

# Separate Cells



**Selections from David's Covid:  
The Lockdown Poems of  
David Erdos**

*David Erdos is a vital part of our 21st century counter-cultural connectome, skittering across the literary landscape like a bead of mercury and leaving freshly-soldered synaptic linkages in his wake. If it's a matter of importance, synthesis, or beauty, then Erdos is there to document, dissect and celebrate: an enthralling chatterbox of the human condition.*

—Alan Moore

*David Erdos is the good detective, out there, on the move, on the case. He is a positive energy, a sympathetic reporter and recorder. Follow him.*

*I marvel over the velocity and production of David Erdos' poems. He is out there now, high among the ranks of the great, but unappreciated*

—Iain Sinclair

*As psycho-geographer of the zeitgeist David Erdos has a rich hinterland to draw upon, being himself poet, actor, director, composer, illustrator, musician and critic. The reader soon learns that the writer is well informed on very many levels and that he's in safe hands for what proves to be a rewarding, penetrating and often breath-taking ride.*

—Heathcote Williams

*Counterculture becomes even more important in these times of no cultural margins and constant erasure, making its dwindling list of commentators all the more crucial. There is no questioning the importance of David Erdos' contribution as he includes me in his canon. Quite possibly the greatest living cultural commentator since Cyril Connolly!*

—Chris Petit

*My heart pulses with the essence of David's poetry taking me away from the normal and casting each haunting image into an underworld of possibility*

—Clare Nasir

*David Erdos brings light to the back alleys and side streets of culture and reveals so much gold that you have to question what it is that more mainstream critics do with their days. I don't know what planet he comes from, I don't know what powers him and I don't know if he can be stopped, but I for one am glad he is out there.*

—John Higgs

*The classic Erdos lilt takes the reader on a Blakean mystic trip*

—Kirsty Allison

*Fall under the spell of Erdos' hypnotic landscape. One of our greatest word warriors*

—Saira Viola

*Poetry seems to flow out of David Erdos as naturally as water from a spring. His responses are visionary*

—David Bramwell

*In Erdos' world the past is disinterred, shedding new light on what we thought we knew about the present*

—Douglas Field

*OMG! You all need to read this. David Erdos has reviewed I Need a Change as a poem and its the most beautiful thing I've ever read!*

—Joe Payne

*David Erdos has a unique talent and a special way with words....*

—Steve Hackett

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**with images by  
Max Crow Reeves**

*A direct consequence of the alienation of man from the product of his labour, from his life activity and from his species life is that man is alienated from other men. When man confronts himself, he also confronts other men. What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their labour...*

—Karl Marx

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## **Coronic Irritation: An Introduction**

If an irritation is seen as something that disturbs  
The smooth surface, thus came Corona to rub  
And to warp settled flesh. I started setting my thoughts  
Into verse as February sought its foreclosure, and by  
The time of my Lockdown on the 23rd of March

Words were dressed

By the rhythms and rhymes

Echoed within this introduction,  
As my pen tried to tidy the chaos  
Of what I feared and felt coming next.  
And so it has proved,

As the simply unconceivable came to dream us,  
Making our past lives the fiction that a sedentary  
State came to write. And so I posted each day  
Each written text to colleagues and friends  
On email and textbook and then started

Recording on Youtube from my own Psalm 23  
To cast light on some of the issues I felt  
Would spike and stain everybody; Johnson  
As Bête Noire, and Cummings the stain  
On each night. Or the Cabinet Corons as a whole

Who have stumbled by day and through darkness.  
In the clash of information they've given  
The fight to feel free has begun. What has been  
The true contagion; Covid? Or, the fact that we  
Have become almost institutionalised in our houses?

As BLM and BAME batter, to master the murders  
At hand, who has won? This is what these poems reflect,  
Along with Max Crow Reeves' stunning photos.  
Each entry is a diary, and a novel, too; a small film.  
Poetry I would hope for those unversed in it.

Monologues with a mission. Fires first found  
In thought's kiln. The hope is they will speak  
And soothe or stoke irritations, and that as these  
Striving words wound oppressors, the scars  
On screen and on paper may in some small way

Soon reveal the rising heart held beneath  
This book of me written for you.  
Life after Lockdown will sequel.  
But here's the first feature that tries  
To describe what most feel.

It was written in my garden each day  
And recorded across the day's music.  
As the birds sang their warnings,  
I lucky to have light and space,  
Wrote towards darkness as I tried to

Contain our new real.

*June 17th 2020*

## The Psychosis of Staying At Home

It's all in Ballard, of course: all you need do is read it,  
As each wall seems to tighten, the suburbs beyond  
Have run wild. Riots threatening themselves within parks,  
As trees percolate hot house gases, and the swift return  
Of time's despot, in his current disguise is unveiled.

There will be plays written, poems, songs, art and screeds  
For salvation; a vast and new generation of prophets  
Each struggling to find fresh acclaim, which will take  
The form of theatres in rooms and concert halls  
Close to kitchens, as the air bakes behind us,

Colouring larynx and lung, sealing pain.

Perhaps people, in time, will quickly become television.  
If we lose sight of what makes us, as we broadcast on,  
Love's reduced. Some won't even open their doors,  
Let alone bathroom windows, unsure of what the winds

Might yet carry; and cold as it is, hope's confused.  
As Social Distancing Strikes Social Media may fall victim  
To the same warped illusions that the Media Circus deployed.  
We will find fresh stars on the screen and see our laptops  
And phones as the portals through which we gaze

On arrangements of the pieces of us time destroyed.

If you stay in long enough, you breathe in the dust  
Sent to age you. A sly cannibalism that fills and filters you,  
Mote by mote. As you feed on yourself you devour books,  
Films and music that you've seen before to grant comfort,

But now we must recognise the importance of a new,  
Hidden note. The sounds of discord which stem from isolation's  
Insistence, implementing the soundtracks for the coming films  
Of ourselves. 'I will show you my pain if you show me yours,'  
It will happen. A pornography of the spirit, funded by the hands

Fate has dealt. We won't notice the world adapt and change  
All around us. Unaware of the forces that are gathering now  
As we slide. Ballard's great Inner Space is what we need to uncover.  
Instead, we shrink under panic as the life we lived slowly dies.  
And something else takes its place; as the fascists above

Find their flavour, a new underground rises, and rises fast,  
In small rooms. As each artist grows thin and each activist hungers,  
We will rage our war of attrition and pixilate horror's cries  
Around doom, to become apocalyptic perhaps, as the popular  
Fiction most favour: the zombie, still living, the vampiric thirst,

Garnering. Our ideas of what's real will mutate, just as our sense  
Of ourselves adopts changes. In my neighbours garden, young  
Children emit animal screams, their sounds sting. This is the time  
The unschooled of whatever age achieve graduation;  
The ignorant stance of defiance is the fear that falls all too close.

I hear it now as I write, trying to make sense of what happens  
And whilst reading JG Ballard as Bible, his are the threats to prize  
Most. For what he saw, decades past has become a form  
Of prophecy for us: that inherent madness as written,  
And which we all deny, coats our breath. As we cough,

Our own hand becomes a form of Biblical tablet,  
On which is inscribed the commandments that both shield  
And secure human death. One might go mad thinking this.  
And yet the day must find order. If we concentrate calmly  
And possibly read the right books, we will find a true way,

Despite the coming months and their carnage.  
Telepathically, there's connection between like minds  
Harmonising and the empathetic lines between looks  
As we face time and connect; 'Whatsapp with you?'  
Will form greeting. Using the same tools that control us

To make Whitman's old 'Song of Myself', multiplied.  
We may yet surpass Ballard's blame and his firm accusations  
And learn to live without guidance other than the type  
We provide. A communism of sorts, or community  
In appearance, who cracked and crazy  
Ensure that this fresh insanity equals pride.

It is not mad to say this. You are still alive, JG Ballard,  
As are Heathcote and Harold, Leonard, David and Ingmar,  
All of the poets who preached their own divine form  
Of gospel. In their voices, this violence:

The actions within will reach far.

*March 23rd 2020*

## Simon Says, or A Life At The Movies

'I don't want to be told what to do..!' Simon says on a phonecall.  
And there it is in a nutshell as they line up at Tesco  
And Waitrose. Freedom's flower, part crushed, by a man  
With both mask and basket, forbidding my friend the abandon  
Amidst the shining aisles he once roamed. Walking later  
That day, I experience the same sad zones at the Co-op,

Servers behind screens and mouth-nets, allowing the infected  
Zombie hordes scant supplies; pre-packaged flesh, as before.  
Eggs rare as gold dust, prohibition prepped lager, and Grail  
Like toilet roll, as hope's prize. One doesn't want to go out  
If this is the landscape we're facing. Like *Planet of the Apes*  
With fresh monkeys, or a stumble away from *The Road*.

Or, *The Omega Man*, with Simon perhaps as Chuck Heston,  
And those strange hooded figures now forming.  
With all other shops closing they will have to stitch  
And bind their own robes. This is how we're controlled:  
Fear, first, then solution. Whether final, or flimsy,  
We will have to negotiate a new way. Doubtless we'll evolve,

Fattening, or slimming down, leasing bodies, those of us,  
Unlike Simon who remains as lean as the bacon  
That I wanted to shop for today. *Oliver Twist* springs  
To mind. But is Boris Johnson our Fagin? Is Priti Patel  
Someone's Nancy and Dominic Cummings Bill Sykes?  
Will we lay before *Soylent Green* while wondering

Just how many portions comprise us, as *A Brave New World*  
Falters and *1984* moves to strike. *Children of Men* coalesce  
As *Logan's Runners* start crawling. The life we knew is now  
Fiction and the people we were close to ghost.  
There will be a new life, with new rules that we must  
Compose for survival, while those in the know plot inaction,

The sentence we serve powers most. We must tell ourselves  
What to do in accordance with both hope and refusal  
Of the ties that bind. We'll film freedoms with the magic  
Of minds: Daily spells. With each house now a cell  
That comes with sanctioned exercise and a walk,  
Life is prison. And yet we seemingly have the keys still.

