



HAIKU  
IN THE  
TIME  
OF  
七  
蕉  
之  
像

COVID  
19

WAYNE SCHLEGEL

## **Haiku in the time of covid-19**

**1**

**I never noticed  
how beautiful your ears are  
behind your masked face**

**2**

**We will save the day  
just like our superheroes:  
Off with those PJ's!**

**3**

**Maybe we should leave  
a plate of Christmas cookies—  
the Amazon truck!**

**4**

**Now I will arrange  
all the things in my back drawer  
and do it again**

**5**

**Love in covid times:  
I'll shelter in your place if  
you shelter in mine**

**6**

**Retreating to caves,  
ancient monks gave all away  
to have what we have**

**7**

**Left's dead count's too high  
while the right it counts too low—  
It's obvious, right?**

**8**

**Underneath the mask:  
how easy to meditate  
while counting our breaths**

**9**

**Not much difference:  
at our best we always are  
working from our home**

**10**

**I've often wondered  
where my life begins and ends—  
tape marks on the floor**

**11**

**Haven't we always  
been spending our days waiting  
for things to open?**

**12**

**We finally have  
all the time we need to start  
procrastinating**

**13**

**Did you ever know  
how many wonderful things  
are in our closet?**

**14**

**Please don't change for me  
and I will not change for you:  
we'll hide the mirror**

**15**

**Rereading old books  
I see the person I thought  
I wanted to be**

**16**

**Doctors on TV  
now once again make house calls.  
Ah, the good old days!**

**17**

**Good things will happen,  
to those who wait—so how long  
can you hold your breath?**

**18**

**Social distancing—  
so many shy people are  
now patriotic**

**19**

**At all who mocked them  
veiled Muslim women chuckle—  
shopper mask hijabs!**

**20**

**I crossed the street when  
I saw you coming maskless:  
What did you expect?**

**21**

**“He/she has nice eyes”  
was used to pan someone’s looks.  
Now we’re all gorgeous**

**22**

**Please tell me the truth:  
Does this mask make me look fat?  
Wait, don’t answer that.**

**23**

**How odd it now seems:  
we are slowing down our lives  
by using more Zoom**

**24**

**Socrates once said,  
“I know that I know nothing.”  
Covid experts thrive**

**25**

**The intersection—  
medicine and politics—  
a thin cotton mask**

**26**

**Modern paradox:  
you're a fool to wear a mask,  
a fool if you don't**

**27**

**Your turn to curtsy  
on the sidewalk, mine to bow:  
six-foot circle dance**

**28**

**I've got so much time  
to sit and read my mail now.  
My box is empty.**



**29**

**Our children study  
online all day—their reward?  
They want more screen time**

**30**

**MSNBC,  
CNN, Fox pandemics:  
not the same virus**

**31**

**Brecht said he who laughs  
has not been told the bad news  
(I guess no TV)**

**32**

**Viral pandemic,  
Economic ruin, riots:  
So, what's for dinner?**

**33**

**Time to open up:  
like a jagged tin can or  
flower to the sun?**

**34**

**Mindfulness matters;  
the guru says be here now—  
like we have a choice?**

**35**

**It's hard not to feel  
like subjects in the paintings  
of Edward Hopper**

**36**

**Marching in the streets,  
no haircut in months—feels like  
the sixties again!**

**37**

**Three generations  
now under one roof, just like  
in the old country!**

**38**

**Who is that masked man?  
William Tell Overture in  
the supermarket**

**39**

**Appreciation:  
Parents marvel that teachers  
really like their job**

**40**

**I never knew snacks  
could add: try checking their math  
on the bathroom scale**

**41**

**Freshman fifteen in  
college: now has become the  
corona fifteen**

**42**

**If Time's all we have,  
seems we have more of it now.  
We are indeed rich.**

**43**

**Well-deserved reward:  
stop work at home and enjoy  
restful staycation!**

**44**

**Ah, my dear old friends!  
My arms are so long I can  
hug you from six feet**

**45**

**Skype, Zoom, Messenger  
Hangouts, Meet, WebEX, Join.me—  
Please be my neighbor**

**46**

**Surfing the virus  
waiting for the perfect wave:  
The Endless Summer**

**47**

**The Places You'll Go!  
Oh, just think, says Dr. Seuss!  
Yup, just think, just think**

