



LOCKDOWN LAMENTS & CONSOLATIONS

Some poems from local poets

(If you are writing about Lockdown, or how things could look post pandemic
and would like to be featured here - send your entries to:
poetry@shorehamwordfest.com)

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Lockdown Day 2 (this was read on BBC3's *The Verb* in March 2020)

All rolled in one

I could write a thousand poems all rolled in one
And see where it goes, see where it runs
It could start with the sky
where there's no sound of planes
How the air feels fresher
And it's got a new colour
And there aren't those stains
Making streaks of white
That cross overhead from morning to night
Those stains of flight
Fine strands of floss
That weave and crisscross
Like trails blazed in times of old
On Navajo paths searching for gold.
Lift your eyes and scan the sky
you won't see them now
Not one line of travel
No patterns to trace no string to unravel
Just all blue with sunshine
A healthy sign
And the birds that fly high
Preened and clean.
I could write a thousand poems all rolled in one
And see where it goes, see where it runs
But today I'll just stay with the sky and the sun.

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Lockdown Day 38 Pillow Bound

'Slide to power off' as my finger runs across
and I close my screen like you draw the curtains
habitual round as the day ends
and darkness descends
sends my phone into slumber
where no text or number can be found
Where the infodemic another pandemic
and the horror of BBC news is put down
released from my hand
by my bed on the floor
so I can give rest to communication
hear no beeps anymore
close the door on the day
Sleep in silent sound calling
With a round of yawning
and dream-states dawning
I'm pillow-bound
folded in duvet I've hit the hay
and that's where for now I'll stay
Tomorrow I'll cope with my next lockdown day.

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Lockdown Day 24 Shattered Dreams

Where do we keep the shattered dreams
the things that seem
to flood us sometimes
material made for song and rhyme.

We lock them away or in photos they're found
where voices are gone
and silence surrounds
forgotten until this lockdown time.

Then a bird starts to call
and they're here again
and in the refrain other birds sing
light and smiling
melody clear.

High notes of spring
bring hope to your ear
Ring through the trees
till you see in their song
the sad memories have gone
And your dream of the future
back with you again.

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Lockdown Day 30 Woman in Lycra

I went online yesterday
a click and collect
needed wild flower seed
and some for the birds
a watering can and PVC
from a well-known, regular outlet
here in Shoreham-by-Sea.

And I saw something funny, a little absurd
cos while I was waiting half an hour
for a turn in the queue to order
I saw a woman or was it a man
right low down on my tool bar border
the bottom of my screen I mean
all dressed in Lycra slim-fitting and tight
doing her health walk from left to right

Brisk, fast-paced she wasn't talking
not telling me how long I'd be waiting
not like a call with muzak and all
She just kept on pacing dead on time.
30 minutes went ticking by
As on the beat as a metronome
making her way to the B&Q home

And I smiled at this woman
or was it a man
who never got tired
walking the line
strutting on stage to tell me the time
something amusing
while I was waiting
comforting
I don't know why.

Lockdown Day 37 Unpick Time

I'm unknotting myself
To knit myself new
Unpicking rows with too much tension
others that are too loose.
What else can I do
in this lockdown time
but search the lines for a new
pace and time
rhythm and rhyme.
To find a style of pearl and plain
And hope we can knit together again
Hear the needles click in an untick time
warming the heart
in a new way, awake to the day
What else can we do but
discover a pattern we can knit together
uncover our hearts to something new
and maybe true
Me and you
To get us through.

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Lockdown Day 35 The Candelabra

We walk in the park
At the end of the day
Sky still blue with a white patch or two
And surrounding us
the trees in the spring
Bow their heads and sing
To the chestnut tree
Majestic and tall
The great Candelabra of them all
Adorned with cream candles on every branch
the large green leaves shiver in the breeze
Shimmer with the light shining through the trees
Sun in its setting
We walk down under
see the dappled glimmer
as the light gets dimmer
And as if from a cue
from the day nearly over
as she prepares to bed herself down
the rays of the sun nearly gone
light each candle one by one
A message of healing
a tree's time of hope
That this earth can restore
Not return to before
But something more
And the flowers unfurled
Candles lit by the sun
Mark a way for the world
As dark blankets all
and the day is done.

