An untitled collection of words to be read out loud in a room together.

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play at home micro-commission
Notes:

For however many humans, wherever we find ourselves.

To be read out loud in a room together.

How lines are read/delivered/divided/shared is up to the humans reading.
HUMANS

We think maybe we were supposed to have settled into a rhythm by now. Acclimated.

We think maybe we were supposed to have gotten our bearings acclimated eased into some kind of schedule some kind of new normal (“or new abnormal!, Ha, ha!” we laugh to ourselves.)

We think maybe we were supposed to have settled into a rhythm by now And we think maybe we have failed to do that.

(We think we will take a brief break from social media which while it has served to connect and unite us in this strange, uncertain time has also served to make us feel we are not doing enough adapting enough figuring out enough innovating enough finding enough creative solutions connecting enough that we have failed even to engage in social media in this strange, uncertain time.)

Here’s how we read this: in individual lines each human taking a line.

Or in blocks of text each human taking a block.

Or the entire thing. Each person reading the entire thing as a long-ass monologue or a solo performance and we repeat it so everyone gets a chance to read the whole damn thing.

(This last option might be a bit much.)
Or we read certain lines or all lines in unison
like a badly performed greek chorus
(although that might be a bit much, too).

So huh
dunno
what do we think
let’s just pick one
pick a way to read it.

Or just like
go through it
without making a decision.
Just try it organically
and see what happens
let go of trying to control the situation
isn’t that what we’re all supposed to be embracing right now
*letting go* of control
of our illusion of control?

And now
once we’ve decided how we are reading this
we put on some music
whatever feels like a gentle cushion holding the words and the breath aloft
Or maybe something that has a nice steady beat, like a heart beat
Or maybe something that is energetic and propulsive and draws attention to itself.

Or maybe we don’t put on anything
We let the existing soundscape envelope and infuse the words
the sounds of street traffic outside
the too-often wail of sirens screaming by
a car speeding down deserted streets
any creakings of floorboards or furniture
audible activity of upstairs or downstairs or next door neighbors
muffled voices spoken or pumped through speakers
the vibration or ringing of phones through walls
(is it ours? yours? upstairs? next door?)
the padding of dogs or cats
the sound of one another’s voices reading through this.
We smell whatever aromas are drifting through the room right now
something cooking or recently cooked
if we’re lucky
Or maybe more probably something sharp
the scent of bleach  white vinegar  cleaning solution
the residual smells of weeks of being indoors together
Maybe we smell nothing
That’s also a thing.
(Yeah remember the article where the guy talked about the biofilm that formed in his mouth?
like because it’s maybe candida because of suppressed immune system or something?)

Oh oh
and we could also do this:
Maybe we dim the lights
dimmer
dimmer
(right no dimmer switch)
maybe just turn them off’?

Or maybe not.

Maybe turn them off or turn them low
and then light some candles
make it really moody
moodier
so it feels romantic, or macabre
like we’re about to go on a date and get murdered, by a ghost.

Or like we’re human beings stuck together in a pandemic
of unknown duration and outcome
and we’re sitting around reading an untitled collection of words together
and there’s something specific and intimate about it
about an untitled collection of words shared among people
people who have been in close quarters together for too long

Or maybe it’s not too long
maybe it’s the perfect amount of time
we know we’re doing okay ourselves
all considering
we know we’re fortunate
given everything
We’re reading this after all.
And we’re grateful to others who are out there now
the folks on the front lines in multiple capacities
and maybe we too are on the front lines in some or multiple capacities
just not at this particular moment.

At this particular moment we are here together
and maybe we’re not sick of each other and each other’s faces and voices
at ALL
No really maybe we’re not
we mean it
we’re really not sick of how one of us is maybe contributing considerably more to certain duties
of the household that shall remain unnamed because that’s totally not a thing
We’re not sick of how long one of us takes in the bathroom or the volume of someone’s voice on
their zoom meetings
we’re really not sick of the way one of us laughs or withholds or is passive aggressive or
aggressive or too quiet or loud or sarcastic or honest or vulnerable or defended
Not at all
we’re really not sick of each other.

And maybe we’re actually really not
in spite of any snarky tone in that last block of text that might insinuate otherwise
Maybe we are affirming love
maybe we are finding grace in one another
and gratitude for one another
maybe we’re finding ourselves feeling blessed to be confined with these particular other souls
these particular other minds and bodies.

Maybe we’re able to rest in presence when we feel that gift of skin touching skin
the chemicals firing from physical sensation
a hand on the shoulder
a hug now and then
or holding a human much smaller than ourselves on our lap
feeling the specific weight and density and warmth of her
smelling the specific smell of her specific sweaty head
reading out loud a book we’ve read out loud maybe seventy-three times in the last five weeks
a library book we haven’t been able to return
along with all the other library books that in this particular strange moment in time
are not accruing late fees.
Maybe we’re really enjoying the atmospheric synergy
maybe we’ve begun to breathe as one
in synchrony
with ourselves and with one another and with the universe
Breathe in
breathe out
breathe in
breathe out
this is what is happening right now in this moment
this is what you are feeling right now in this moment
yes
this is good
very
very
good.

Maybe almost we are taking a moment from the uncertainty
the tiredness and sadness and plunges into despair
the rage
the grief
Or not taking a moment from them
but having these things live in this moment with us and our breathing
aware they are all here at once with us and in us.

Maybe in reading words out loud together
not these words necessarily
any words

(because there are many better words we could be reading out loud together right now
words that are maybe nourishing
or comforting
or inspiring
or action-taking-making
or more dulcet and melodious
or intentionally discordant and therefore awakening
words with more structure and order
words that suggest a narrative
a plan
to a world without narrative
without plan
to something careening wildly forward
resistant to all attempts to be fitted with a narrative or a pattern)

We have not settled into a rhythm yet.
We sense there is an expectation that we will finally settle into a rhythm
but we have not settled into a rhythm
we have not settled

We have not settled into a rhythm
We have not settled
haven’t settled into a rhythm
haven’t settled
haven’t settled into a rhythm
haven’t settled
haven’t settled into a rhythm
haven’t settled
into a