**48**

**They're strange bedfellows  
Politics and medicine  
hogging the blankets**

**49**

**Get outside and play!  
But it's fun to stay inside  
and play with my toys.**

**50**

**Take time—smell flowers,  
value people and show love.  
Covid's not our boss!**

**51**

**Look at me closely.  
Can you tell if I'm smiling?  
I'm wearing a mask.**

**52**

**Open or closed schools?  
Education's Golden Rule:  
Keeping minds open**

**53**

**It is not that hard:  
Learn to dance with your mask on.  
Listen to your heart.**

**54**

**The best year so far—  
lots of time to get to know  
the people I know**

**55**

**Novel corona  
they call it. Has it really  
taught us something new?**

**56**

**People are talking  
about safe bubbles of friends.  
Careful they don't pop!**

**57**

**Black, Blue, White, All Lives—  
Which Matter? For the virus  
It's No Lives Matter!**

**58**

**Voltaire suggested  
we tend our garden. I'll try  
weeding my haiku**

**59**

**Asymptomatic—  
something for us to hope for  
and something to fear**

**60**

**Old joke with new twist:  
To make God laugh you tell him  
your post-covid plans**



**61**

**OK. Try this out:**

**Do not think about covid.**

**Ha! Ha! You cheated!**

**62**

**Irrational hope!**

**How is it looking today?**

**Irrational fear!**

**63**

**Irrational fear!**

**How did you feel yesterday?**

**Irrational hope!**

**64**

**Time for unity!**

**Already we're united:**

**Mutual distrust!**

**65**

**Painter Edvard Munch  
did survive the Spanish flu—  
such a happy guy!**

**66**

**Disney, FDR,  
Woodrow Wilson all beat flu!  
Yay, team, we can too!**

**67**

**Kafka had flu, too.  
Will we wake up as insects?  
Metamorphosis**

**68**

**Such a troubled world!  
I can't fix any of it  
so I write haiku**

**69**

**Haiku touch nature  
but the covid virus feels  
so unnatural**

**70**

**Give a man a fish  
and he'll eat. Teach him haiku  
and the pond ripples**

**71**

**Jim Crow blues, 'Nam rock  
Forties' swing and ghetto rap—  
Where's covid music?**

**72**

**South Seas cargo cult.  
Primitive, right? Not us!  
Waiting for vaccine.**

**73**

**Virtual work gives**

**Virtual satisfaction**

**Virtual pay, too**

**74**

**Waiting on vaccine**

**Godot was more punctual**

**Nothing to be done**

**75**

**Ever feel on hold?**

**Waiting for life to pick up?**

**Call again later**

**76**

**Yeats dance updated:**

**How can we tell the patient**

**from the virus, friend?**

**77**

**Trump mask, Biden mask  
Fashion too joins medicine  
Who wore it better?**

**78**

**Beauty is pinching,  
so maybe this pandemic  
has some beauty tips**

**79**

**Wow, how beautiful  
emerging from our cocoon  
we will someday be!**

**80**

**Boccaccio wrote  
of plague then Defoe, Camus—  
some real page turners**

**81**

**Today I enroll:  
First online class. Should I bring  
virtual apple?**

**82**

**Testing the waters  
Wine outside with distanced friends:  
Old age rebellion**

**83**

**The Sturgis bikers—  
a mushroom cloud of droplets—  
Heroes? Madmen? Jerks?**

**84**

**Black Death: Champ Killer.  
Dirty Harry to Covid,  
Feeling lucky, punk?**

**85**

**Covid denial?**

**Rage? Bargaining? Depression?**

**What's your favorite stage?**

**86**

**Socrates update:**

**The unvaccinated life**

**is still worth living**

**87**

**Like with Plato's cave,**

**lockdown escape will blind us,**

**so will our return**

**88**

**How dark is our heart?**

**Kurtz: The horror! The horror!**

**Weep for all stricken.**

**89**

**Covid Denial:  
they think that there is no “I”  
or “us” in virus**

**90**

**Mindless escapism:  
We looked down on that but now  
looking pretty good**

**91**

**Wearing masks saves face—  
Social pressure maybe but  
literally true**

**92**

**Left-wing or right-wing  
difference in politics  
not chicken, not life**



**93**

**Shakespeare's Hamlet asked,  
To be or not to be. Yup,  
it's just that simple.**

**94**

**Beggars on the street  
are now masked like the doctors.  
What's their prognosis?**

**95**

**Tennessee Williams:  
Life's a casting off process.  
Wanna chuck something?**

**96**

**Magical thinking:  
If our wishes were vaccines...  
