Our greatest challenge? Keeping the twin flames of love and hope alive during these times of adversity.

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Keeping the twin flames of love and hope alive during these times of adversity

Marking a year since the declaration of a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation, *Love in the Time of Corona – Covid Chronicles* is an inspirational anthology of stories from around the world, coming through the voices of ordinary people, sharing their experiences and reflections of the pandemic. They provide an invaluable record of these times. As in the words of Rudyard Kipling, *If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten*.

From when the first national lockdowns were declared in the spring of 2020, people struggled to make sense of the devastating effects of the pandemic. These stories give a glimpse into some of these lives and their attempts to draw something positive from the impact of the virus upon our lives.

A year on, we find that in the midst of fear and uncertainties, profound change is possible both individually and collectively; that in times of adversity the human spirit rises and flourishes; that love connects us, unites us, and gives us hope; and that *Love is a springtime plant that perfumes everything with its hope, even the ruins to which it clings*. Gustave Flaubert.

This unique collection focuses on love in all its breadth of meaning - love, of course, for another, whether it be new love or old love; love of nature, seen perhaps with fresh eyes as the wild world re-enters spaces in our towns and cities during the human lockdown; love of friends and family, love of home and garden, love of art and music, love drawn from the expanse and depths of our being, all coming together here in *Love in the Time of Corona.* As Philip Larkin writes *what will survive of us is love*.

In the final pages of the book, where blank pages have been set aside, the reader is invited to record their reflections of the pandemic – to write their own Covid Chronicle.

Love in the Time of Corona – Covid Chronicles

Throughout these contributions, there is an underlying message of the strength of love and the resilience of hope. Here are some extracts from the volume from a few of the contributors:

'There is a deep love within us all, often unspoken... I feel it for all living things, yet when I try to speak of it something inside me disappears.... The only relief I find is to stick my fingers into the soil and earth. This is what I do, and somehow this is enough.'

'I often wrote in the garden, surrounded by the soothing sounds of birdsong and the rustling of trees. I imagined my writing coming from a steady oak tree, firmly rooted into the earth while the coronavirus storm raged over us.'

'Lockdown had brought a slowing to our usually too-fast-paced lives and I was enjoying the concomitant peace of a city free from traffic.'

'I think too about why we have gravestones; that we remember those we love and honour them. For me, *Love in the Time of Corona* means showing respect for those who have died without recourse to modern medicine, and feeling immense gratitude for the changes we have experienced in recent times.'

‘Looking back at the journey of this book, it began with that single step I took in the Spring of 2020 when the world went into its first lockdown. Since then, I have travelled many virtual miles reconnecting with friends and family scattered around the globe, and making new acquaintances, all of us brought together by Love in the Time of Corona. *Kalyani Sandrapragas – Editor*

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Kalyani Sandrapragas was born in Sri Lanka and spent her formative years growing up in the UK . At various times, she has also lived in Sierra Leone, Jamaica, the Netherlands (where she worked for Greenpeace International), and more recently in the mountains of La Alpujarra in the Sierra Nevada in Spain, with her three children, where in-between growing oranges and olives and building projects, she worked for a yoga retreat.

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