

When the world came to a standstill

- **Sudha Shrotria**

*The world stood still
Against everyone's will;
The enemy so sly no one could see
Attacking mortals like you and me;
Ruthlessly taking lives,
Without bullets or knives;
A war without ammunition
Sparing not a single nation;
Threatening every human life
Lavish rich and poor who strive;
Young and old alike
Faced with the dilemma of how to survive;
No one could predict
Who next would be hit;
Neighbours living in fear
Skirting near and dear;
Conversations stopped,
Borders blocked,
People living in dread
Of the virus spread;
Forced into a bubble
Not knowing
If there was an end to their trouble;
And as the pandemic grew,
Except the frontline warriors few
Putting their lives on line
Helping the sick to survive;
People made to stay home*

*Compelled not to step out or roam;
Be it a mighty nation or a small town
All forced into a lock-down,
In an endeavour
To prevent people from the kill;
And the world came to a standstill.*

*In the quiet of nothingness
Amidst the silence of the streets,
A stage was set to witness
And greet,
Our other partners on planet earth
Who began to reclaim their worth;
The winged ones joyful and free
Spring from tree to tree
Sing fearlessly and tweet;
Peacocks dance in the street;
And eight little geese in a row
On an otherwise busy road,
Follow their mother with her partner in tow.
The deer family at the intersection basks,
No longer afraid of the officials in masks
No sound of passing trains or planes,
The big cat freely strolls in the lanes;
An elephant on the road chases a man,
Who in lock-down dares to be out in his Van*

*As humans retreat and activities stop,
The polluted air ever so hard to endure
Is now fresh and pure like on the mountain top.
And as the rivers begin to breathe again*

And become blue once more

Dolphins playfully appear near the shore.

Nature starts to regain

What humans long managed to tame

How long will this recuperation last?

Will humans take this opportunity rare?

Stop to reason and to others be fair?

Give up their desire to acquire,

And learn to care and share?

Recognise the true worth

Of living in harmony

On this bountiful planet earth.