We'd love each other**

**97**

**Godfather update:**

**Mask up for your friends, mask more  
for your enemies**

**98**

**So scared while reading  
Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death"  
I put on my mask**

**99**

**So go ask Dumas—  
The Man in the Iron Mask—  
Did he go too far?**

**100**

**Feeling tough these days?  
Volunteer for vaccine trials  
It's covid roulette!**

**101**

**They say that death is  
a lagging indicator—  
you feel better now?**

**102**

**There is a reason,  
some folks say, for everything,  
and then there's covid**

**103**

**It's an ill wind that  
blows no one any good so  
start blowing, covid!**

**104**

**Bergman's Seventh Seal  
We know that Death cheats at chess:  
It's your move, Covid**

**105**

**Our masks like cocoons  
hide our chrysalis' change:  
We will be lovely**

**106**

**Self-improvement time!  
Lose weight, stop drinking, eat right!  
Maybe tomorrow?**

**107**

**Here's a covid joke:  
What finally cured covid?  
Wait, wait, don't tell me**

**108**

**Early fall this year—  
leaves of red, yellow, blue. Blue?  
Wait! Discarded masks!**

**109**

**Why can't we agree,  
red and blue, to work as one?**

**No soap radio**

**110**

**Heard the one where red  
and blue agreed on covid?**

**Well, neither have I**

**111**

**Time to cut the grass  
Those blades don't distance at all—  
those selfish bastards!**

**112**

**Sci-fi invasion:  
Outer Space Covid attacks  
peaceful Inner Space**

**113**

**Biblical epic:  
Moses to Pharoah Covid,  
“Let my people go!”**

**114**

**When I look at you  
over my mask, glasses steam.  
Maybe I’m in love**

**115**

**Werner Heisenberg:  
Can tell where you get covid,  
how bad, but not both**

**116**

**First line of defense—  
Hard to dispute its power—  
Time for denial!**

**117**

**Vax denier poem:  
Herd immunity could be  
herd stupidity**

**118**

**Thinning hair in front  
and no barber in the back:  
A covid mullet**

**119**

**I write haiku but  
I must be doing it wrong:  
covid is still here**

**120**

**Confident Donald  
or critical Joe Biden?  
Who gets covid's vote?**

**121**

**There's no place like home!  
Maybe Dorothy was right.  
Now just click those heels!**

**122**

**Rich guys flee city  
to country places and say,  
"Must suck to be you"**

**123**

**Ah, nostalgia!  
Used to think we'd beat covid  
by not touching face.**

**124**

**Like Sisyphus we  
pushed our fear up hill. Is it  
time to let it go?**



**125**

**Garcia Marquez**

**fled cholera on a boat.**

**Wait, can covid swim?**

**126**

**Passing notes in class**

**it's not as much fun when it's**

**online self-study**

**127**

**Heal America.**

**Where to start? First, do no harm,**

**Said Hippocrates.**

**128**

**It's tempting to think**

**of covid as metaphor:**

**no rhyme, no reason**

**129**

**Nurse who swabbed my nose,  
was much gentler when she worked  
for Roto Router**

**130**

**“Swabs” Popeye called foes.  
How did he know long ago  
about covid tests?**

**131**

**So who was right here—  
Marx, Adam Smith, Keynes, Friedman?  
Covid says, “Whatever.”**

**132**

**Revolution now!  
Marx, Lenin, Mao, Che, Fauci!  
Overthrow covid!**

**133**

**Stream of consciousness:**

**Joyce, Faulker, Woolf, Proust, Covid**

**It's one long sentence**

**134**

**Don't think 'bout covid,  
and it goes away. Now try:**

**Don't think about it**

**135**

**Haiku math problem:**

**I write four, but post just one.**

**Will covid catch up?**

**136**

**It's Covid, Covid**

**over and over: Maybe**

**the record is scratched**

**137**

**Yeah, going viral!  
It used to be pretty cool.  
Well, now not so much**

**138**

**Insurance, condoms,  
masks. Ever meet anyone  
who wants to use them?**

**139**

**Phew, I smell a skunk!  
It's a blessing in disguise:  
I don't have covid!**

**140**

**Put a human face  
on covid. Take your time and  
look in the mirror**

**141**

**Supermarket aisle:**

**You're going wrong direction!**

**Beware covid rage**

**142**

**Kiddie joke: What is**

**red, blue and dead all over?**

**Not expecting that?**

**143**

**If I dream of you,**

**should I first put on a mask,**

**love, to keep you safe?**

**144**

**Covid courtship move:**

**Is getting her mask off, boys,**

**now the new first base?**

**145**

**He's a covid wolf:  
He'll make a pass at any  
