

## How Will This Pandemic Affect Poetry?

by Julia Alvarez

Will the lines be six feet apart?

Will these hexameters be heroic like Homer's?

(Will) (each) (word) (have) (to) (be) (masked) (?)

Will there be poetry insecurity?

Will there be enough poetry to go around?

Will poems be our preferred form of travel?

Will we undertake odysseys searching for Ithacas inside us?

Will poetry go viral?

Will its dis/ease infect us?

Will it help build up antibodies against indifference?

Will poems be the only safe spaces where we can gather together:

enter their immense silences,

see snakes slithering inside sestinas,

listen to nightingales singing on the boughs of odes—

hark! a lark in the terza rima,

a hawk in a haiku?

What if only poetry will see us through?

What if this poem is the vaccine already working inside you?

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