So, which way to turn? Stumble well.

*March 31st 2020*



*Photographs by Max Crow Reeves © 2020*

## **That Look**

Another friend, Philip reports of more Supermarket  
Suspicion: THAT LOOK, traded freely, while gaining  
More purchase now, than the tins. It is the fresh currency  
That the poor at heart have been spending, signally  
Strange new sensations as the end of community

Claims a win. I saw THAT LOOK spent,  
As I strolled, my legs strangely heavy, as if fighting  
The welcoming pull of the prison that has always  
Been my heart's home. My lost Mother's house.  
I am only glad she can't see this. I'd rather her

Dead than divided, with us cut by a screen,  
Both alone. And now we all are, while rationing  
Our cares and our money. With those who venture  
Out, each ignoring the ships of passing day  
And stilled shore. We can't even wave from the mast,

Lest we get too close, or, breathe freely, and so  
We cost and charge every moment. As the stopped  
Sea cools, silence roars. It is the Pinteresque pause  
That powers on, ripe with meaning. In his crises  
Of silence, and his sharply splintered rooms

We are found. I will go out today and catch  
The same look as Philip. Someone will cross  
The street as I dare them not to not be safe,  
But to honour what still remains common ground.  
And which is riven with common sense, too.

For there is still a way to survive while performing  
Due caution. Call it a first rehearsal for being,  
Or even the former decencies of the day,  
Which while being lost, still have a part to play  
In us. As we breathe alone, retain distance,

But be at least warm within it. Consideration  
Grows abstract, and yet I urge you to implore  
Them all: Don't be stupid. We can't afford that.  
Not on this April Fools' Day.

*April 1st 2020*

## When Puppets Rise

As Boris fights on the Ward, are his darker  
Angels and cohorts charting the means to make  
Martyrs? And what are his proper sources  
Of comfort, with Cummings' left hand up his shirt?

Would it were Trump, no doubt denying death  
As it took him, 'fake newsing' all he can't fathom  
As a cold and encroaching sea drowns the hurt.  
For there is a new form of fascism at play,

Gathering now, like infection. We have heard  
The right wing as it flutters and seen the shadows  
It casts across land. Suffering spirals now,  
Beyond sense, as Corona arcs its ascension,

Spreading now as an eagle, or, perhaps  
An oil slick's spend across sand.  
We have called it the rise of The Right.  
An unfortunate word, if we're honest.

The direct opposite; Left, does not capture  
The power and need to resist, mentioning only  
Remains, to which those who oppose are not suited.  
So, make it through, Boris. Do so. But know,

That if Judas were here, you'd be kissed.  
So many unknown others align.  
If you know who they are you should tell us.  
See the light. Speak directly.

The people now sick beside you should give  
You a new sense of place. Their immunity fails  
In the face of fear and foreclosure. If Statesmanship  
A la Churchill is truly what you seek, turn your face.

What you loved before cannot last.  
We are at the end of one chapter. If you were  
Once a writer, than look instead to the people  
And do what a writer should, man: describe.

Not only what everyone feels, but also  
What they would wish to take from each season.  
Just as in dreams, we discover how the inner  
Informs the outside.

Everything in the air infiltrates,

From pollution to gossip, and while I fear  
The future, I do not do so now, terrified.  
For I see what the issue is: we're the worm  
And THEY are the birds flying over.

When one close to them suffers,  
Then it is us, in the ordure who must turn  
And then endure and defy. It's all in the work  
Of John Gray: *The Soul of the Marionette*:

Strings breed puppets. But the puppet itself  
Has potential, particularly if you read or pay  
Attention to Kleist: Self-awareness ensnares.  
Inner consciousness forms transcendence.

So, concentrate; you'll earth values  
That the fascistic cannot see or seize  
Through their heist. Which is going on as I write.  
As the truth obscures, we fall, heavy.

And yet those birds fit for breaking  
And those puppets, paled, on either side,  
Can still rise. The skies seem broken but sun  
Is still scorching through imposed darkness.

As our days and nights begin merging  
And the bastards sleep,

Scour light.

*April 7th 2020*

## On A Fellow Inmate

The noises of others, through this has become  
Its own form of symptom. You can't, of course  
Choose your chaos, or your neighbours too,  
That's quite clear. If on a certain (former) income  
You're placed in the dense contagion of cities,  
As expressed through selfishness and pollution,  
And felt in the heart, air and ear.

We all tune in to inane chatter, loud noise,  
And the lack of consideration for others;  
As some feed on silence as a means to survive,  
Just as in their way, so many others crave talk.  
But the sheen of community is not shown  
Through a series of badly made false impressions;  
We still require a balance if we, like the pilgrim

Are to lift up our beds, rise and walk.  
Its certainly an impossible conversation to have.  
Those in country climes may escape it.  
But for the legions of us caged by cities, insularity  
Does not soothe, seal, or heal. Instead, it forgoes  
That brother or sisterhood between neighbours,  
As separate cells make roads prisons

Through the bars of which no-one feels.  
What then are the issues at hand,  
When the hand is rendered numb by this climate?  
Everyone does their own thing and nobody close  
Stops to think. We consider ourselves all the same  
As we chorus in with Arthur G. and Paul Simon,  
But the bridges that breach troubled waters

Without craft and sweet care duly sink.  
I sit and hear this loud young man's soundwaves  
Rise, while calling out for new music. Sadly, a lack  
Of taste is the torture that pushes social harmony  
To the brink. But distance does that of course,  
Especially when used as a language. That we either  
Learn or mouth badly, as difference divides us

And confrontation receives its nod, or twitch,  
Its skewed wink. My little road could be a corridor, almost.  
I can look into the cells through each window,  
And see the separate lives Covid's planned.  
Each sentence seems long as we sit and wait  
For the judgement, and of course each has methods  
To alleviate Kafka's crime—chiefly life itself

(Let's be Franz),

Something to be only understood

When its done. So, can you understand neighbour,  
That to be in on our own is communion  
Especially under graced weather. As calm questions  
Climate everyone needs their own peace.  
If not of mind then certainly of the moment.  
You're new. You've just moved here.

If we're going to be friends we'll need fealty;  
A fidelity through the hi-fi, and for the air  
That's shared,

Hear my plea.

*April 15th 2020*



*Photograph by Max Crow Reeves © 2020*

## Kingdoms

Former roads led to Oz, mine goes to Uxbridge;  
A settlement in the suburbs that is a fifteen Minute  
Walk from my home. Not a palace, as such,  
To consumerism's slick kingdom, more like an outhouse,  
But which has swiftly become in reflection as mythical

To me as old Rome. Which legendary roads  
Once arced there before contagion carved that grand city;  
The site for Sorrentino, and Caesar, Fellini and two  
Or three of my friends. And another nation state,  
Let's be frank, that has been less than quick to the rescue;

As no God saves yet or graces the efforts of man  
Near his end. Or, certainly, man as he was, out on a limb  
Or rib beside woman; estranged now from each other  
And the spaces once conquered and reached by a car.  
I have been less than 500 yards from my house

During this 'is it a month?' of confinement, as Uxbridge  
Gleams now beyond me like some sort of compromised  
Shangri-La. A place that may no longer exist, though  
Apparently, there's still Tesco's, an M&S, and a Homebase  
And inevitably, or so it would seem, a Primark.

But now that sweatshop front has been closed  
And the Uxbridge cures no fouled river. Wherever  
And if ever it stood, such connection has been severed  
And strewn, cut by time. Which has not marched on.  
Time has stalled. And taken all journeys with it.

With life itself clearly folded along an ominous  
And possibly spiked dotted line. This line represents  
Space and step, that everyone must undertake now  
With caution as we forego premonition and do  
What we must to survive. Which is to live meal and meal

In an ongoing romance of location, but not  
Of a Venice that's clotted, or even those calm country  
Lanes; but of places like here: Zone 6 on the tube map,  
Which has robbed Science Fiction of genre as the one  
In which we all feature does not even have its own name.

We don't know where we are, and so are prowling  
Our kitchens, like Zombies, searching for scraps,  
Treating others, if snatched on the street like a threat.  
We talk to our gardens and screens as if those with sense  
Were Alzheimic, as something slick wipes us

Of even the will or need to forget. We are captive,  
Contained but I think about Michael Moorcock's  
Dreaming city; in its turns and spires I glimpse a renewal  
Of sorts and feel heat. Let every house now embed  
And become a true castle. Let the nation states better Brexit

And become a Universal Union, street by street.  
That double U will enhance and assist individuals,  
And let no thief try to govern and no liar command,  
While as we wait. Perhaps then, settlements like the ghettos  
Of old and my Uxbridge will become the museums

To the time before wisdom straightened this sad twist  
Of fate. We should work on that as we're kept and become  
Our own world of nations. In which all information is open  
And can be seen and shared on the screen. Then fresh  
Exchanges will work and we will know how and why

We need shielding. Perhaps then we'll fuel sleeping  
And learn and see through each window how to shape  
By day some fresh dream. I feel completely alone,  
But recognise now, I'm a city. And so I call to each  
Kingdom, forge a treaty with me. Share my scheme.

*April 21st 2020*



*Photograph by Max Crow Reeves © 2020*

## **My Mother's Window**

In the cave slash lounge where I write  
There is a photograph of myself and my Mother.  
It is one of those pictures where her eyes seek and follow,

No matter where you are in the room.  
The photograph makes her real, while I look hot  
And asleep, somehow absent. But her stare continues,

Undeniably real. Lost life looms. I am wearing the same  
T-Shirt today as I am in the picture. It was taken by one  
Of my almost brothers, as Anthony too, knew my Mum.

