

UNCOVID—a 55-word story

H.S. Wald PhD*

Life upended
Demon invasion
Disruption, Body violence
Fright, Terror, Dread, Trauma
Vulnerable, Uncertain
Face the Unknown
Anxious, Restless
Stress unrelenting
Loss of control
Isolated, Lonely
Anger, Gloom
Suffering
Dashed dreams
Life can be Unfair
Need Resilience
Courage, Hope
Kindness helps
Life can turn on a dime
Yes, hard to have a husband with brain cancer

Afterword

I was struck by adjectives describing the experience of the COVID-19 global pandemic. They resonated with me, with emotions I experienced (and have read about others experiencing) as a family caregiver of a loved one with an unanticipated diagnosis of a devastating illness. They came at me like piercing bullets, hitting targets already inside me; hence, the structure of this prose. Fifty-five word stories¹, as brief pieces of creative writing, have been called “small

jewels” for personal reflection and teaching in medical education and practice, and tools for professional growth².

I gave it a try in 2009 at a seminar², published it in 2017³, and was struck by the utility and power of this “lean machine of prose”³ to capture experience, serving as a succinct “meaning-making vessel”⁴. I hope that this story might help readers pause, reflect, remember, and respond to suffering, both COVID and “UNCOVID,” with compassion for others and for oneself.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

I have read and understood *Current Oncology*'s policy on disclosing conflicts of interest, and I declare that I have none.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

*Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Providence, RI, U.S.A.

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