by

the open window. Just a few days before the epidemic, I received several valuable and very interesting books. Through quality images and texts of the "Picture Atlas for Travelers and Pilgrims", I visited holy places from Egypt to America. At the celebration of my eightieth birthday, which was organized by my husband and a social worker from the Bread of Life, I received several more valuable and interesting books. Now, during the isolation, I had enough time to devote to my hobbies, to reading and writing.

Inspired by the celebration of my birthday and married life for fifty-four years, I used the time of isolation and wrote a short story of confession, which reads:

"A clear winter morning dawned when my biological clock began to tick its first moments of the ninth decade. I celebrated my eightieth birthday. It was a pleasant evening. Congratulations, hugs, kisses, flowers, gifts. My life companion Julien is with me all the time. Memories flood back, taking me back to the beautiful moments of the past. With music and dancing, I remembered our first meeting. It was love at first sight. No, I didn't fall in love then, I immediately started to love him. A man appeared from somewhere and immediately ran into my life with big, sure steps. He moved into my heart and he still sings there. What we had for all these fifty years that was simple and precious - and that is our love. Despite all the challenges, we managed to share pieces of our good mood and happiness with each other. With his support and his love, it was a pleasure to reach the ninth decade and, in the meantime, to give birth to a daughter, have a son-in-law and three grandchildren. When I think about it, we found each other, and that's is something, isn't it?"

The time of isolation allowed me to be with the book for hours. I was especially pleased to read a book

about our famous countryman, one of the world's most famous scientists "From Pastures to Scientist" and the book "Michael I. Pupin", which provided a true picture of this great man, professor, humanist, philanthropist. That Pupin never forgot where he came from is shown by his attitude towards his homeland. With his knowledge, behavior and great authority that he enjoyed in the United States of America, he managed to arrange for our Serbian flag to be flown at the White House in Washington, side by side with the American flag. The twenty-fifth of March, 1874, was a great day for Michael I. Pupin, who as a young man from Banat, set foot on American soil on that day, as it would later turn out, on the soil of his second homeland. Sometimes I catch myself thinking, if it weren't for Corona, the question is when would I be able to take time for all this and I should have. There is an elementary school across our building. Children's shouting was an integral part of our ambience. We enjoyed the sounds of the piano and the gentle children's voices in the choir singing. I miss it all now. When I look through the window into the street, there is not a living soul. One can only see the roofs of parked cars and empty sidewalks. That unpleasant silence was broken by thunderous applause of support for top experts - doctors, nurses and other medical staff and their great sacrifice, selfless commitment and humane attitude towards every person infected by the virus.

During the happiest religious holiday, Easter, the fight against the virus was in full swing. Limited movement and supply have taken their toll. This year, there was no communion and a festive lunch. We marked the holiday by dyeing eggs and praying for better days ahead to all the nations of the world.

We didn't expect a virus nor isolation, so we weren't prepared for that. Isolation was the right time

for solidarity to come to the fore. Wonderful young people in our building offered to help us on their own initiative. On the inside of the entrance to the building - in a visible place - they wrote down their names, as well as phone numbers, and let us know that they wanted to help us. I was moved to tears by this attention of our young neighbors. God, how wonderful it is to know that you have people nearby who offer help on their own initiative. For me, this is a real intergenerational cooperation.

During the isolation, the Red Cross also prepared a surprise for us. The young volunteers brought us a nice little package to the door, which I personally experienced as a big sign of attention. I was pleasantly surprised and delighted. The more time passed, the more I missed our children. Conversations with my daughter, son-in-law and older grandson, who is studying medicine, are precious to me. The adventures of twins, preschoolers, are irreplaceable. Playing with them is a real pleasure. We often talked on the phone and we sent them pancakes through adult "food suppliers". I miss hanging out with my peers. We talked on the phone and read to each other what we had written during the isolation. It was fun this socializing at a distance.

I was touched by the attention of the Red Cross of Serbia and Savski venac, the Bread of Life, the Club for the Elderly, Amity and others who called us during the isolation. If I needed anything I would be free to address them. Fortunately, our children took care of supplies and other necessities. I come out of isolation with the conviction that our doctors and the government cooperated well. Emotions are not important, the goal is important - the defense of the country, and we succeeded in that, said Dr. Predrag Kon, on the occasion of the isolation ending, and I trust

him infinitely much. I believe that all the nations of the world will learn a lesson from what happened to us and that in the future we will address each other with more respect and love.

Jovanka Dimitrijević
Beograd

Strange spring of 2020

Strange spring of 2020. Spring in my street and my house, this year, 2020, looks completely different than all previous years. I watch its arrival and smell the blossoming branches from my terrace. I will remember it forever. I also decided to write something about this difficult time and to send it to the Red Cross. Maybe I can help someone with my story.