I can clearly remember the day when the picture was taken.  
I was making a short film to frame her, as an entirely new  
Stage (and screen) had begun. My Mother had never acted

Before but she was brilliant at it. Anthony acted superbly,  
But he did not do what she did. Which was to somehow  
Transcend and to know, and to speak in a strange new way

Through the camera. She knew the reasons why  
We were filming. It was something to see when she'd gone.  
This was never discussed. It was just part of the bravery

Of her. As monumental now in reflection,  
As when I left home at Nineteen. How that kills parents,  
That shift; it's like a tiny death in them,

As they lose and free children who will never  
Come back as first seen. But Lilian knew, though  
She enjoyed the day, I remember. She laughed,

Took direction—which was the most surprising  
Of all—and relaxed. As if there were nothing off  
With the light, and that the expected day would obey us,

Allowing us to feel both calm and protected  
From any future form of attack.  
Now this photograph is that film, with all of it held

By one image. It's a bottle of sorts, the imp's lantern  
From which she may one day rise, like a flame.  
Perhaps I'll be too old then to see, or dead myself,

But she'll do it. She was such a powerful person  
And so much of that force fuels each frame.  
It's part of what she gave me, along with this house

And care, clothes, possessions, a life of love  
That was measured by the strictest rules of the game.  
So, for those who have gone in this time of change,

I am with you. For those who are left your departed  
Have made a deep sacrifice. They have simply stepped  
Through the gate that this Science Fiction Fact has now

Captured. As photographs become portals, windows  
In the real, some advice: Just think of this as a war,  
Such as the one my Mum lived through. Born in 1938,

She had purchase on the cost of such loss for six years.  
As did my Dad, who will have his own poem.  
But his last look when I found him was framed by

A further world of dark glass. Death does this to the eyes.  
They suddenly reveal different windows. Now, if I talk  
Of this torment I do not do so to depress,

But simply to state how we must seek the worth  
In each moment as we do not as yet know which story  
Is being filmed, or addressed. When I look now at the shot

I see both hers and my childhood. I see her as a young girl  
Tap dancing and then the older woman excited by the famous  
Phil Collins drum break. I see where reality warped in that last

Awful hour, in which I held her hand, as we splintered  
And I could feel our souls weep and ache. In the film I get  
The last of her past before cancer claimed her.

She had reached beauty's end, as we all must, when it decides  
To withdraw from the face. She was not conventionally pretty,  
My Mum, but she had such magic to her. She could also be

Judgemental, ferocious and the most outrageous girl in the place.  
She could be unforgiving, tough, tame, and despite her lack  
Of touch, truly loving. Had she lived today, she'd have managed,

And now an expert onscreen, battled through. But she left.  
She escaped through pain's sharp gate for new country.  
She did not become a statistic that is being held up to us now,

Like a brand. She was the brightest fire, a force and she lives  
In me, every moment. She would have had the world at her window  
And held most of it too in her hands. Which were small, elegant

And I can feel them now as I'm typing, guiding my fingers  
And making sure you that all of you understand  
That when I talk of this I do not do it to drag you down

Into darkness. I just want to tell you that absence,  
Which is where we are now is survived. If only in memory.  
Look: what lives in the mind is existence. If the body falls,

Fails and suffers then the battle my friends rages on.  
Do not believe what you're told. Believe what you can find out  
And still question. Just as she did, committed both to the film

I was making and right *now*, to me, her trapped son.  
But if I am, if we are, then let memory become moment.  
For that is all we have. That is living. And no false truth

Can distract. As Anthony's photograph becomes film,  
The story it tells keeps and cures her.  
It alleviates that cursed illness and returns her,

Like a dream, while they act. She becomes a part  
Of the house that she has never left, bequeathed to me.  
She is the clothes I am wearing and she is everyone

There who falls lost. I am talking to you all  
Through the screen and the photograph. It's a window.  
From the other side, my Mum's watching.

She at last knows the answer.  
Its the secret stars share:

Death is God.

*April 23rd 2020*

## Coo And Cull, Or, Scarecrows In Reverse

My friend and comrade, the photographer, Max Reeves,  
Was before Covid struck, shooting Scarecrows;  
Taking this on as his mission he was prepared to journey  
As far out as Sheffield, or, as far afield as Southall.  
Some he found. Some were bare, ransacked crucifixes  
Within country, while some spots ran with rumour  
And had no history of crow or any bird presence  
At all. It would seem that we're all Scarecrows now,  
But instead of dispelling birds, we near woo them;  
Jealous of flight while we're landlocked, we even coo  
City pigeons, near transforming them into doves.  
Who might as well carry the stories we'd share,  
As they did in the first days of letters. Today, I read  
Through the raven as he spreads wings like pages  
On my neighbour's rooftop, as if directly booked  
From above. Care crows from these birds as the scare  
Grows amongst us. There is no cloud that quite calms  
Us and still no safe horizon's secured. But what we do  
Have is clear sky. A perfect photographer's background,  
Or possible page for a poet on which to picture  
Or detail, or capture in verse the obscured.  
Fear of course has stark lines as does the cross  
Of the scarecrow, but these country Christs  
Have no father and no further to go through the lens.

But they haunt us still, all the same, and Max Reeves  
Too, I imagine, as these ancient totems used to ward  
Off threat can't defend what's been lost, won, or,  
Saved as we water wheat and boil flowers, to make  
Our own breakfast as the Supermarket shelves  
Remain gasping; its not so much a shoplifting  
As it is a Shop flown away. I would kill for a takeaway

Now, or for a pint, point or purpose, but the risk  
Of what's handled and the rush of what's gone,  
Leaves me stunned. I believe 'A Murder of Crows'  
Is the phrase that conveys what is missing, or is being  
Consumed fast by others, as every teenager retires  
And for the older, a social Groundhog Day has begun.  
The birds circle and arc. The cull is called. They begat it.  
Communicating now through such circles to the forces  
In air, there's a plan. They will bide their time, forsake  
Fields and bring no more alarm to the hedgerows.  
The fear we thought they felt when sent flying  
Was a playful tease on aped man. Not that a Wurzel  
Has fur, or whatever it is on Gorillas. The Scarecrow's  
Hay heart is shattered, material for the nest their eggs  
Win. That's the reason why they return, we are a shop  
Of sorts for these sky racers, but if a bird shops in panic  
It is only because the climate descended and told it

That it officially knows what begins; an affirmation  
Hard won that quite enough time has been wasted.  
And so, spurned, we suffer as our broken straw guards  
Grow lonely and lease their insect hearts to the wind

We are scarecrows now in reverse.  
And seek the grace flight may grant us.  
But now only the birds' pity answers:  
Their coo and cull could cure sin.

*April 24th 2020*



*Photograph by Max Crow Reeves © 2020*

## **Another Killer**

Sixteen people have died from domestic abuse  
Since the lockdown. The Covidian Age, like the Ice-Age  
Has started to chill blood and mind. A 700% increase  
Has occurred across the various helplines, as Corona's  
Brutal accomplice slides into the fear trapped hands

And divides. This is a difficult poem to write,  
With words reflecting those who are cornered,  
Not only with their own private monster, possibly  
Raging now while you read, but also the fact  
That there is nowhere left they can run to,

As doors prove as brittle as assaulted skin  
When it bleeds. What frees the monstrous in us?  
Opportunity, or containment? While some lose  
Jobs there are victims beyond any hospital  
Granted bed. There are the women and children

At home, near cannibalised through frustration,  
As rage and fear fill abusers who can only  
Make their point through the dead. This is not  
A silent panic at all, but with the doors  
And windows closed, who can hear it?

That tree still falls in far forest and kills  
All manner of life in its wake. And with  
Television obsessed with the same tired genre,  
We see once more one more murder  
And one more paedophile for who's sake?

Not God's, certainly. Unless the Biblical Age  
Has restated. Alongside the iced rim of Covid,  
A dark testament spits and sparks. It contains  
No parables and no healing lessons. It is simply  
Blood and destruction and God taking his piss

In the dark. Now that piss covers us  
And the taste of it turns to acid. The fiery ones  
Wreak contagion of a different sort on those  
Close. With such statistics we see that some  
Will never be cleansed through this culling.

They will not emerge with fresh wisdom,  
There will be no vaccine for them.  
No calm new command. No sweet dose.  
For yet another killer has come to take their place  
In the schedule. And this is one you can't turn off,

Or theorise far from view. There is no conspiracy  
Here, to countenance or interpret. There is,  
Simply horror and the weakness within, and stark  
Truth. Many find people good. I hope they are.  
But these others: what do we do now to stop them,

As a character like Robert Wyatt's strange Richard  
Is corrupted by something that makes him terrorise  
His poor Ruth? In the light of these facts,  
Everything becomes darker. As you're safe tonight,  
Someone isn't. Under these gorgeous skies,

There is bruising; a thoroughly corrosive black.  
A scorched blue.