THE MANNY CORONA DIARIES

Not so good haikus

Because she loves me

she buys digestives
because, I do not like them,,
waistline kept in check

Self-isolation

day two and I am
considering an apple,
that's how bad it is

Manny at co-op

no toilet paper
only soya milk, couscous,
no toilet paper

He sleeps

[just because its enigmatic doesn't
mean it's meaningful]
no planes, cars, people
to stir pink apple blossom,
dog waits for summer

That's how it is

we keep our distance
we hope it is someone else,, ,
that is how it is

Me, you, us, them

a leaflet arrives
the vicar wants volunteers
support those in need

Roy 66 ½

do I risk my life
to deliver medicines
to eighty year olds

(cont.)

'Release the peas'

'cod tonight' she says
tells me like it is a treat
and,, 'we have some peas'

Bored, I decide to reposition the router

trusting memory
I disconnect the cables,, ,
no TV tonight

Jesus Manny!!!

April 3rd 2020

Manny's been shopping
digestive *and* ginger nuts
who ^[the hell] buys ginger nuts!!!!

[Manny says she's throwing them
out,,, -the ginger nuts- she doesn't
like them either]

Roy Woodard

(I wrote this whilst my dad was admitted with covid)
When this is over, I promise not to forget

When this is over, I promise not to forget
Those that did their utmost
Coordinator, organiser, neighbours and the rest
When this is over, I promise not to forget
The shop keepers and their staff
Who kept going and risking themselves to keep us safe at home
When this is over, I promise not to forget
How those shops kept us stocked
With flour, compost and loo roll
When this is over, I promise not to forget
The tradesfolk, pubs and restaurants
Who put their business into a coma
To protect us all
When this is over, I promise not to forget
Those who changed their livelihoods
To keep the rest of us going
Learning new tricks and helping out
Just trying to stay afloat
When this is over, I promise not to forget
The sacrifices of the carers
From hospitals to the community
Doing the things we cannot do
When this is over, I promise not to forget
That you're the bastions of our community
The ones who deserve our respect
When this is over, I promise not to forget
The carer, who cleared up my father's mess
And helped get him the help he needed
When this is over, I promise not to forget
The paramedics & the neighbours
Who got him to hospital
And the nurses who held his hand
Comforted the confused old man
Reassured whilst I wait at home
And the doctors who iv'd him
Prescribed him back to health
All those people doing what I can't do
Stranded so far away
When this is over, I promise not to forget
All the things that have changed this world
All the people who've tried to save this world
All the people who've just stayed at home
All the teachers who've gone into work
All the politicians who've tried to protect us
When this is over, I promise not to forget
When this is over, I promise not to forget

Simon Zec

This is called **the new narrative** which I wrote after discovering a treasure tree in the woods near Steyning :

There's a new narrative now
As we define the next era
Covidean times
We are part of tomorrow's history
Trees become treasured
Windows a symbol of primary unity
The pavement a medium for messages
Biology lessons by trees
Stay safe is the new goodbye
The skies clear
The planet given a reprieve
The essential workers look different now
Differences have been put aside
Communities clap and dance
And look out for each other
And fear
And worry
And sickness
And isolation
And death
And waking early
And distance
No hugs
No handshakes
No pubs
No going out
Binary communication
Video calls
Families forced together
Staying in
Saving the health workers
Social sacrifice to save souls
Paid to stay at home
Work redefined
Compost
Loo roll
Flour
Masked people
Daily deaths
Dying alone
And yet
In a wood
Away from the world
An ivy covered tree

cont...

Surrounded by dying ashes
Has become a treasure tree
A beacon of hope

Painted stones by children
To show the world they care
Trusting the world to grow it
And let it be

Simon Zec

(This poem was included in *Love The Words winners' poetry anthology* for International Dylan Thomas Day 2020)

Rebirth

What's this limbo
like a Tibetan Bardo
where souls meet
electronically

Disembodied voices
fearful reassuring
deepening bonds
boundlessly

Conversation song
in zoom driven spaces
making sweet doorstep
cacophony

When we meet again
on trains and buses
will we rebuild walls
instinctively

Or is the world turning
through a new vibration
moving us to connect
courageously

As we reach across
the two metre space
with a smile a common
humanity

Bee Meredith

