

Beginning with Gildas's *The History of the Ruin of Britain*, the stories we've read in this class often concern grief, loneliness, the loss of normalcy, and, more hopefully, humanity's amazing ability to endure despite terrible hardships. Consequently, these works speak to us even more now that we, too, are living in a time of crisis. For this extra-credit assignment, please discuss one of the poems or stories we've read for this class, explaining why it resonates with you during this difficult period. Be sure to cite lines that you find most relevant and compelling. This assignment will be submitted to KSU's library archives, which has begun to keep a record of responses to the Coronavirus. So, we will be part of the historical record! Remember to provide a title and your name. You also may want to provide a brief biography for your future audience.

Gabriel Carrillo, [REDACTED],

The Wanderer is as Lonely as I Am

The story of *The Wanderer* relates to me because we both feel as if we are alone. The narrator states that the Wanderer is often alone whenever the day starts, or as when the first light of dawn hits (8-9). In relation, I am also in the same state. Since this pandemic hit, I had to migrate to my parents' house, which is up in Fort Lee, Virginia. My background contains my childhood portraying in a small town in southern Georgia. As my father is in the military, he took on the duty of stationing up north, after I had gone off to college. In effect, since I have not had the time to live here and socialize with neighbors or other teenagers, I have grown to become a homebody and only speak to my friends from home, over social media. Times like this cause extreme loneliness and hard times to be at my happiest. Motivation to do things, such as work and school, has decreased. In comparison, the Wanderer is left feeling alone as I am this hard time.

Sarina Ball, [REDACTED], Sir Gaiwan and the Green Virus

The story of *Sir Gaiwan and the Green Knight* resonated most with me just as Sir Gaiwan was uncertain about his future, I am also uncertain about mine.

Everyone at the round table was afraid to fight the green knight just like everyone is scared of going out because of the Coronavirus. The fact that the knights of the round table are scared to fight is made evident by this quote from the Green Knight: "For all you cower in fear before the blow has been struck!"(line 315).

Another parallel I found is the passing of time: "A year passes swiftly never bringing the same beginning and ending seldom take the same form. And so that Yule went by, and the year ensuing, Each season in turn following the other" (line 498-501). Just as Arthur wanders aimlessly to fulfill his sworn undertaking to the Green Knight, scientists and disease researchers are searching aimlessly for a cure to the C.O.V.I.D 19 epidemic. Moreover, they probably had to make adjustments for celebration back in Camelot because they were used to celebrating with Sir Gaiwan. In fact, it probably felt weird for many to celebrate without him that year. I think this is very similar to how weird this Easter morning must have felt to churchgoers. Many

Behrman
English 2120
"The Power of Poetry" Extra-Credit Assignment
Spring 2020
2

adjustments had to be made for this Year's Easter celebration and more might have to be made for future celebrations. In quarantine time and seasons will start to blur just as they did for Sir Gaiwan. Hopefully sometime our salvation castle will appear in front of us just as it did to Sir Gaiwan. When Gaiwan fought the Green Knight he got scared in the back of his neck. I think this is similar to some people obtaining permanent lung damage after having contracted a bad strain of this disease.

Grace Lewis, [REDACTED], The Wanderer who is stuck at home
I resonated most with the story we read at the beginning of the semester, *The Wanderer*. To me, this story is about isolation, and being separated from loved ones. "just as I have had to take my own heart- often wretched, cut off from my own homeland, far from dear kinsmen..."(Line 19-21). This quote resembles almost exactly what most of us are experiencing right now. Many of us are not able to see our families due to the coronavirus. We are also in some ways extremely cut off from others and the outside world. "He who has come to know how cruel a companion is sorrow for one with few dear friends, will understand: the path of exile claims him..." (lines 29-32). This quote also reminds me of the current situation. The narrator is speaking about exile and loneliness. I feel like many of us are experiencing loneliness. We are all feeling exiled from each other. The narrator also speaks of not having friends around. I think one of the hardest parts for me so far has been not having my friends around.

Adrian Mendoza, [REDACTED], : The knight who surpassed his battles
The story that resonated with me the most is *The Faerie Queen*. This story had many adventurous twists and turns which made it enjoyable to me. I focused my interview with the Redcross Knight as I believe his characteristics make him the great knight that he is. In lines 22-25, it is explained how he has a great devotion to the Queen. "Which of all earthly things he most did crave..." (line 23). RCK is faced with many difficult battles that almost kills him. It surprised me the many enemies he encounters throughout the story. He can barely survive after each of these battles and still, he continues to have the strength to move forward on his adventure and battle other enemies. I believe we can all learn from RCK to continue moving forward during these difficult times. Many people have lost their lives due to this virus but some are still fighting to their lives. Nothing stopped RCK from defeating the dragon so we must do our best to overcome this crisis. Also, I would like to compare RCK to the front liners that are battling this crisis. While Front liners aren't battling dragons, they are doing every they can to help those that are infected and stop it from spreading. Just like RCK, front liners are the heroes of this story. While it may seem impossible, we will see the light of day soon enough.