*April 27th 2020 8.30pm*



*Photograph by Max Crow Reeves © 2020*

## A Dominatrix On Her Day Off

Stories of uplift, or not:

And so, John K. journeys on, collecting his own tales  
Through the shopping. As he delivers, he gathers  
Impressions and snatches from the empty outside.  
He sees as he drives the almost parodied homes  
We're all kept in, as former humour meets horror  
And our human zoos fester to become an Animal House

Fear divides. John delivers the rudiments of breakfast  
And Lunch to a sandwiched block of flats that astound  
Him; he describes it as a 'prime place for perverts,'  
Each window gangbanging another, so close are the lives  
And the victims helplessly trapped and part baked.  
Food is his means as if Jesus were constructing shelves

Now for Lidl. He surely wouldn't for Waitrose,  
But would it be bread and fish now, or cake?  
Something sweet to seduce, as John delivers groceries  
Like a gospel, but one that is left on the doorstep,  
Drawing the residents to it like kittens when the time  
Finally arrives for the bowl. Some understand

And some don't. With the elderly far from coping,  
They simply can't lift the shopping that Sainsbury's  
Has now sold. And John can't go in. So, he teases  
And tames an old man out, like a lion, offering a chair  
Out front as a stopgap, but this is where the old man sits  
In the sun to take calls. So the awful image appears

Of defrosted mince and wept ice-cream, while old throats  
Grow hungry and where the need to eat and survive  
Leads to falls. John does what he can, as an embittered  
Old woman shouts at him. He wants to deliver her  
Shopping, but he is always it seems, just too close.  
So they negotiate on the path and she treats him,

Like the lion, there to consume her with contagion,  
While it is only survival that he wishes for her  
More than most. There is a fruity rise to John's voice  
As he sends me his impressions and sound files,  
An actorly innuendo, as he studies the plight of those  
Who fear coughs; from the pensioners ignorant

Of all maths as they try to assess the two foot length  
From their wheelchairs, to a mysterious tracksuit dressed  
Handsome woman, who speaks to him strictly,  
Reminding him of a trapped Dominatrix forced into  
An extended day off. What does S&M do in Lockdown?  
One would have thought this was perfect,

As the Businessmen swathed in leather and the High  
Court Judges in nappies could have stayed aroused  
For two months. But even a whip can grow limp  
When it hasn't been cracked, greased, or savoured  
And now the woman seems tragic, with her former force  
Spent and wasted, and her clients inside their townhouses

Bound to bittersweet reminiscence of their much prized  
Welts and weals, and blood lumps. Where is pleasure now  
And where is the status in pleasure? As John applies  
Observations this poem forms instantly. For something  
Else has gone and then come: A 'saddo' masochism  
In people as they fold in on themselves while pretending

That for the time at least they are free. They need  
The lifeline John writes as he drives the empty roads  
Which grow eerie. A ghost town ghost story quickly  
Transmogrifies through the soap, of the opera ill sung,  
Or ill rehearsed, as we mumble, keeping voice  
And throat far from open, as admission, confession,

And expression too, lose all scope. The adventurers  
Wilt as the Mistress toys with her cucumber as weapon.  
Today it will not be inserted but will just suit the plate's side.  
It will fall into place on her plate as she regretfully strokes  
Her dog collar. Meanwhile, as some of her Dogs wait  
For Lorries and Vans like John's, hungers slide.

What will become of us all when our appetites  
Have been sated? And what will happen  
When they cannot be fulfilled? Will we fall far,  
From taste, or seek bland new means of abandon?  
Or will we run mad through our houses bumping  
Into walls for sad thrills? The entertainment goes on.

John sees it all through each window.  
The dominance to come will oppress us  
And keep us all bound and gagged. And so, John,  
As a kind of Josef K. drives away, leaving  
The suspected Dominatrix behind him, her reverie,  
Near romantic as she considers the numerous

Prides she has bagged. 'Those were the days',  
She will think when you could reduce a man  
To near nothing, that is, before Covid did it,  
By taking her playground away. Sex was skill then,  
Through which the darkness in dreams was delivered.  
Now in its place, there is waiting for some strange

New desire to be introduced and then ordered,  
Boxed and bound and transported and with space  
On the shelves, precariously put on display.  
I think of this woman myself and the special  
Charge which has failed her. As she sucks the static  
And I chew my lip, hope's not saved. But it is chased,

All the same, even while being chastened.  
As we drag through drains for desire and howl  
In our houses, ready perhaps for a mistress  
To take us on and out hope feels frayed.



*May 3rd 2020*

## **Borish't, or, Overacting: The Unopen(Ed) University**

And so the Unopen University fails as its peri-pathetic  
Lecturer garbles. Transmitting graphs and equations  
That would set the mathematically spun into spin;

A series of mixed ratios equal R over the rate of dissent  
Subdivided, before what is in blue times the yellow,  
Can, to the power of shite, infect twins. Or some other

Nonsense that shows no clarity, only static,  
As hints were leaked of announcements that would  
Returns us all to clear air. Before a broadcast that singed

Everyone confused, watching. By a form of brute  
Aping Churchill, with a delivery so emphatic  
That it seemed to press once wild hair. 'Stay Alert',

He said. Where? And how for that matter.  
Alert at home or out jogging now that apparently  
We all can? But just as long as we're related? I see.

Or rather I don't. What's the question? Are we to now  
Jog with passports, or have our DNA stamped across us  
As the Street Block Corona Bill tests for clans?

Those who can't work at home can go to work,  
But must bike there. So does that mean as I say  
This that the Tour De London streets that were

Empty will now resemble that famous race  
Through the Alps? Or will millions of Builders  
Now walk from one far away zone to another,

While at the same time keeping distance  
From the clatter of traffic, and the greasing  
Of wheels. I have doubts. I have proper visions

Now of the past as Pennyfarthings crest above  
Scooters. I see pony traps, horse and carriage  
Crammed across Kilburn High Road. And on

The Uxbridge Road a relay from Hillingdon  
Down to Acton, as frustrated plumbers  
Stop and start and stop. Hope's borrowed.

Tonight's lecturer stunned with his lack of clarity  
And false promise. It was a tease, a temptation  
To make the rabbits twitch in the hutch.

Hotel owners despaired, along with restauraners  
And pub landlords. As others had no idea  
Of what happens when you have moved so far

Beyond what's enough. Give the public what  
They want is the trick, while you in fact  
Give them nothing. People will not be as tidy

As you think or expect them to be. For further  
Traps can be set if you encourage past  
Experience as nostalgia in yet another attempt

To win over, the fact deprived who stay squeezed.  
The toothpaste tube empties out, as does the piggy  
Banks and the wallet. Those eager to live risk reversals

If a false start yanks their frail lead. And Scotland  
Does not agree, along with Wales and Ireland.  
A four nation state hung, drawn and quartered,

Along these badly sketched lines can't be freed.  
Stay Alert: More design from the slogan smeared  
Cummings. Stay Alert Twats is more like it, as you

Can see the sneer as he writes, on his little  
Whiteboard, or iphone, containing pictures perhaps  
Of the gravestones, each empty space filled

With scribble, which is conditional, naturally.  
And so the rhetoric came. And the lecture screen  
Remained empty. Devoid of real information

He talked to us, liminally. Everything remained  
Vague or faint despite the bombast  
Of his acting. He was both Henry the Fluff

And a 'Falsestaff' roaming around ruined fields.  
Which he almost 'Blaked' or 'Dunkirked,'

As he tried to rouse the long fallen. Who must not  
Rise but keep rocking. Pass our tests to keep failing.  
Numb yourselves down. That's the deal.

*May 11th 2020*

## To The Ortolan

One of the rarest foods served on plates  
Is the Ortolan songbird. The snack  
Of Billionaires only, their shame demands  
That its eaten under either a hood,

Or face shroud. So that whatever God is  
Will not see how one of its most exquisite  
Creations is mastered; dipped in Armagnac  
Brandy and roasted, its sweet French song

Extinguished as it enters and thrills  
Each damned mouth. The One Percent  
Eat it whole, priming privilege for sensation.  
It is for their slick indulgence that this

One ounce illegal (and thus exclusive) bite  
Seasons need. You swallow this bird, crisped  
And caught from feet to beak, crunching  
On bones, fats and brandy, with the taste

Of figs and flesh fusing with the juices  
And guts in your feed. Including of course,  
Your own blood, as the Ortolan's bones  
And talons scrape at you, and yet, as you chew,

The flamed life force of what once sang  
And flew falls consumed. Sadly such acts  
Are attacks that this slender horde unleash  
On us. In every false word and gesture,

The delicacies of the depraved distort tune.  
For now the future of song and music too,  
Has been threatened. With the global  
Songbirds soon silenced, a report

On the NME website today defines  
The true enemy, as the Immigration Bill  
That's slid through will restrict the free flow  
Of EU and Non EU musicians, who from

2021 will need Visas, to play their music  
Here and succeed. They will also need to show  
Gain and worth of more than £1000 in their  
Pocket; enough to ensure that their singing

Will incur no extra charge from our air.  
And the price of these Visas will rise, as each  
Breath is checked, each note measured,  
Guaranteeing that the live sharing of music,

And the collaborations to come won't  
Be spared. The Ortolans are alive when  
They are cast into the brandy.  
They are cooked alive, their fear frying

In the juices of booze and their blood.  
Just as music will be, as they start to  
Segregate every artist. One step away  
From the Gulag as the musician Gil De Ray

Describes: Death's new flood. As soundwaves  
Suffocate and are separated by oceans.  
The richer Rockstars may fund them  
But will and inclination are being forced

To decrease, as the scale of song shrinks  
And a tempest occurs around touring. Having  
Been robbed of the record as a means to survive,  
Gigs release not only the energy of that air

But the actual purpose of music. It is man's  
Variant on ascension and the methods  
And means we can fly. If you place a cage  
Around breath you will only obscure visions'

Mirror. And what you will see in reflection  
Will lose surface and sense as stains dry.  
Music will remain in its cell, unable to even  
Return to the pubs we can't go to. In emptied

Rooms, chords are practised as the performing  
Of them starts to fade. The Brexit burn  
Will scorch through, and have every English  
Artist soon branded. For Corona will have

Assisted those slick Euro sceptics who will  
Have been able to slide this all into play.  
We have been distracted of course and have not  
Heard the guitars fall from tuning. The Pianos,

Too, now sound sour as the pedalled sustain  
Soon falls thin. Suddenly a key struck  
In France, or, a string strummed in Spain  
Can't be balanced, as the price is paid

And demanded and those who aren't famous  
And advance the art fail to sing. The Ortolan bird,  
Found in France is a deeply endangered species.  
Its spark is numbed for Musk's dinner, or if not

Musk himself, his cohorts, who will soon decide  
What we eat as they carve up elephants  
As food sinners, and claw the sky free of  
Songbirds and sauté the dreams we'd support.

You can put a price on the art,  
But this is a tax on the artist. Not on what  
They do, on what's special about what they  
Wish to bring to the world. Which is both

A means to become and a melody made  
By the ancients, who afforded a true sound  
To feeling and to the thousands now  
Who'll be spurned. It will be one more song

That's been stopped, and one more act  
Towards silence. For at music's end, we'll hear  
Cracking and feel the crumbling of flesh  
As hearts fall. For skin will have lost

Its soft muse, as we become the Ortolan,  
Consumed by the removed money makers,  
Protecting themselves as we suffer, wings clipped,  
Deafened, dying and dreaming once more

About flying and of some lost bird's  
Distant call. I hear a bird singing now,  
And see a fat and phantom hand come  
To grasp it. I play a chord. No-one listens.

