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## NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

### Viral rant

So now, we enter the "Flatten the Curve" era. OK, cool. It's like the classic old sci-fi story from *Astonishing Tales*, where the people of Earth are all crazy with war and killing each other, and then the Martians attack, and we Earthlings all suck it up and band together to repel and defeat the invaders. I've long been comfortable with the thought that pretty much nothing could ever again unite our fractured country, even a little bit. And then ... somebody in China ate a freakin' BAT? Wacky!

If you're 24 or 33 or 42 and you catch this bug, just remember, you ain't gonna turn into a leper (allegedly). You're gonna be sick, yes, but you're not gonna need the hospital (probably). You're gonna stay home, cough a lot, drink your water, eat your soup, and get it together. I'm reading this morning where the mighty Tormund, badass

warrior dude from beyond The Wall in *Game of Thrones*, just tested positive. Tormund! He reports he's fine, showing the symptoms of your basic cold, which appears to be typical for a healthy guy in his 40s.

It's us old fart geezer baby boomers that gotta watch our rear ends. A bit too much mileage on the old chassis can lead to some weak links in The Armor, chinks that get exploited by ornery little bugs. So it's time to lay low and ponder the fate of ... The Reno Rodeo? Hot August Nights? The Rib Cook-off? Burning Man?

We all knew that sooner or later, Dum Dum's luck was gonna run out. That he was gonna have to deal with a real legitimate crisis. Something a little heavier than Charlottesville and paper towels in Puerto Rico. Well, ole Twitler's Reckoning has arrived. And sure enough, his slacks dropped

around his ankles very quickly, and there they stubbornly remain. Oops. The lack of widespread testing in this country for The Virus is nothing less than a national catastrophe. I mean, are we the United States or are we freaking Uzbekistan? Corona could well be Trump's Katrina ... times a million.

I'm finding it easy to consider the coronavirus as a response to our continuously toxic behavior. Meaning The Virus as a planetary response by Gaia herself, that She is now ready to fight back against the raging slobitude of humanity, that Mother Earth is freaking fed up with our poisonous bullshit, and She's finally gonna do something about it. Of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Pestilence is a solid sender, capable of racking up some impressive stats. □



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