For the first thirty days, my little brother, my father, and I, we didn't leave the house. Mom came and went to work with a mask on her face and gloves on her hands as if she was working in a hospital. Upon entering the house, she would take off her shoes, jump over the threshold and go straight to the terrace to change her cloths, and then wash her hands for an eternity. We all followed this same procedure when, after 30 days, we started going outside in front of our building. Finally, some different days - I'm walking down my street again. There is a completely different atmosphere in it this spring - it is more lively, despite the gloomy weather, worry and insecurity that I feel - sometimes I don't understand a lot of things. But no one does; there are no answers to many questions I ask. Even my older brother doesn't know the answers to many questions, although he almost always knows the right answer. Mother and father are drinking coffee with the neighbors as if they were in a café, albeit at a distance of two meters. And for me, that rule, to be at the distance with friends and neighbors is the hardest part. However, this time I decided to do the same thing the older ones do - I am

sitting with my friends from the building in front of it and drink juice. And we are pretending that everything is fine, that the street is a school yard. We also started riding a bike, every night. We passed through deserted streets and parks, rarely meeting people. Sometimes we would stop by the school yard, which was recently full of my schoolmates. This silence is completely unusual - it looks like spring fatigue, but it is not. It is a deadly virus, which arrived from distant China. It crossed all borders, without a passport. I worry about my family because of it and I am very sad when I hear how many people are in hospitals and how many of them are no longer with us. I had no idea that one small invisible virus could change the look of my street in a few days. And not just my streets – but to change lives all over the world. Although I will not remember this spring as good, I have learned a lot. I realized that a street could become a place to drink coffee and juice. I taught my grandparents how to operate their mobile phones and how to send me pictures and even videos. I miss them a lot. I also learned how much a human hug is worth. That's enough of this, as I called it “Corona Spring”. And I realized what the Red Cross is doing, and I decided to help people even more.

Tadija Janković
Beograd

My own song

I set up lighthouses,
I fee ships,
I clear the depth,
I clear the ports,
To find myself....

I divide the roads,
I sum the clouds,
I count the stars,
To explain myself...

I say goodbye to the birds,
I calm butterflies,
I drown in the twilight,
To calm myself...

I count the dawns,
I bridge the days,
I skip years,
so as not to hurt myself...

The words are leaving,
The nights are coming,
I do not lose strength,
To save myself...

Under the lamp,
To write something else,
Until I lose the strength,
Until I turn off...

I listen:
The grass is waking up,
The rain caresses,
The wind carries...

I look:
Autumn is golden,
The snow is white,
Spring fades away from me...

I don't know where I am anymore,
and I don't even know who I am.

But I believe –
In clover,
in a leaf on a branch,
in rosemary, in a calyx of lily of the valley,

I will be born,
I will see everything...

Rade Kokić
Beograd

The story of a virus

Hi guys ... I'm a virus, you've probably all heard of me. My name is CORONA virus. I traveled from a distant world, people and children are afraid of me, but I am not so dangerous for everyone. In fact, I am dangerous for those who do not know how to drive me away. Don't be afraid! We just need to take a lot of vitamins, wash our hands regularly, clean and ventilate our rooms. That's how I disappear. I will leave and I will never return.

One day as I was sitting on the fence of a yard in the neighborhood, I met a boy and a girl who were playing in the yard. I watched them and saw the joy in their game. I wanted to play with them too. Although I shouted, they did not hear my wishes, they laughed and ran around. I was angry and I jumped on the boy's jacket, climbed up and sat on his shoulder. I thought that I could stay there so that the boy would get sick and wouldn't be able to play, but his jacket smelled very nice, even though he was playing outside, he was clean. Their game became even more interesting, and my anger slowly disappeared and since the boy was so neat, there was no place for me to stay. Since the whole family is now telling us that it is not good to go out, I wanted to warn them and explain why is that. They were riding a bike, and I was just standing on the boy's shoulder, it became even more fun and I was happy together with them. I felt like I was flying, because of the wind that was getting stronger and stronger. They soon got tired of riding their bikes, so they started playing with cars,

and I jumped up and sat in the green car. It was great, I saw so many beautiful houses and forests. Suddenly, that ride was interrupted by the anger of the boy who threw all the cars, and I jumped on the girl Lana's dress. Her dress also smelled nice. Lana played with her puppets and sang various songs while walking. A relaxing walk helped us meet many insects, ladybugs, butterflies, and even bees that worked hard. One of them started flying towards us and the girl shouted: "Oh, oh, a bee!". She called the boy and they started running towards the house. She ran so fast that I thought I was going to fall, but still I just slipped and hung on a sleeve, so I entered the house with them. She pushed the door and at that moment an unfamiliar voice called: "Chillldrenn! You know what's next after the game?" The children answered: "Yes, Mom, handwashing!" They ran to one room, and I looked around where I could settle down. My looking around was interrupted by some splashing, and that liquid reached right up to my head. I started to lose my breath, to fall, and the water took me far, far away. I didn't know where I was and I would never be able to go back to them. I later realized it was soap and warm water. They drove me away. I realized how nice it is to be a child and how happy children are when they are healthy. I had no place with them.