Behrman
English 2120
"The Power of Poetry" Extra-Credit Assignment
Spring 2020
3

Ashley Howard, [REDACTED], Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

When I first started thinking about this assignment, I figured I could relate to all the tales we have examined throughout the semester. Considering, I'm glued in the house during this pandemic. But understanding I had to limit my results, I selected Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. This tale stood out to me the most because I work at Northside Hospital while in the middle of crisis, and everyday we are forced to be leaders and encounter challenges considering we are essential workers. And when we are faced with those challenges we have no alternative but to keep going and live life. Comparable to the Green Knight he took whatever challenge was thrown his way. Daily, we are fighting something we can't even see or detect the right way but have to make sure we have food, tissue, paper towel basic things that stores normally have, they do not so we are hunting for daily needs now during this crisis. Similar to the way they hunted fox and etc. One specific quote stood out the most, which helped me decide on this story. It started, "Gawain gripped his axe and gathered it on high, Advanced the left foot before him on the ground, And slashed swiftly down on the exposed part, So that the sharp blade sheared through, shattering the bones, Sank deep in the sleek flesh, split it in two, And the scintillating steel struck the ground". This was a symbol that he would not back down nor will he let somebody else defeat him. Even Gawain knew he was the weakest knight. The knight reaction reminded me of the United States & we have become weak over the course of two months. Thousands of people have lost jobs due to the work being shut down. And rightfully we are frightened, our governor, mayor, president, and tons of others are striving to keep us confident.

Nicholas Hammer, [REDACTED], A Knight Full of Battles
Sir Gawain and The Green Knight is the first story that came to my mind when I thought about relating a story to this pandemic we're currently in. In Sir Gawain and The Green Knight, the Green Knight goes from battle to battle fighting whatever is in his way in order to save who he needs to save and break free from the cage he was in. This is sort of how I feel at this particular point. Not that I am actually fighting any battles, but the fact that we as a people are fighting against a disease, fighting against isolation, fighting with our mindset, and possibly fighting with the people we live with. Battle after battle us humans keep going just like the Green Knight. Also like the Green Knight, most of us are unknown. There are celebrities who everybody knows who are trying to do their part by giving money and donating, but there are even more people who are completely unknown who are risking their lives to serve others at hospitals and doctor's

Behrman
English 2120
"The Power of Poetry" Extra-Credit Assignment
Spring 2020
4

offices. They are unknown as the Green Knight was unknown. These people are the real heroes fighting for the people who don't have the skill to do so just like the Green Knight did. This story also stuck out to me because of how long it is. This quarantine has felt like it lasted forever and that's exactly how I felt when I read this story. This was probably the longest story we have read all semester and this is also the longest we've been stuck at home in who knows how long. After skimming back through the story, lines 2331-2339 stuck out to me. It begins with "The knight kept his distance" and finishes with "Brave sir, don't act so wrathfully in this place. No one has discourteously mistreated you here". For some reason I find this funny how out of context it totally relates to what we are experiencing. Keep distance, and how a place like home nobody is necessarily doing us wrong so there is no need to be wrathful. I thought this was a cool line to note after going through this pandemic.

Alexis Tyson, [REDACTED], The Wanderer Who Kept Wandering

Covid 19 and the spread of this novel virus has created a world crisis that quickly halted life as it had been. Billions around the globe have together experienced a wide range of emotions towards this shift, including fear, loneliness, and grief. On top of everyday life challenges, the coronavirus has added many unknown variables such as one's health, finances, and future. To curb the continued spread of the virus, social distancing has been strongly advised in varying degrees around the world. Here in America, a main strategy is the six feet apart rule. In Georgia we are currently in a lockdown - advised to stay at home unless we need to get essentials from the store.

Essentials such as toilet paper are harder to find, people go out in public in gloves and masks, and no groups of ten or more people together are allowed. Many are staying home, there is minimal traveling, and it is unknown when this pandemic will end.

"So this entire middle-earth tumbles and falls every day.." (Line 62-63).

People are in panic, disbelief, and sorrow. It is said to be a national shared trauma. I do believe this to be a crisis and I do believe it has and will continue to affect many. I do though, believe this should be seen in a more positive light.

I connected deeply with lines 64-65, "Therefore a man cannot become wise, before he has earned his share of winters in this world."

I have been through less than ideal living situations, abuse, addiction, and more. I say this to share an idea of my own personal tribulations or so called winters. I am by no means the wisest, but my experiences in life have shown me many darkneses. Therefore I do not wish to play victim to this crisis. Of course it has brought many tribulations to the world, but it has also brought much light. I've seen more people walking in nature than ever before in my life.

