

From The Plague Year 2020

by Daniel Harris

I went to Costco and bought virgin olive oil, a bag of lemons, a bag of limes, a bag of shallots, a pack of 6 tins of tuna, and a 90-pack box of EmergenC. Everyone in the checkout lines had paper towels, toilet paper and hand sanitizer. After I checked out, the lady who scanned my cart said to me “Why don't you have paper products?” I said, “I guess I can wash my ass.”

I walked around the neighborhood with my wife today. The music emanating from housing was louder than yesterday and there were many angry arguments.

Watering my garden this morning there was a big row between the man and his girlfriend in the Section 8 housing across the street. The woman ran to her car and tried to run over the man. She hit a tree, backed off and sped down the street.

There were no paper products, cleaners, disinfectants, pasta, canned goods, dried beans, hot dogs, brats, sausage, bacon or other preserved meats in the grocery store. I looked for baby wipes and Preservision for my wife. None to be had. The meat counter was empty. I left with wine, potatoes, lettuce, tomatoes and bananas. To cheer up my spouse, I bought some lilies.

My cat died a month ago. There are still a dozen cans of cat food. It would work in pasta as long as I could get tomatoes. There were no canned tomatoes, pasta sauce, or tomato paste in the stores.

I'm a good bread maker, but there was no flour either in the stores, or on-line. Forget yeast.

Today I made Clorox wipes from a bottle of Clorox, boiled water and rags (1/3 cup of Clorox to a gallon of water either spray or wipe.) Not as elegant as what one could buy, if you could buy it, but works fine, at least if you keep it on a surface for six minutes according to Clorox.

I heard from a neighboring apartment, "I can't fuck you anymore, but I can whip your ass."

Beautiful flowers are blooming on my hibiscus tree outside my kitchen window.

The black & cream swallowtail butterflies come to my purple porter weed blooms. The mockingbirds are in full mating song. The blue jays bathe and drink in my fountain as do the raccoons at two in the morning. Hummingbirds come to the flowers of an unknown tree.

My giant Cuban laurel tree is dropping its third crop of fruit in a year. Messy, but indicative of its health.

My wife has a small fever and is terrified she will die. I try to calm her. 80% of people with the coronavirus have no or minor symptoms. She slams the door to her office.

Another Day

So today was basically mellow. The blue jays argued over who would bathe first in my fountain. When a squirrel showed up, the birds left, but the doves took their place. Our local woodpecker, apparently recovered from a day long headbanging session, returned to the bamboo grove across the street. He found a nice three pitch groove and kept it up until he realized the mockingbirds were comping him. Ain't nature wonderful?

The landlord of the Section 8 house across the street put up a For Rent sign. She's a tall skinny breast-implanted former pole dancer who is fun to watch, but dreadful to engage in conversation. She wanted to know if I was leaving since I have covers on my cars. (I have four Laurel Oaks in my yard and the leaves and pollen this time of the year is devastating to car paint and our sinuses.) I explained the issue but assured her I would watch her property for intruders since between my wife and I we were on patrol almost 24/7.

On my morning walk I noticed a difference in people's behavior. Persons I didn't know went out of their way to keep a six-foot distance. People I knew seemed so deprived of human contact they stopped me and spewed a ton of words. Most were like me in their 60's or 70's. One woman, unleashed such a torrent of words after never speaking to me for 9 years, that I was dumbfounded. I did see my former councilwoman and her dog Chris, who does tricks for me for treats. He's a small fellow full of personality. His owner and I traded bread recipes.

I can't believe the ignorant patriotism rampant in this country. Our president is killing his people, yet the yahoo's rally around him. There is a meme in the dark web that says the administration wants all the old people to die from coronavirus so they can kill social security. The empowering of the ignorant, the crazy and the usurpers by social media is a travesty of democracy. Is free speech that destroys a country a first amendment right? I guess so.

Meanwhile, my garden flourishes thanks to my watering. We have had only a trace of rain since January. Hardly green Florida, though everything is green thanks to dewfall.

The snowbirds emptied the grocery shelves and then fled back north. I hope they donated all those canned goods to food banks. But what are they doing with 300 rolls of toilet paper? I read on a

plumbing site that toilets that are a combination of bidet and toilet are big in upscale homes.

Using water instead of paper is probably a good idea. It's worked in Europe for generations. But uptight Christian Americans, thought it was a sex thing because prostitutes used them and they, of course are immoral sinners. Maybe it's related to not shaving armpits.

But I digress. A beautiful day today in SW Florida. Temps in the 70's and 80's, light winds with a sea breeze in the afternoon. Low humidity and perfect tourist weather, except no tourists and no stores, restaurants or hotels, no beaches open, *ipso facto* no people.

The best thing that happened today was the cardinal pair came back to their tree in my back yard. They are great to watch and hear.