Riddles

1. I am left and right
But the colors are different,
I protect many hands,
From infectious diseases? (a glove)
2. Sometimes it happens
and is very loud
everyone runs away from me
when they hear "achoo"? (a sneeze)

3. I clean the dirt,
I look after all people and children,
I smell nice
And water is my friend,
who am I, do you know? (a soap)

4. Who takes care of you
When the virus comes,
When someone sneezes,
For virus to disappear (a doctor)

Virus

The virus is everywhere now
Socializing is forbidden,
In order to stay healthy,
Avoid sneezing.
There is no handshaking as before,
Take care of your health.
Be neat much more,
Wash your hands.
Put the mask on your face often,
If you really have to go somewhere
The virus is hidden in some place,
But soon it will leave.
Ako baš moraš negde ići
Virus se sakrio na neko mesto,
Ali će brzo otići.

Preschool institution
"The forest fairy"
Kragujevac

The Red Cross of Serbia

The Red Cross of Serbia is the oldest and largest humanitarian, independent and voluntary organization and the only national society in the Republic of Serbia.

The mission of the Red Cross is to alleviate human suffering, and the specific tasks are: to provide assistance to vulnerable people in warfare, natural environmental and other disasters, to save endangered lives and human health and to spread knowledge about international humanitarian law, to act preventively and educate citizens in the field of health and social protection and to promote human values in society, as well as to provide social protection and care. The Red Cross of Serbia carries out its activities in accordance with the Law on the Red Cross and international standards.

In Serbia, the Red Cross was founded on the initiative of Dr. Vladan Djordjevic on February 6, 1876. The first president was Metropolitan (archbishop) Mihajlo Jovanovic. Most people in Serbia know that the Red Cross of Serbia is the oldest and largest humanitarian organization in the country, but probably few people know that there are 191 National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in the world today, as well as that the Red Cross of Serbia is one of the fifteen oldest Red Cross organizations. We can certainly be proud of this fact. The way in which the Serbian society responded to the humanitarian needs in the

second half of the 19th century, and even the founding of the Red Cross, which resulted from that, shows the progressiveness and humanity that characterized it.

The Red Cross of Serbia also showed its uniqueness in the Serbo-Bulgarian wars, during which the Serbian Red Cross Society performed the evacuation and care of wounded with its medical vehicles (45) and mobile hospitals (37) The Serbian Society of the Red Cross convinced the Supreme Commander, King Milan Obrenovic to allow the transport of aid form European societies of the Red Cross through Serbia for Bulgaria, with which Serbia was at war, respecting the Geneva Convention. To this day, this is a unique example of respect for the Geneva Convention in this way.

The main goal of the Red Cross of Serbia has always been to help people and communities in need, on the one hand, and to motivate people to become more humane, on the other hand, whereby the Red Cross contributes to the development of the community and society. Of course, the main motive of the work is to be on the path of building a more humane society.

Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross

The Fundamental Principles are an expression of the doctrine of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Although they did not exist from the very beginning, they can be recognized in the basic ideas that led to the creation of the Red Cross. The work of Jean Pictet “Red Cross Principles”, published in 1956, is of the greatest importance for the development and definition of the Fundamental Principles. The Fundamental principles were officially proclaimed at the 20th International Conference in 1965 in Vienna. It is very important to emphasize that due to their adoption at the International Conference, they bind all constituent parts of the International Movement, but also all member states of the Geneva Conventions.

In achieving these goals and tasks, the Red Cross of Serbia helps all people, without any direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds, especially because of race, color, gender, nationality, social origin, birth or similar status, religion, political or other beliefs, property status, culture, language, age or mental or physical disability.

The work of the Red Cross of Serbia is based on the General and Fundamental principles of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent:

HUMANITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

IMPARTIALITY

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

NEUTRALITY

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

INDEPENDENCE

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

UNITY

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

UNIVERSALITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

821.163.41-32(082.2)
821.163.41-32

TIME Without Time : life in the time of Coronavirus
: how did you spend your time in isolation? / [editors
Nataša Todorović, Milutin Vračević]. - Belgrade : The Red
Cross of Serbia, 2020 (Mali Požarevac : GrafoIN). - 141
str. ; 21 cm

Tiraž 300. - Str. 7-8: Time Without Time : the contest of
the Red Cross of Serbia / Miloš Janković, Gordana Vlajić,
Majo Danilović. - Str. 9-10. COVID-19 Virus Epidemic /
Nataša Todorović, Brankica Janković.

ISBN 978-86-80205-82-3

COBISS.SR-ID 25758985