Lockdowns are clearing the air of pollutants. People are more aware of how important each and every job is as waste management workers, grocery clerks, and postal workers all continue to work regardless of the risk. The practice of social distancing creates togetherness as everyone must connect in new ways. More people are cooking, creating art, gardening, and more.

Behrman
English 2120
"The Power of Poetry" Extra-Credit Assignment
Spring 2020
5

This crisis is a winter that has blanketed the earth and made human life pause. A pause to help us remember what's important, where we came from, and where we want to go from here.

Uchechi Nwafor, [REDACTED],
Longing for affection

In this time of uncertainty, the Wanderer's despair resonates with me now more than ever."Then the friendless man awakes again, sees before him the dusky waves, the seabirds bathing, spreading their wings, frost and snow fall, mingled with hail. Then are his heart's wounds the heavier because of that." (Line 44-48) As someone who thrives off of physical touch, Covid-19 sabotaged any chance of an embrace from loved ones. Facetime is a tease but the heart knows better. Each day I am greeted by the morning tunes from the birds nest outside of my apartment; a punctual 5:30am. The world is thriving since the shelter in place. However, I am alone.

Evan Owens, [REDACTED],
Parent is to Son as Lord is to Thane.

Early in the semester, a lot of the texts we read focused on the lord/thane relationship. While not exactly the same relationship, I have a lot of respect for my parents who have supported me through every stage of my life thus far. I am currently staying with them while I complete my degree online, as paying rent in Kennesaw was a significant financial strain that I am able to avoid by living with them for the time being. During these trying times, I am adamant that I go out to do the mundane, everyday tasks that they normally complete as they are getting up there in years and are not in the best health. I am doing what I can to support, or "serve" them while the globe fights its way through this pandemic. A story I am reminded of is one of the few from this class that I will probably remember for years to come, "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." The ordeal Gawain went through in order to serve his King is obviously incomparable to the "struggles" I go through, as Gawain lopped a man's head off and traveled across the country in order to complete a task that he thought would result in the end of his life, but I still see the same principles reflected in our lives, serving those we love and respect. As Arthur is about to strike the Green Knight, Gawain asks the king to allow him to deal the blow in his place, saying that he is the weakest of the knights and should he die, he would be mourned the least (lines 354-355). My situation is not exactly the same, as I am serving my household because I am the healthiest, and stand to lose the least if I should somehow catch the virus, but the principle

Behrman
English 2120
"The Power of Poetry" Extra-Credit Assignment
Spring 2020
6

remains the same. I ask my parents to stay home until things calm down, and Gawain asks Arthur to allow him to risk himself in his place.

Kyuri Park, [REDACTED],
I am the Wanderer, I am lonely.

The Wanderer is constantly looking for someone to receive somewhat of attention to during his journey. During this whole pandemic, I have been stuck home in my apartment, being told not to exit my apartment complex if it is not for essential needs. Lines 26-29 expresses how it is possible to find someone who can comfort and accustom to give joy to an individual. I work at an essential store, exposing myself for the virus to get to me or my close ones, has made it hard for me to go out and see my friends. Late nights at a friends' house, car rides to random locations, adventuring around has come to an end until who knows when. I am described as a person who needs to physically be out and adventuring with a loved one, which this virus has made me realize I am an extrovert. COVID-19 has weakened my mental health, filling me with loneliness. Line 62-63, "Thus this middle-earth droops and decays every single day," flashed out to me because of the current situation, we are running out of toilet paper, constantly wearing gloves and masks, losing jobs, losing lives, dramatically on a daily basis. With stores that would not even close on special holidays like Easter and Thanksgiving, is closing, 6 foot tape marks all around essential stores, curfews, all around the world, we are struggling and this pandemic can happen again.

Staying Home While Seizing the Day - Grace Buckley,
[REDACTED]

I can carefully relate my quarantined experience to the poem *To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time* by Robert Herrick. This brief poem is very sexualized, but I will ignore the across the board sexual remarks and the agist approach. Instead I am paying close attention to the "carpe diem" theme that is also presented in this poem. This poem we read this week made me realize to accept the pandemic and seize this moment. I will admit that I have not been handling quarantine well. As a dance major, it is very difficult to participate in online classes, where the music glitches and no teacher can truly correct your mistakes. I should be performing in a studio and in a classroom setting. I miss my friends and I want to experience dance outside of my home, away from my (now very annoying) family. While I am young as expressed in line 9, "that age is best," this is my time to take my education and skill into my own hands. In this free time at home, I can create habits that I would like to continue after this pandemic dies down. For example, I would love to cross train and work on my cardiovascular health. This is something I have not been focused on while spending my time on campus all day. I can also reconnect with

Behrman

English 2120

“The Power of Poetry” Extra-Credit Assignment

Spring 2020

7

old friends using platforms like FaceTime or Zoom. Seeing people’s faces can make a huge difference in strengthening relationships. “Use your time” (line 13) and benefit yourself by reflecting and seizing these hard moments.