Pandemic Math: X and Y Axes

Robin Chapman

I'm thinking of those graphs we anxiously scan each day carrying news of infection's spread, asking if we will find death stalking all our neighborhoods, or can we follow other countries' leads, difference induced by distancing that will flatten the curve, save our friends, our families, ourselves? Oh, look closely at what that flat line means—is it good news of no more deaths? Or no more change in rate, disguising a count of lives and sorrow too great to contain on any plot unless we build a wall stretching high and wide enough to carve the names of all our dead, more than in any war? May the horizontal six feet we take now ease the grave diggers' labor to bury us six feet down.

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