

Waiting for the Virus With Apologies to C.P. Cavafy and E. Keeley

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What are we waiting for, assembled in our houses?

The virus is due here soon.

Why isn't anything going on in Parliament?

Why aren't the members sitting there and legislating?

Because the virus is on its way.

What's the point of members making laws now?

Once the virus is in our houses, it will do the legislating.

Why did our Leader get up so early,

and why is he sitting at the entrance to Parliament,

flanked by experts?

Because the virus is arriving

and he's intent on returning it whence it came.

He's even got a scroll to wave,

loaded with titles and imposing names.

Why have our ministers of state come out today
wearing their best Armani suits and shirts?

Why have they put on Bulgari watches pearl earrings,
rings sparkling with sapphires and emeralds?

Why is the Speaker carrying the royal mace,
beautifully worked in silver and gold?

Because the virus is coming today

and things like that might impress a virus.

Why don't our distinguished orators turn up as usual
to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

Because the virus is coming today
and it pays no heed to rhetoric and public speaking.

Why all the sudden puzzlement, all the anxiety?
(People's faces have become so serious.)
Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,
why is everyone going home lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and the virus is here.
Some of our men just in from the border say
there are more viruses on the way.

Now what's going to happen to us with this virus?
Some say it's a kind of solution.