girl with a mask on**

**146**

**Orpheus looked back  
too soon and lost his dear wife.  
Keep wearing the mask**

**147**

**Masks at nudist camp:  
careful what you show, nude face  
considered risqué**

**148**

**Now Summer's over,  
we don't have to worry much  
about mask tan lines**

**149**

**Practicing safe sex:  
it does take the romance out  
kissing through a mask**

**150**

**Who do experts think  
really won last night's debate?  
Polls say covid did**

**151**

**Childhood rules apply  
to masks, be careful with whom  
you play peak-a-boo**

**152**

**Some day we will say  
All I really need to know  
I learned with covid**

**153**

**There's Pascal's Wager  
to consider each morning  
when donning your mask**

**154**

**Mustached crossdressers  
much bolder during covid  
while wearing face masks**

**155**

**Bank tellers get spooked  
now when customers enter  
without their masks on**

**156**

**It's a poor poet  
who blames his material:  
Shape up there, covid!**



**157**

**Washing hands again,  
I'm atoning for something  
like Lady Macbeth**

**158**

**Halloween question:  
are the scariest costumes  
the ones without masks?**

**159**

**Yankee style Covid:  
quarter million sugar skulls  
for Day of the Dead**

**160**

**Our own Hobson's choice—  
politics or medicine.  
Must we really choose?**

**161**

**Last call! Trump! Biden!**

**Ya place your bets, folks, and see  
who took the pulse right**

**162**

**Election's over**

**It's time to refocus on  
what is important**

**163**

**Election results**

**We think it's so hard to wait  
Covid's kicking back**

**164**

**Flip a coin to choose**

**Presidential race too close  
Covid coin: two heads**

**165**

**Poll numbers not true?**

**Only one is accurate—**

**the one Covid keeps**

**166**

**It's time for healing**

**Maybe someone should tell that**

**to Mister Covid**

**167**

**Civil War's over**

**why can't we get rid of the**

**uncivil discourse?**

**168**

**“Vaccine” comes from “cow”**

**Medicine and politics**

**will really milk this**

**169**

**Vacceen: pretty name  
for girls this year, she is both  
safe and seductive**

**170**

**New soap opera:  
tramp Vacceen trying to wreck  
Covid's happy home**

**171**

**They read vests weren't safe.  
No life vests on Titanic  
for anti-vaxxers**

**172**

**Tolstoy's families:  
does his famous quote hold true  
in these covid times?**

**173**

**The old Dance of Death:  
Medieval allegory  
still seems relevant**

**174**

**Alice Wonderland:  
Red Queen says off with their heads:  
those covid prophets**

**175**

**Covid Club rule one:  
Don't talk about Covid Club.  
Well, just shove the rules!**

**176**

**You have got Cooties!  
kids shouted before covid  
then It changed the game**

**177**

**The really cautious  
watch General Hospital  
wearing covid masks**

**178**

**Covid Solomon:  
Just let Blue and Red go rip  
their nation in half**

**179**

**There once was a girl  
from Nantucket got covid,  
naw, that's not funny!**

**180**

**Today's kids are chaste  
saving themselves for their pods  
not removing masks**

**181**

**Kids can't wait to sign  
each other's masks: they now will  
be the new yearbooks**

**182**

**Covid innocence:  
accidentally lose it  
you can't get it back**

**183**

**It's covid role play:  
Doctor Fauci to Covid,  
So who's your daddy?**

**184**

**What will you miss most—  
Turkey, football, politics—  
come this Thanksgiving?**

**185**

**Frost's poem "Mending Wall"  
panned covid: Something there is  
doesn't love a wall**

**186**

**Hey, Ms Kubler-Ross,  
in what stage of covid grief  
we supposed to be?**

**187**

**Who'll hold the patent  
if we reinvent ourselves?  
Will it be covid?**

**188**

**Archibald Macleish  
said fall's the human season—  
covid winter's here**



**189**

**Hairs can be ingrown  
but not as painful as our  
covid ingrown souls**

**190**

**Covid precaution:  
it's just as obvious as  
the mask on your face**

