



Community Stories

Reflections on 'lockdown' from Great Wilbraham in Cambridgeshire – by Tony Goryn.

Lock Down - Out of Town

We are not allowed to sing;
all breath's air must be collected
and directed
to the furnace;

except when we walk,
which we may for exercise.

So I do.

No voices; a tyranny;
a crime against humanity.

These country roads are empty;
hicks locked in their barn-sheds,
newcomers indoors
Zoom.

A car passes;
if this was 1960
I would take my pencil,
my notepad, write down

its number and wait.
But it isn't,
we are sixty years on.
Six o and so quickly;

the trees are greener
in the balance somehow
disturbed. Poor caged bird,
freedom's broken promise.

A cinnabar moth
lifts its fire and wrought iron
from a ragwort; the chalk
stream's babble even

is loud; dissent brooked
as it seeks resolution;
sweet harmony
from the discord.

Here I can deeply
inhale, exhale,
no one can see!
and here the bridge divides

Little from the Great,
me from the water,
flesh from the slaughter,
my lungs from laughter.

Another car;
but how long?
The road song disappears;
a walker appears

mouthng more
into the silence,
oh happy day
oh when we walk.

We close and cross
and recross for fear,
whisper *hello*; strange this
un-“hail fellow well met”

with a friend of the same
sixty years. As if
every word is guarded.
What is there to say

with all this new greenness
and with the air as clean
as it has been since;
whenever;

for I cannot remember;
only the haze
over the fields.
Nor the last time

we sang together
in conversation!
Together we sync' -
see you this evening.

Solitary in my room
and on the screen
with nineteen
others locked down,

muted, we chant alone;
to the beat of a time-lapse
rhythm; a schism between
a teacher and her choir.

There is nothing else,
it is in its beauty
as quiet and manic
as death; is all it is.



'Life is not (just) a bed of roses'