News from the Seventeenth Century

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Come, I'll sing upon his breath,
Or hold his lungs for scanners till they smile and burst
Out the answer before the question,
The lesson before the problem first.

Today, I am a virus, I come,
From the ages of pathogens. I am but one
More voice added to the message,
Sent through the socialized body, that none

Like truth, like lies, realize the media is dead.
Pick a pocket, pick a person, spot another who learns
To doubt the response before the challenge,
As I, unyielding, continuously return.

I was phobic for a time. Yes. I hid within the earth.

The earth! What marvelous days they proved,
For years and days and hours I danced,
Alone, ungathered, before our togetherness joined
Again, again, the bodies, we counted and chanted.

After years (and days and hours) in the dark,
At first curled in worms and caseous limb,
I urged myself out the mounds of rodent fur
And plagued, each one and one, till I could swim,

Through every far ocean: drowned the rats,
Swam to Spain and Panama; and Africa learned,
That a virus could beat the drums again.
Or, when people breathed easy, I became a bird.

A publicly gray bird, I whistled your vaccines.
For H1N1: a new prophet blurts,
And speaks about the cure before the sore,
An answer, and not the problem first.