The bird has flown.

The sky's stalled.

*May 20th 2020*

## **Ffff (Fears For Fucked Futures)**

Fear forms, unbidden,  
With all of its mystery still established.  
A matter of shock, or knowledge,  
It rarely informs, never speaks.

And so, as I sit and consider,  
In sun, the possible dark of the future  
Appears or forms on the clear air  
Like a tiny black square as hope peaks.

What will happen to us, and to me,  
Too, when I'm standing? Waiting for work  
Like the answer that Philosophers seek  
Is no quest. Instead it is a tired trek

On numbed roads which at some point  
We'll be walking, away from what we were  
And once treasured and towards other  
Options, or coupons perhaps, as time tests.

We all secretly hope for the same;  
A fast rewind, a repainting, but surely  
The world will look different as will, perhaps  
Each of us. I wonder if you will accept

My fast hug, my comrade's kiss,  
My slow rapture at seeing you all there  
Close beside me, in order to regroup  
That old trust. Or will the fresh paint

THEY'VE applied be tantamount  
To rebranding, as uniforms make new  
Fashions that the youngsters adopt  
With false pride. Orwell's 1984 came

And stayed, coasting in subliminal ways  
That sought surface; such as Parliamentary  
Bills, abused language, and bloated Potentates  
Spreading lies. It isn't about a Police state

As much as it is a possible censorship  
Between houses, as we batter down a la Ballard  
And erect new sensations from the Kingdoms  
This societal collapse will arouse.

It could be a fucked future, I fear,  
But then fucking is 'Manunkind's  
Raison d'être. And fucking up his long  
Habit. If only women ruled we'd know

More. Or understand where we are,  
As we undress ourselves before dinner,  
To reveal our need and our hunger  
For everything we savoured before.

We do not know what will be.  
We might yet be rationed.  
Will the NHS we're applauding  
Be finally drained and need funds?

They could still sell it off,  
As that was the plan before Brexit.  
I can't afford to die if I'm honest,  
So must ask the question: will it be

Immortality or the gun? Don't worry,  
I don't have the balls. Or the gun.  
But back on the bus, there'll be danger  
As I question another ignorant bastard

Who believes we all have to hear  
The inane, either in their music, or words.  
For we lost all courtesy before Covid.  
So will this internal exile grant lessons

That will with the power of tears  
Douse all flames? I fear it, and know  
That you will find me pessimistic.  
But a poem at heart, aims for progress,

Or some sort of change as it rhymes.  
In fact in either rhyme or blank verse,  
It calls across the world for shared stanzas;  
Songs to drown darkness and strike bright

Light with each line. And so, for now,  
I am fucked, while unfucked. And placing  
My passion here, full of loving; hoping  
For the return of the future

That we predicted once, beyond time.  
For time has changed too. The days  
Have become incestuous these days.  
Identical siblings that I want to

Separate to find mine.  
I do not know who you are.  
But even if I don't know you,  
I love you. For you, alone,  
Are hope hidden.  
And you alone hold hope's sign.

*May 22nd 2020*



## Which Testament

And so another Sunday arrives, as God  
Enables the heathens from Heaven to disbelieve  
Or cast doubts on just what sort of force

Creates this. I have many Christian friends,  
Along with those in and beyond all religions,  
But it is not The Divine Presence I question,

So much as the breath behind the air's kiss.  
What graces us now in the proper absence  
Of answers? As we reel each day, and keep feeling

For something secure to hold close. If it is God,  
Itself, it won't speak, or perhaps He/She/It speaks  
In other ways beyond language; for language, as we

Understand it, holds danger, as those who do talk,  
Wound and boast. They paper that language  
With lies, to cover our minds. Its their gospel.

As we will have to accept all the safeguards  
Placed to cleanly ensure we don't roam.  
These shepherds will clip us, like sheep,

Or perhaps we will soon be microchipped  
Through our breakfast, in order to make sure  
We're obeying the dictates they're relaying:

Do not touch anybody, and do not stray  
Too far from your home. I fear this new world  
Brought to boil, or set on low heat, frying slightly,

While the waiting plate is repatterned  
And the menu becomes Biblical. Apparently,  
There will be no portents, no signs, despite

The Nostradamian dramas we're faced with.  
There will be no fires, no locusts, no Four Horseman  
Coaches as we start to pass our next physical.

The NHS will repair despite the martyrdom  
Its run close to. There will be Mammon  
From the heavens and the hungry shelves

Will soon fill. Miraculous lies, as those who  
Think themselves Gods decide for us.  
Unbaptized they smear water, as politics hungers

And starts to move in for the kill. We have allowed  
Them all they could want. We have been kept at bay.  
Did they make this? I merely raise the task,

Ask the question and do not support evil's bid.  
But we know that by keeping us kept, all manner  
Of actions have started; forests cleared, protests

Packaged, illnesses stoked, and bills slid.  
Sickening Leaders infect. America is now  
An intellectually Third World country, deprived

Of true reason, with its false ruling idol,  
Mad and ignorant at the top. So, which testament  
Are we in as the invisible flood rivers through us,

And its waters rise through hot mornings  
As we both sink and float, our breath stops.  
And as we continue to hold it, we wait,  
For the correct release that will ease us,  
For the real Sunday Sermon that every Vicar  
Alive tries to preach. As they summon their

Flocks they try to shield them through screens  
From the Poachers; those out there who would  
Steal us and see us infected again, our hope

Breached. And so we step into the field  
And sniff the air. The clouds gather. If there is  
Blood in the rain we won't smell it, as the aromas

Of hope fuse with doubt. All faith is blind faith.  
But there are leaders we see who false promise.  
You can't stare them in the eye from a distance.

Nor can you avoid rainfall if you spend the rest  
Of your life under cloud. For the dark always  
Comes. The light issues the direct invitation,

And in that of course, rests the lesson.  
We cannot accept each thing said. We have to  
Question each truth as each word is God

For the moment. We have to construct our  
Own sermons, as in the religion of our real  
God's confused. It is as if both of He/She/

Its books have been all too freely adapted.  
The priests try to edit what those with  
No soul or skill now abuse. Should we have

Johnson the Baptist's fat head on a plate,  
Or Cummings', who believes himself Christ,  
Sent to cull us? In the coming days,

New beginnings.

A germed Genesis without use.

*May 24th 2020*

## After the Lies, or From Strummer To Shakespeare and Back

It's like that Joe Strummer line in the famous Clash classic;  
*'If I go there will be trouble/if I stay there will be double...'*  
Only we'll have the riots, if not on the street, then in mind.

As it becomes more apparent each day of the current class  
Struggle, which as well as the privileged v. the workers  
Is to do also with all of us and the so called Politicians,

Our uncivil servants—for want of a bitter word,  
And their kind. Which naturally, they are not. For the illusion  
Of care's no Oasis. And a misalliance in faith is an absence,

An active black hole in blue sky. Which Cummings can't fill,  
As he simply lacks inclination. His pathetic press conference  
And the void in his voice explained why. He has no true

Empathy. Now I know some wonderful Tories.  
They are of an age and a class now that the current party  
Line couldn't chart. Let me be clear: they are not wonderful

Because they are Tories. Their class and charm  
And their beauty is to do with the type of people they are.  
And they started out at a time when there were things

To believe in. At least their figures led, as they've  
Said it, and had around half the measure of the specific  
Principles of that time. I can't quite concede this,

Of course, as then we have to flit around Thatcher,  
But the point is today, all is different. The lies are not  
Hidden. They are blatantly scorched through each line.

And yet, as we rage there are those out there  
Who allowed this. There are those out there who buffed  
Boris, thinking him a loveable clown for our ring.

You bought the image and puffed as he seeped  
And smeared indiscretion. You let yourselves be persuaded  
That his blonde ambition has been sanctified. But it runs

Deeper than that. He wants a new Constitution in which  
He becomes English Emperor, or, at the very least,  
Our Pale King. Having lied to his mother, he may dream

Of a suitably Shakespearian Coup against Charles,  
And a battle of wits with young Willy. He'd send out  
The dogs to spike Megan and like bad King Richard

Perhaps court the freshly widowed Kate for his bride.  
Even though he prefers broader types, but each English  
Rose will need plucking, and each saving Grace will need

Fucking and casting away in quick time. Who could  
Cummings be, then? Certainly not Launcelot Gobbo.  
And nor would Iago, despite his complicity, shadow him.

Perhaps Caliban in his cave, slimmed down but still  
Deadly. Or the diseased Duke in *Measure for Measure*  
In disguise and out driving, while guilelessly gaining

A proper understanding of sin. And so, from  
The Clash, to this crash and the current crisis  
For humans. There is this global virus and the one

Within Parliaments. Housing those who regard  
That they have both the moral right and the freedom  
To do as they want to, according to their temperament.

But now temperatures rise and the forcing call starts  
To echo. Out, Scum! And quickly! Act, Scam!  
Hope can win! But the Scammer In Chief is like

Charlie Brown's Linus: he needs the blue blanket  
That Dominic C. colours in. He won't go, Joe,  
Won't leave. And if he does, it won't matter. For Boris

Will Zoom him no matter which room hides his shade.  
And so the great obfuscation begins along with  
The misdirect we'll soon follow. They're already lining

Up the distractions and the inventions too, as news fades.  
So, prepare for a war, or for Dunsinane's mad advances,  
As Nicola Sturgeons defiance may well need her Banquod fast.

As the Lockdown starts to lift, we won't ever know  
What is coming. The Play itself remains tragic, with us  
The strapped extras, written out and imprisoned,

Our speaking parts stricken  
As we cower behind the miscast.

