

## Corona Time

By Robert Hilton

I looked out the sliding door of my bedroom, during a summer's evening, at you sitting on the patio, in a metal lawn chair, with a bourbon and soda in your hand. Behind you, the waterfall you built dropping its flow from bowl to bowl to bowl among the ferns and succulents babbling and mixing with the sound of Tito Puente's band. I liked the percussion; I couldn't imagine you doing a mambo. Then, I put off talking to you, Dad. Maybe I felt unwelcome.

I was in action. At that time, girls, sports, student government and high school studies were my world. Later, it was a full life, including your death. Now, alone, I'm sheltering from the Coronavirus. Now I have time for the thing put off. What were you feeling that day?

For a father, dead when you were two, and a cold now-dead mother, longing or grief?

By a promising Olympic career that became a Sales Rep. job, fulfilled or disappointed?

For your wife, and children, love, or responsibility?

About the red convertible you bought at 50 without telling Mom, autonomy, or regret?

In your treasured Sunset-worthy yard, pride, or disappointment?

Of the tumor in your stomach, you first felt that morning, acceptance, or fear?

In your faith, confidence or uncertainty?

Your reaction to the woman in a tight red dress on Tito's album, aroused, or disinterest?

I've thought of you, Dad, younger then than I am now, sitting on the patio, in the metal lawn chair, with a bourbon and soda in your hand. Having time in abundance, no longer put off, I ponder your answers and know you better.



Robert Hilton is amanuensis to scenes and characters that disturb his sleep, widowed, father of four, and grandfather of seven.