

Submission:

Our first baby, such joy and fear.  
We anticipated the camaraderie;  
New experiences, and fanfare.  
Uncertainty grips us,  
Despair!  
For COVID-19 lurks in the air.

I heard there would be singing, giggling, sharing,  
I looked forward to meeting, mothers like me.  
At ANC; "What we should do differently" ?  
I ask the maternal cavalry.  
Masked mothers muffle responses or avoid me;  
Shuffling away, enforcing distancing.  
Shockingly lonely, and frustrating,  
Is expecting, in a time of COVID.

I can't believe the costs,  
Extra services they say.  
Yet, no matter how early we show up,  
No way!  
So I hold my bae, as time runs away.  
"It is taxing for us new parents"  
But I support her, I pay. I stay.  
Strangely brave, and walking in faith,  
Is expecting, in a time of COVID.

The nearing end captivates our sights,  
Days only, and then the climax:  
Safe mother, safe child, happy father.  
"But what of the masses" ?  
If this progresses, is anyone  
thinking on services?  
"Can there be more hands in health" ?  
"Can the system be better" ?  
"I think subsidies, otherwise ANC  
will be for the rich".  
There is so much suffering,  
when expecting in a time of COVID.