**191**

**Stretching, contorting,  
not finding the perfect pose:  
that's covid yoga**

**192**

**"Mama don't let your  
babes grow up to be doctors,"  
sang Covid Willie**

**193**

**Social media:**

**it's just not kind to covid—  
it gets so few “likes”**

**194**

**Some still not convinced?**

**Really? The only hoax is  
covid is a hoax**

**195**

**Covid honky tonk:**

**The girls all get prettier  
when it's masking time**

**196**

**Post hashtag Me Too's**

**(shame, shame) for covid abuse  
on maskless spreaders**

**197**

**POW's**

**flag is black, what color for  
covid prisoners?**

**198**

**Covid Hannukah:**

**going without masks is like  
spinning the dreidel**

**199**

**Monty Python sketch**

**“Bring out your dead”—it now seems  
oddly prophetic**

**200**

***In A Few Good Men***

**Jack: You can't handle the truth!**

**Did he mean covid?**

**201**

**In new Christmas songs  
home for the holidays is  
taken for granted**

**202**

**Cheer up, covid friends,  
Dante said, I went through Hell  
then found Paradise**

**203**

**Covid poetry,  
instead of rhyme or reason,  
sickening rhythm**

**204**

**World War trope update:  
no atheists in foxholes  
just covid prayers**

**205**

**Is that a vaccine  
in your pocket or are you  
happy to see me?**

**206**

**You can pick your nose  
your friends, too, but not your friend's  
nose behind the mask**

**207**

**Spin the bottle game  
has evolved with time, lucky  
kids now can rub masks**

**208**

**Another teen game  
Seven Minutes in Heaven:  
no masks in closets**

**209**

**The covid solstice:  
darkest day of the year means  
tomorrow's brighter**

**210**

**Santa checks list twice  
Gonna give Covid some coal:  
vaccine in stocking**

**211**

**Of course two front teeth,  
but then maybe some vaccine  
for Christmas stocking**

**212**

**The war on Christmas—  
we know who's the enemy—  
don't let covid win!**

**213**

**Santa is exempt!  
declares Anthony Fauci,  
a right jolly elf!**

**214**

**Twelve days of Chistmas  
Might just be the time you spend  
in your quarantine**

**215**

**Under mistletoe  
we will need to kiss ourselves  
for covid safety**

**216**

**Camels and COVID  
Don't let them into the tent  
Or under the mask**

**217**

**Covid Zoom mullet:  
wearing business suit up top  
party pants below**

**218**

**Hang on till vaccine:  
Survival brings guilt but it's  
guilt we can live with**

**219**

**Flattening the curve:  
Life used to be so simple—  
little did we know**

**220**

**Our resolution  
for New Year's: work together  
so we'll all survive**



**221**

**Titanic again  
same guys rushing the lifeboats  
now demand vaccine**

**222**

**Children now rehearse  
lines to be said in old age:  
covid memories**

**223**

**Covid war stories  
will get better as we age  
our odd glory days**

**224**

**New Richard the Third  
Covid winter glorious:  
summer sun of Pfizer**

**225**

**Aesop's sour fox  
His vaccine reaction was  
anaphylactic**

**230**

**Covid nostalgia  
a premature luxury  
prevaccination**

**231**

**Souvenir T-shirt:  
Gramma went maskless and all  
I got was covid**

**232**

**Pfizer, Moderna,  
even Astrazeneca—  
all great baby names**

**233**

**Em Dickinson:**

**Hope is the thing with feathers**

**Time to get flapping!**

**234**

**Greeks took Troy with craft,  
not strength; so let's get sneaky  
with our covid foe**

**235**

**What human touch means  
is lost until last moments—  
lonely covid bed**

**236**

**Can we stop fighting  
proxy wars in shadowland?  
Covid's real, real, real**

**237**

**When it's all over,  
can we shed the covid skins  
we no longer need?**

**238**

**Freudian covid  
many choices, mine's just blue  
I've got mask envy**

**239**

**Winners write his'try  
How will we pick the winners  
in the covid war?**

**240**

**West African folks  
have griots. Who's among us  
writing covid notes?**

**241**

**New covid grad speech:  
Set high expectations or  
at least stay alive**

**242**

**Sartre's *No Exit*  
Hell's other people's covid  
Devil's in details**

**243**

**So go not gently  
said Thomas: rage, rage against  
the long covid night**