

A Season of Never-ending Discontent



The people in my city and in our world are reeling. In just one day, among my own very small circle of people: A cousin attended a concert for the sake of some “exuberance” in her life, came down with symptoms, and is now waiting for the results of her Covid test. If not, she would have visited with me yesterday. A dear friend attended a Memorial service for her closest friend the other day, was just informed that two other attendees had tested positive—thus, today she hunted everywhere for a Covid test and was finally told to return tomorrow. Yesterday, my rabbi had to cancel a class in order to deal with a Covid issue in his family. My assistant’s partner, a teacher, just had three breakthrough cases for fully vaccinated staff members and now everyone has to be tested. Another close friend’s friend, a man who drove for five hours to spend a week here seeing Broadway plays, found that all the plays had shut down. Some places of worship have closed.

I just cancelled my weekend plan with friends at a restaurant in one of the outer boroughs.

We have been here before. But now we are weary, sullen. The Wuhan virus, whether intentional or accidental, refuses to quit and has marked our lives forever. Too many have died.

Some are still enduring the long-term consequences of Covid. People are locked down in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The children? Too soon to tell. In my city, beloved stores remain boarded up. It is too cold to enjoy the festive, sidewalk restaurants. Sitting indoors, masked, for any kind of a performance, which I just tried to do at the opera proved too difficult, quite unpleasant—at least for me.

Making plans, cancelling plans, refusing to make plans, has unsteadied us all. Thank human inventiveness for our ability to livestream movies in our own homes. But the fearfulness, anxiety, insecurity, isolation, has had some serious mental health consequences. Some of the women in my life are psychologically bouncing off walls: Flying into royal, ranting rages, lying outright, viewing bad actors as victims whom they must defend, crying victim themselves even as they go on the attack. Some claim identities that are not their own and become mortally offended when the proverbial child tells the Empress that she is quite naked.

Is this just happening to me? Or are short tempers and wild accusations rampant? Oh, do tell.

We will all be celebrating this year in smaller groups. I would like to wish us all a Covid-free New Year but I hesitate to do so; clearly, it may not be possible.