*May 27th 2020*

## **Bombshells**

Today I was going to write about something  
Else, but the anger was sparked again,  
So forgive me. Avoiding the news last night,

One line spiked me when I had run out  
Of excuses, to check. BJ himself, there to both  
Unnerve and to nudge us, away from and yet

Really into confusion, which is clearly the only  
Thing he does best. Apparently it is time to move  
On, from affront, and back to the task at hand

The blonde Bombshell tell us—after only a day—  
Lest our anger start to upend his fouled scale.  
As the future's fading balance is sought,

He demands that we redirect our attention  
Away from the outside concerns he endangers  
And which if enabled will rush to ensure

All hope fails. After demanding he speak,  
BJ must now defend the blown bounty,  
For as Cummings came he sat spunkless,

Pleasing no-one at all with his spray.  
Maybe not even himself, as for Westminster  
DC, the conference was later described

As a torture; a painful process, as pleasure  
Is so different for those who betray. I knew  
Someone like this as a boy; a strange underdog

And his owner, a loutish lad and a bully,  
Protecting the mind that in truth and twain  
Saved and dared. The two became like a schooled

Frankenstein, as the strong and the sly fused  
Together, with the meeker one far more  
Vicious and bearing the same hunted stare

That we saw on Tuesday, along with a familiar  
Look of aggrievance. Tight lipped, teeth  
Pushed forward as if preparing to bite

As he glared. But after the spectrum  
And sparkle of sun he slides once more  
Between shadow, calling on the Boris bulk

Now to shield him, and to bare the brunt,  
Too for the c---. No, I won't say it. I can't.  
But you can see what I have done there

With those letters. For words can be  
Weapons, even the things unsaid. These  
Affront. So, we seek apologies still.

Admissions, too. Explanations.  
Along with Confessions; if they were more  
Freely released we'd be cured. It would be out

There; the truths that these two excretions  
Keep wiping, as their smear and soil the real  
Questions that continue to infect each plagued

Door. As the disease is seen to lessen we'll see,  
Another Virus emerging. As the coughs are boxed  
And the fevers become the stuff of summered

Sweat, dust will rise. It will come from the full  
Explosion of sense as the monsters move  
Through the mire, painting for us a blurred

Landscape, that while sketching in Sun,  
Mists all eyes. Our reality will soon fade,  
Just as it does on Zoom backgrounds.

Have you seen them? Because if you move,  
Just a fraction the picture behind makes  
You ghost. Just as we are to them, regardless

Of whether we're living. They'll blow the smoke  
From hearts burning, for as the bread runs out,  
We'll be toast. This was a close call for them.

They'll be baking furiously now, crusts  
And covers. And as the bombshell bursts,  
We'll be shrapnel as they shatter all we hold close.

I suppose its a war, with four more years  
Stretched before it. In which, as with all wars,  
The generals will continue to protect themselves

In the Mess. While we live it, and learn how  
Much we need true resistance, not against those  
Ranked against us, but against those directly

Above, rich and blessed. Comedians will make  
Jokes as a simple way to deal with it. But few  
Today find the funny, because the funny

Remains bittersweet. Or, possibly just bitter  
Today as we start to bite down on the bullet.  
In each mouth, an explosion and the taste

Of hate and steel. Spit defeat. For tomorrow,  
We'll blow, and very possibly swallow. As they  
Cum across us the fuck they seek can't complete.

*May 28th 2020*



*Photographs by Max Crow Reeves © 2020*

## Coronic Irrigation

In Alan Moore's and Dave Gibbons' *Watchmen*  
It is the character of Ozymandias who recruits  
An island's worth of supposedly disappeared  
Artists to construct and describe Armageddon,  
As he perfects the destruction he wishes

To unleash on the world. Seen as the antagonist  
Of the tale, the book is really his all too graphic  
Novel, as the troubled heroes he faces are selected  
To fail and unfurl. Dr Manhattan, of course,  
Is in a quite different story; that of a God's:

The supernatural conclusion of the fanciful  
Superman myth Moore evolves. The book tells  
Of an experiment on mankind by an unkind man,  
Stripped of feeling. I am wondering if anyone  
Hears the echoes of such a dystopian dream

No day solves. On the Dominic Cummings  
Website he has posted an active call for recruitment.  
Policy experts are needed. Great Project Managers,  
And assorted 'Weirdos', oddly, to work inside a new  
And clearly Uncivil Service as if the joint challenge

Of Brexit in the Coronic Age seeks cleansed truths.  
An unusual set of people are sought to become his  
Officials. Misfits with strange skills features strongly.  
He seems much in favour of them. For what is described  
As '*low hanging fruit*' lines the streets, '*Trillion dollar bills*

*for the taking*'. Between the frontiers of science  
And prediction, there will be institutes of decision;  
Ministries of both truth and pretence. As I read it,  
I'm chilled. And not just by the weirdoes. But by this  
Dark unveiling that blisters up and out through

The screen. Cummings seems to say on this site  
That he wants to make 'me' less important, as  
Apparently, he is working beyond the targets  
That form his own hit and miss. And this is the man  
At the top who wants to recreate Moreau's Island.

I'd hate to defame other writers by saying  
That the fictions they conceived triggered this.  
Including HG Wells. But this is real. Make no  
Mistake. And its horror. In supposedly serving  
The people Cummings is crafting a new kind

Of skeleton ship, that sails and sets the sliced  
Shore against a cataclysmic horizon, in which  
Performance trumps human and totally destroys  
Reason's grip. There is a sense of eradication  
To this; a call for a strange breed, an Army.

It is a signal flare sent in secret, despite it being  
Seen here online. He talks of '*thermoacoustic systems*',  
And '*spads*,' and '*statistical ML forecasting*'  
'*Spatiotemporally Chaotic Systems*' and '*Computing*  
*Approach Reservoirs*'. Jargon? Hidden Code,

Or a new hieroglyphics in which the true future  
Is hidden inside a different Holocaust for this time.  
Things need to be rearranged and reset and  
Reconstituted. It will be the language of Maths  
They'll be using, communicating no doubt through

Percent. He needs '*Unusual Economists*', too, in order  
To shift the mark that's in money and doubtless force  
It to revalue the wait and the worth of what's spent.  
Which will be our whole past. With none saved  
As the Cummings Currency fractions futures.

The mixture of blandishments and intention is like a knife  
In the mind, a heart blast. From undecipherable lines  
To a chattiness that churns stomachs, Cummings craves  
It all quickly; '*Great Project Managers*' who can shuffle  
Or shovel us up at great speed. If you are a company

Who can turn '*the A1 north of Newcastle into a dual carriageway*'  
If you are a destructive force, Cummings wants you.  
His Masterplan is obscene. He states that as there'll be  
No election for years And so many digital changes,  
There is the chance now to run things in a completely

Different way. It foretells of an almost chemical  
Change, in which the flesh will fall loosely to reveal  
The carved plastic of every soul and heart he'd replace.  
A plan has been laid. Which he is busily implementing.  
This is Man as Invasion. And he represents none of you.

He was not elected. Just sought by someone  
Only interested in power. The Politics is  
The process from which you can then sup wine  
Or maybe just Newcastle Brown from a skull.  
As of now, they tread grapes and stuff  
The Genie back in its bottle. There will be  
No more wishes. There will be only the whinge

And whine of the culled. This is no longer  
About being sacked. This is about what he's doing.  
And as long as there's Boris, and the Matt  
And Moggs, he'll go on. Pressing the past  
Until the shit rivers from us. A Coronic

Irrigation across a shattered human  
Landscape in which the excreted  
Will learn to forget freedom's song,

*May 29th 2020*

## Think Floyd

George Floyd's final words  
Read like one of the last Beckett poems;  
His repeated please as they crushed him,  
A broken bubble of air in his throat.

As Derek Chauvin stamped the life  
From this man you could hear the sudden  
Return of the jackboot, but on American soil;  
That rebranding came with a police uniform

And blood moat. For this is the castle  
They keep, whose gates were stormed  
Right through to the weekend.  
As opposition spread like wildfire

And like a virus too on death's street.  
Across the US and the world, and Lockdown  
Leased, here in London, as the fear of what  
Happens or of what can happen soon

Fuels stilled feet. They will kill us all  
In the end, if we rise against such dark action.  
The stark opposition in cities will bring  
The boot polish out in the Camps.

President Trump, the dumbled scum  
Will have his Commandant togs sent from  
Macy's, as he preens and prattles, while the kerb  
Where Floyd died remains damp. And so,

A new martyr is made, when we would wish  
For none, as wounds deepen. The children  
Bored at home of their parents are about  
To be released from the cage, as the anti-social

Distance is seen as suddenly secondary  
And the primary children and the adults  
Abroad unleash rage.

When so called  
Elected leaders decry the reactions

And thoughts of their people, History repeats  
Swiftly, on a continual loop, with new clothes,  
Whose colours soon blur, as blood is churned  
In the mixer and the crimes perpetrated

Belong to the fat pink hand we all loathe.

Hold someone down for too long  
And the life rivers from them. That return  
To the water from which we all came, is begun.

Here, it is a river of blood and a sea of tears  
For a victim who died because a twenty dollar  
Bill was suspected as he tried to pay for his lunch.  
And so the white once again stained the black

With the hate they always say has been  
Vanquished. After Eric Garner, another,  
And back to Rodney King. That's the crunch.  
For now empires of hate have built up

Under this brand new oppression  
And the rage of those rivers in bursting  
The banks fills all cups. Prejudice of this  
Kind is familiar of course and an acid.

Black people have always endured it,  
As of course have the Jews. And the Palestinians,  
Kurds, the Lebanese, and the Irish; every place

Fills with poison, not all of which stains  
The news. But we would have thought,  
We'd have hoped that at this startling time

Of division, a normal man in a Deli,  
Would not become beaten steak.  
Across the world, anger fries, as we prepare

To sift through smoke. We're all burning.  
Read Trump's reaction and watch as the world  
Starts to break. Will it break for the best?

