



## we're all in this together

Ontario's premier suggested things would "get back to normal" once COVID-19 vaccines are approved and mass-produced, as hot spots in the province entered lockdowns and Eastern Canada's Atlantic bubble was dismantled again in an effort to curb the spread of the virus. Doug Ford dangled the possibility of an end to the pandemic in announcing a retired Canadian Forces general would lead the province's vaccine distribution and vowed to support businesses struggling under stringent public health measures. Ford's comments came as urban centres in Ontario where COVID-19

province's "nightmare" monitor showed several retailers were closed on Friday, not only serve sacrifices but Tam, said and larger settings. "T

While there were no eggs, milk, or fresh produce, there were plenty of specialty gourmet items, including several kinds of high-end pasta and olive oils imported from Italy, and a number of varieties of salt favoured by chefs, including English Maldon sea salt — both regular and smoked — at \$11.99 for a 240-gram box.

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Canadians at risk of life-threatening illness, cause serious disruptions to health services and present significant challenges for areas not adequately equipped to manage complex medical emergencies." The pandemic has exacerbated long-standing, systemic health inequities related to poverty, racism and other forms of discrimination that creates conditions for COVID-19 to spread and disproportionately impact Torontonians who are Indigenous, Black or racialized, precariously employed or live on a low income, live in multigenerational or crowded housing, or experience challenges taking time off from work when ill or to isolate from others.

### Poem Statement

Job loss. Fear. Long line-ups. Supply chain disruptions. Empty store shelves. Transmission uncertainties. To mask or not to mask? Social isolation. Anxiety. Zoom-

class teaching and learning. Parodying Cat Stevens, the first pandemic wave cut deepest.

Constructed from found text in newspapers and City of Toronto press releases, this poem combines literary devices in ironic juxtaposition. The centred text content pulls out meanings and incongruities in relation to the

text below. Even the text shading and font size communicates disparity: the centred darker, larger text imposes upon and partially obliterates the lighter, smaller text on which it rests.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights all-too-familiar inequities and disparities in the social fabric. We all suffer during this global health crisis, but some among us needlessly suffer more than others. We are not all in this together. Rather, we sail the same sea in different boats.

La Portoricaine-Canadienne María Helena Auerbach Rykov vit et écrit à Tkaronto. Elle a l'honneur d'être la lauréate du Prix présidentiel de création littéraire (poésie) de 2021. Son premier recueil de poésie, *Some Conditions Apply*, a été publié dans un chaos pandémique en 2020. Plus d'informations sur <http://maryrykov.com>.

## Author's Bio

Puerto Rican-Canadian María Helena Auerbach Rykov lives and writes in Tkaronto. She is honoured to be the 2021 President's Creative Writing Award (poetry) recipient. Her first poetry collection, *some conditions apply*, published into pandemic chaos in 2020. More at <http://maryrykov.com>.



## Énoncé du poème

La perte d'emploi. La peur. Les longues files d'attente. Les magasins vides. Porter un masque ou ne pas porter un masque ? L'isolement social. L'anxiété. Assister à « l'école » virtuelle.

Construit à partir des journaux et des communiqués de presse trouvés ici à Toronto, ce poème combine des dispositifs littéraires d'une façon ironique. Le texte fait ressortir les significations et les incongruités par rapport au texte en dessous. Même l'ombrage et la taille de la police communiquent la disparité; le texte centré, plus sombre et plus grand, impose et oblitère le texte plus clair et plus petit sur lequel il repose.

La pandémie de COVID-19 met en évidence des inégalités et des disparités bien trop familières. Nous souffrons tous de cette crise sanitaire mondiale, mais certains d'entre nous souffrent inutilement plus que d'autres. Nous ne sommes pas logés à la même enseigne. Au contraire, c'est chacun pour soi.

## Bio