Twitter Thread by Gregg Gonsalves

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@gregggonsalves

One thing I will never understand. In 2020, we let ~340,000 Americans die, sometimes in the thousands per day. And we watched. There were no protests, no daily banner headlines befitting a national tragedy on this scale. It's as if we watched 9/11 in a loop for 300+ days. 1/

It was the non-chalance of all of it, the sangfroid. Yes, of course, there were stories in the media, some great ones, but we were shoving bodies into makeshift morgues in America in 2020, and it all became background noise. 2/

And no one rose up. Punctuated outrage from some. But no one on the streets in any substantial numbers asking for, demanding answers, action. 3/

If it weren't for the #BlackLivesMatter protests you'd think most of America was already dead. 4/

You don't have to ask what would I have done if I was present at one of history's great tragedies where people made choices to let barbarism flourish. We've done it now. 5/

I don't know how you wash off the stench of death from who we are as a nation. 6/

This is not to dishonor those who have fought through this, but to realize whatever we did was not enough. There was a capitulation at the core of our defeat by a virus. 7/

Sure @realDonaldTrump, many @GOP governors made things incalculably worse, but what's the excuse for the rest of us? 8/

Were we incapable of stopping the madness, powerless? Just a victim of the faults of our leaders? 9/

We create the world we live in. The culture that gives rise to what we've all just witnessed. 10/

All my adult life, I've been told government is the problem--from Reagan to Clinton, was told we "can't" have universal healthcare or other kinds of social welfare programs here, because this is America. 11/

Then when we needed the federal government to act, to have a robust health system, social and economic support for all of us in crisis, it wasn't there, but we made it disappear, conjured it away over decades. 12/

And we were told it was up to us, to wear masks, social distance, to do the work. From Democrats and Republicans alike, American individualism came home to roost except now it meant you were on your own, with your own bootstraps. 13/

And the temptation is to blame the politicians, the "experts," the media and never look into our own hearts. It's always somebody else. It's capitulation again, in the civic sense. 14/

We created our present. Yes. Larger forces are at work, racism and late-stage capitalism are mine, but take your pick. But we are not without agency, control over our lives. If it's all pre-determined why get out of bed? 15/

This is just me at the end of 2020. I don't have answers. But we have to start asking the questions. end/