With the dead bark split, fruit is growing.  
But sadly here, it is *Strange Fruit*, as in  
The song by Nina Simone; Hate's numbed  
Taste.

Apparently, Chauvin's

On Suicide watch. Does this mean the shame  
Claims him, or is that just the process  
With which they seek to convince us now  
Of said guilt?

Perhaps we should  
Hang him from a tree and see the '*bitter crop*'  
Spread around him. The man with the mask  
And umbrella was the first to shatter glass.  
What's been built? Clearly, a second structure

Of lies, there to incite and smudge focus  
After the global snuff movie was made  
To incur our outrage. Some believe this  
Chamberlain was a cop. Certainly, his

Entire stance was a riot. And there is a clear  
Strain of thinking that sees this as a second  
Biblical stage, in which the feared slaves  
Are smashed down as the white world

Feels threatened; a dark preparation  
Through which the signal glare fans  
The flame that witnesses the world  
As it burns. Trump can only melt.

He's warped plastic. Cummings is sulphur.  
But above and beyond them, as our statutes  
Shake, what's been learnt? We are being  
Pushed back to work, charting our lives'

Remaining chance on the tube map.  
As they actively prepare for a new strain  
Once others die, serving them.  
Get the economy fed, and new graves, too.

There's no question.

Remember,

That Chauvin was filmed for nine minutes  
As he brought a black man to his end.  
Now black and white clash for the right  
To riot. Meanwhile, another face finds

Its dinner and the Angel of death  
Makes new friends. The lies rise from lies  
That surround now to slice us. Windows  
Weep just like widows. In our hands now,

Are mirrors reflecting back fate's pretence.

*June 1st 2020*

## **In The Black House**

He turned The White House lights off  
In order to avoid noisy neighbours, bunkering  
Down a la Hitler, as if he too were trying  
To persuade himself from his end, the so called  
Free world's Billionaire President, slyly avoiding  
The Bailiffs, who sought morality as their surfeit

And as a kind of forfeit on truth he won't lend.  
He certainly could not spare sense if it screwed  
Him in the ass, like a porn star, as this Stormy  
Donald would vapour like rain in a drought.  
If he ever held a clear thought he wouldn't know  
How to pronounce, or to spell it: you 'Caligarish',

With your cabinet dark, reason's out.  
In fact, its fucking well leased to the wind  
In the hope that someone with sense  
May hold to it. The insanity of your actions  
And the redneck rash that you scratch  
Makes me ashamed to be white, not that

You are, being orange; a plastic sun  
Of your making that no gravitational pull  
Would dare catch. And yet still, you remain!  
A proper enemy of the people, exposed  
And blown, hiding from them, deep down  
In the dirt and bowels of your State.

For an hour, at least, but it could have been  
Less than a minute. We would have still sourced  
The lesson of so called democracy in defeat.  
Democracy has been exiled for years, certainly  
As we understand it. A forgotten concept,  
Or relic, just as in *Logan's Run's* classic twist.

When Peter Ustinov's ancient man meets  
Jenny Agutter and Michael York in their  
Running. They touch his face, disbelieving  
That such a tender form still exists. There is  
Nothing now quite like that. We've lost  
The sensibility for it. Now its sensation,

Or sensation and shock that surrounds.  
Whether on screen or in the Coronic Age  
They're extending, with morons like you  
At the forefront, beauty itself's gone to ground.  
I look at your wife when you're on. And her  
Lovely face, dead but living. I wonder always

If she's captive, or did she let you grab hold  
Of her in that dark? As you wronged Civil Rights  
In the President's nuclear Bunker, seeing your  
Own people as weapons, was Melania strapped  
Beside you, or baring her own Devil's mark?  
What sort of world has been made

And what sort of life are you living?  
It can't just be dementia, or like Reagan before,  
Will it show? When you turned off those lights  
You cut modern civilisation completely.  
What is in your mind? Is it empty? The lights  
Are off but you're home still. And now your

Accusers have no doubt at all where to go.  
They barricade your preened lawn while you  
Hide within. Fucken' pussy! Just like the ones  
You once grabbed for as you thought about  
Dating your daughter and paid for Stormy D's  
Suck and blow. And now they have you on

Epstein's Affidavit. Pig. So unkosher, even  
The prawn like shell of impeachment was made  
Dirty for God, priced and peeled. When will  
The son, or grandson of whoever framed  
Lee Harvey Oswald, clean his gun to run at you  
As you shut down freedom's field? You have

Stained the white walls and forever marred  
The grand emblem. You have sounded the word  
Within country and shown us what's left  
When hope's killed. Ugliness in plain sight  
And across all known levels. Spiritual, spatial,  
Mental. For each word you misuse is a weapon

That will in time keep us stilled. Not even the Bible  
Had you. But now we have our blonde photocopy.  
As you tear the pages from your idiots tome, we read  
Blight. For behind our own prick is the balding  
Shadow hand that has gripped him. Cumming again,  
You'll jerk and wank with them, as your hunker  
And hate, lost to light.

*June 2nd 2020*

## Trans-Social

We are now, I feel, between the hard place  
And the rock that Cummings has crawled right  
Back under, caught in the shadow and mire

Under which slugs accrue, when you leave  
Damp garden bags out in the rain, or when  
The air holds rain at bay, flowers tire,

And their retreat is a signal for the worms  
To turn; nothing's true. Apart from the continuing  
Trouble to come, in the United States and all

Countries. As one man's death fuels a choir  
That has become the world's Requiem,  
And we are caught between breaths, abandoning

One, checking others, foregoing safety in order  
To finally pierce the pretence and heal friends.  
The fascist coup's on the rise. And its watching us

At each corner. But as it's spying, protestors  
Once again claim the streets. Recognising at last  
The horror within hollow churches, made not

This time from religions but from the Downing  
Street Pulpit and the puff haired puppet, who seeks  
Only power, and his wretched string puller,

Wrenching and waiting to cart us all off by the feet.  
This is as it was, a place between progress. It reminds  
Me of the mismatch between the former kindles

And books read on trains. That soon  
Transmogrified too, and become the numbed  
iphone vortex, that one handed portal that sucked

Everyone's soul down hell's drain. Just look how  
We've bubbled up and who we have allowed  
To claim surface. They're exposing themselves now

And stand naked behind the White House  
Door and each lie. As impassioned people  
Shout out, while others try to avoid the news

Altogether, we are now all trans-social,  
Shuttling between mind and body, not to much  
A gender realignment as one of the soul.

What has died? Is it us as we were, as they  
Prepare the knife to release us? Or the chance  
For renewal as power is placed in the worm.

It slides and sidles now as I speak, sliming  
Its way through your carpet. Call, or stamp,  
It won't answer. What else fell with Floyd?

None confirm. News passes like air,  
And we forget all too quickly. But Donald  
Officially hates his people, as does Un-Priti

And Bore-is. And Farage, the shit spreader.  
Weeds in the garden that burst plume  
And flower. Make no mistake, they seed

Soiling. Your earth is unsteady. You don't  
Know what to read. We're all waiting.  
Meanwhile the fascistic flag is unfurling

And fucking Dominic

Is *still* there.

*June 5th 2020*

## Toad In The Hole

A wart on the face can only be expunged  
With a laser, but even then the scar lingers  
And still the surface smear sees cure fail.  
And so it is with Farage, the French sounding  
Frog or toad in our hole, now our very own  
English Carbuncle, with his leering eyes a threat  
To all nieces, as he lustily pumps staling ale.

Farage fools no-one. Its the only hope  
I can cling to. Apart from those so deluded  
And racist that they would gather in robes  
Round the bog and defile mystic men with  
Their clear misunderstanding of magic.  
These Morris prancers, if they exist at all  
Remain dogs chasing their own rears

And tails for an equally mythic England,  
Which is unconnected to folklore and legend  
And the beauty behind sacred stones.  
All people like this can do is throw, or cast  
Spite as Farage has done at protestors, calling  
Them Terrorists on Good Morning Britain,  
For Estate Agenting Edward Colston's river home.

There, in those words, we saw another skin  
Shed under darkness. As Colston's cold face  
Kissed the Avon, we saw in Nigel's false fed fury  
And his blatancy, exposed hate, that he has for not  
Only all immigrants, but for all minorities also,  
Be they black, disempowered or those battered  
Back into life by a banner that seeks to forego

Our dark fates. The English honour all oafs.  
They even welcomed Oswald Moseley back  
Onto talk shows. We think, I believe, we can  
House them, miscast as there are in false shows.  
But we do not know what they are. Only the how  
Comes to claim us. The why barely features,  
Was Farage in his childhood beaten or bred

To spark race? We don't know. He just pretends  
To speak sense, the bore in the bar, we'd part  
Smile at, attacking when drunk his opinions,  
But allowing him still pride of place. Just like  
That wart you can't lease, until you smother it  
With cream, nuke, or cut it, while endangering  
As you do so the former symmetry of the face.

We see each ignorance fed and latterly at least,  
We decry them. But we do not remove them  
Because their hold on us squats on hearts.  
They silenced Farage on TV, but he was still allowed  
His expression. Where are the points in which  
Power must be finally prised apart? As Minneapolis  
Calls for control and Trump tweets to hellhound

Individuals, when, as we tire, will we seek  
To truly overturn all we've seen. For we are now  
The toads in the hole as much as this frog  
On the throat, primed for bulging; through  
The bile in his larynx, bilge rises, as beer  
Poisons bubble and the swamp in his mind  
Stains all green. Whenever this reptile

Reappears the water and way seem  
Corrupted. His yokel laugh seems affected  
As if he were an auditioning perhaps  
For Panto, on some tawdry stage, but with  
His slimed eye trained on the failing West End  
Of Westminster, in which the other hams  
And poor players prod, pull and wrench us

As we remain unsure where to go.  
But these pond scum know all too well.  
They are raising Colston now from the water.  
The muck that clings is the mire that would drag  
Each sacred slave deep below. Farage is a race  
On his own: the Underfrogs, we might call them.  
Listen as they warp the water. With each word,

Sound finds vomit. And yet still they're speaking.  
Across De-Angeled days Devils blow.

*June 10th 2020*

## Metropolitaland

Sir John Betjeman wrote of this train trundling  
Its way out of Uxbridge. Today, carriaged silence  
And my jewish soul does remind of former train  
Journeys in which fear and something as corrosive  
As fear; trepidation echoed under motion, pushing  
Passengers ever closer to the cold embrace  
Of stopped time. Aldgate isn't Auschwitz of course.

Nor Baker Street, Belsen. Wembley Park is not  
Dachau even if its towers do stand rebuilt.  
Yet behind our stares we are stilled, as masks  
Contain the closed person, and the return to work  
Feels like murder as time and truth seem to tilt.  
Why are we wearing these masks when they seek  
To cut the two metres? Outside the train all is flurry,

While this travel towards becomes grave.  
The train becomes a moving coffin, of sorts,  
With the light of life caught through windows;  
With Preston Park a drab shadow, giving way  
To the Finchley Road photograph no-one saves.  
Held in here we're one race while outside Black  
Lives batter at the racist rule that has seen them

Crushed and then filled with new air. This we are  
Trying to breathe as the imposed shrouds cover  
Faces, and I can feel the rash forming around  
My mouth and nose as rage flares. We are still  
Being kept under a chaos rule of fused colour,  
In which blood and black blur the senses  
And the world we once knew turns to smoke.

I glimpse the gas towers ahead, but now  
The mist masks the bodies. As this protective  
Sock reeks of Jackboots storming the street,  
War's no joke. Even Churchill has returned under  
Our Prone Minister's botched impression, while  
The cartoon stare of his statue is captioned inside  
Its own box. The Metropolitan line writes me now,

Close to such confrontation. As the riots boil  
In stark sunlight, just how will today end in shock?  
Another black man dies as I sit in silence. And then  
Another, another as the sad, stunned show seeks  
Repeat. Twitter's song becomes sea as everyone  
Casts their soiled teardrop, including me with this  
Poem, but how can we sail through and how

Will we now crest defeat? Kick the state  
For too long, and that state begins stamping.  
As we, headless chickens, suffer by face and throat,  
They'll slit us. Those who died in the camps, had no  
Reprieve at all. They fell, silenced. While we rise  
We are shouting because we do not know who  
To trust. Soon, should THEY win, we won't know

How to trust, either. Hope forms despite that.  
But then its spite that sparks all. For this is  
A battle begun, as everywhere becomes suburb.  
Separate streets made of people who dare  
To defend their heart's call. The train takes me  
On between zones. It is 10am and its empty.  
Through the mask on my face a hand stifles.

And I think of all of those who would speak.  
The ghost of Churchill's boom can't be zoomed  
In his protective shroud, despite racists.  
BAME sets blame's agenda as contagion falls,  
Horror rises to once more attain its own peak.  
Both black and white fuse but it's really the black  
That needs hearing. The white stirs in slowly,

In an attempt not to grey, as that colour reminds  
Of a former uniform found within a parallel landscape.  
The electric train trundles. With my entire face  
Covered I hear the bright fire and speak through  
My eyes as I pray. What are we moving towards?  
This is my ninety ninth Lockdown poem. When  
The daily ones end tomorrow, how will the next

Book be formed? What sort of words will I write,  
Hidden, like Winston Smith in my corner?  
For as colours run pens start crying. Poor old  
Betjeman will be banished. The train arrives.  
The gaps widen. Mind how you go. What has  
Opened and what has been closed?

Watch all doors.

*June 15th 2020*

## What Covid Caught

What did Covid catch? Just the light,  
As it was spotlighted to glare at us, warping  
The way and the wisdom once used to  
Describe what was known. It interrupted  
The real, and the glands which soon fell  
Unguarded, as the unguided heart  
Heightened its urgent call to hope flown.

It virused each vein. Home and hospital  
Claiming patience. Covid disinterred Doctors,  
Made phantoms of food, restrained rules.  
Bracing us for the brink into which we're still  
Falling; Covid the Destroyer, if not of worlds  
And health, then of High Streets, along with  
The future and physical form within schools.

For now our children run wild, and Ballard's  
Balm cannot calm us. I started with Ballard  
And so with Jim I will end. He saw all this  
Years ago and his balm became cooled  
Acceptance. In not heeding him have we  
Made oppression and the scorching within  
Our fat friend? Brought to boil, all soup spun,

We're numbed as our souls start to vapour;  
Hates hot press has soon squeezed us,  
As we emerge reduced or even miniaturised  
From our homes. Just like animals in the light,  
We blink and blame each breeze burning,  
As the summer air sees us simmer  
And the heart, split and heavy finally

Transmogrifies into stone. What did Covid  
Catch? Us. Along with the Corons who rule us;  
The furious Coronica we have fashioned  
In affront and outrage clothes the fear,  
Of the tender flesh placed just like a crab  
Cast to water, knowing that the biting bowl  
Boiling over is the maddened foam of death's

Tears. We have been forked for that bowl  
And fucked for the plate waiting for us.  
As a prawn is peeled, our exposure is seen  
Through whitened flesh, or black grain.  
For a meal has been made of the human meat  
Fate's throat formed for; within the modern age's  
Saliva both acid and blood taste the same.

Cannibalism has come as the cafes  
And restaurants all go hungry. With the menu  
Mixed, marination of each ingredient worked  
For taste. Starting in March the seasoning  
Source sought all flavours, as broiled bone  
Duly softened and still falling flesh smoothed  
To paste. Each brick wall became toast

That the plump at pot began spreading.  
Johnson as butter - right down to his hair -  
Melted first. All he wants is to feed from the fame  
That first found him and make us all breakfast  
While his powered lust seeks desert. Mogg  
Is just beans, counted from the tin, hiding others,  
Gave the sauce slick between them, Priti Patel,

Bacon rind. But Dominic is the egg claiming  
His bald domination. A stark staring yellow  
That not even albumen can confine. Instead,  
He drips from the plate, a viscous fall of life  
Wasted. On seeing us slip in the spillage,  
He is in turn satisfied. He always doubted  
Our worth, not that fate for him is a flavour:

Is he really what a Mother made? No cut  
Chicken, with a well farmed c- or a- would  
Lay him. And yet his Mary did, as they attempt  
To make better breakfasts, in which future  
Creatures will feast on the second slavery  
He begins. Remnants of the first stained  
The steam as the 2020 Spring moved to

Simmer, just like the shards of shell  
In a saucepan as fire forces egg death.  
There the yoke rises like sun, or blooms  
Within, a trapped secret. Crying across its  
Existence or hardening through boiled breath.  
A frozen emblem, in fact, despite the warm  
Crumbling as its swallowed, just as we

Dissipated, immune systems scrambled  
As hope and heart found the fry. Of course,  
It isn't just food, though food is the refrain  
And echoed chorus within cultures; the lack of it  
Blocks expression, across the starving plains  
As words die. And with them, the mouths  
And spirited hands that would form them;

The African and the world's starving stories  
Were sequelled within the panicked West's sell  
And buy. That was the first division that struck,  
The first wall fell and it crushed us. Selfishness  
Begot separation. Separation begat Quarantine.  
And then Quarantine became Cure. A convenient  
Port of seclusion. In which forced exclusion

Allowed people to forego former dreams.  
Now we are snails, prised from our shells,  
Masked and mired. Across wound and wire  
The charges to come would shock stone.  
At which we may yet recoil, as we scurry  
Back to our burrows, stunned, slimed  
And silenced as along the mucus field spores

Were sown. But by who? Which God's hand  
Came to strike our soft structure? Who came  
To peel or repel us away from the stifled water  
Within? Who brought us to the boil and stoked  
The steam's surface? Which vows to vapour  
And the dissolution of flesh worsened sin?

WHAT KILLED US? Did we die? And is this

The dream that we're waving? Or, is this,  
In fact, just the journey that the sautéed soul  
Undertakes, as it seeks the clean white plate  
Of either the cosmos or heaven, salted by  
Unrepentant stars, death still savours the oil  
Of the dark and love's taste. All my long lost  
Dead have escaped but Hell for us is now

Waitered by Angels. In fact, here in Hell,  
All is service as the ovens roar all the time.  
But unlike the food fire serves, here it is us  
Who are tasted. The tongues of flame, each  
A demon's, are licking us clean as blood binds.  
For blood thickens and seasons the deal  
That someone has made near a cauldron,

In either a kitchen or office, to shape the 666  
Of the Devil while we confront or fall foul of  
Emergency's 999. In a possibly Shakespearean  
Shade on a heath an inelegant play's being written.  
Sadly by those whose own theatre ends and begins  
With their face. Which they slather over in smoke  
Summoning it up through stained magic,

Pate and wigs branded as evil succeeds  
Second place. What did Covid catch? Them.  
The THEY of whom I have written. Those carved  
Kings of chaos and the Queens of long rule,  
Eat the lot. We have been cooked. Throughout  
The Summer ahead, we will simmer. With children  
As croutons the soup has been stirred in fate's pot.

A Century ends twenty years after starting.  
It is almost Biblical. For after these hundred poems  
They will serve a new selection of years free from  
Care. And what will they taste like? Well, you.  
And you as well. Your vagina. Your nose. Your penis.  
The spice in your soul. Your crisp hair. You have been  
Sacrificed. But then you did steal the sugar.

Well, now, time reclaims it. And the earth as well.  
Man's not spared. Corona came hard and crested  
The wind. We fell, bloated. Covid 19 turned to 20.  
But when your number's up who can dare?  
And so, now, the dead look to us as the animals  
Speak their language. How then, can we learn  
The lesson? The answer is simple:

Write and be your poem. And so begins  
The next volume. Importantly, I'll echo Wilde  
And then, Hemingway, being Earnest.  
Take your words to life's river.

Our life is unrhymed.

The rhyme's there.

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