

A reflection: amalgamated sections of Weekly Poem in Covid-19 Times

When despair for the world grows in me
I come into the Presence.
For a time
I rest in the grace of the world,

Slide 1

give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Slide 2

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.

Yet ...

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality:

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

Slide 3

When this is over,
may we never again
take for granted
a handshake with a stranger,
the taste of communion.
Life itself.

Slide 4

Sometimes as an antidote
I eat the stars.
Sometimes, instead, I stir myself
into a universe still young,
still warm as blood.

Slide 5

And where is Jesus?
He is up and risen, long before,
Alive, at large, and making his strong way
into the world he gave his life to save.
He slips
Away from church, shakes off our linen bands
To don his apron with a nurse:

Slide 6

“How do you do? I’ll not shake hands
or hug you like I would
normal seems to be on hold!”

Slide 7

If you fall down, we’re told,
you shouldn’t get up right away.
We have
fallen.

Hard.

It’s ok to lie here a while
enjoying the peace.

Slide 8

The deer are reclaiming the woods -
each hoof print a hopeful rebellion.
The paths that we once trod
now lie bare in this small revolution.

Slide 9

For those behind locked doors,
fearful of illness, poverty, violence, and loneliness
we seek a blessing.

For those outside locked doors,
in the moments of encounter
in the richness that sustains our spirits
in the renewal of nature
peace be with you

Slide 10

like you've only now remembered
you are alive.

Slide 11

Give us resolution ... , courage, ... persistence ..., strength ..., acceptance ..., grace ...
and wisdom to discriminate between our own impatience to move forward
and your Spirit's deep stirring of our spirits when the time is right to move.

Slide 12

To all that is chaotic
let there come silence:
an opening
into the quiet
that lies beneath
the chaos,
where you find
the peace
you did not think
possible,

Slide 13

moments of revelation near leaves, sunlight and skin.
And wonky, colourful rainbows.

Slide 14

For There is a time for mercy
and there is a time for reflection.
There is a time for certainty
and there is a time for unknowing:
soft protection for seeds
unready to face full sun.

Slide 15

So we pray for our locked-down, longing world.
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul.
Yes there is even death.
But we are always encompassed by Love.
Wake to the choices you make,
open the windows of your soul.
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

As Slide 3

Credits for all sections of poems used in this reflection:

Slide 1: 16 th March	Wendell Berry	'The peace of wild things', in <i>The Peace of Wild Things</i> (2018)
Slide 2: 23 rd March	Lyn Ungar	'Pandemic' See http://www.lynnungar.com/poems/pandemic/
Slide 3: 30 th March	Richard Hendrick	'Lockdown' See https://brorichardblog.blogspot.com/2020/03/lockdown-brother-richard-hendrick.html
Slide 4: 6 th April	Laura Kelly Fanucci	'When this is over' See https://motheringspirit.com/?s=when+this+is+over
Slide 5: 13 th April	Rebecca Elson	'Antidotes to fear of death', in <i>A Responsibility to Awe</i> (2001)
Slide 6: 20 th April	Malcom Guite	'Easter 2020' See https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/?s=Easter+2020
Slide 7: 27 th April	Paul Booth	'Creative Distancing', © Paul Booth
Slide 8: 27 th April	Christine Crabtree	'If you fall down', © Christine Crabtree
Slide 9: 27 th April	Laura Sutcliffe	'In this moment', © Laura Sutcliffe
Slide 10: 4 th May	Jan Berry	'Behind locked doors', © Jan Berry
Slide 11: 11 th May	Carrie Etter	'How to handle a pandemic' See https://www.mmu.ac.uk/write/how-to-handle-a-pandemic.php
Slide 12: 18 th May	Nicola Slee	'Prayer for the waiting time', in <i>Praying Like A Woman</i> (2004)
Slide 13: 25 th May	Jan Richardson	'Blessings in the Chaos', in <i>The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief</i> (2016)
Slide 14: 1 st June	Miles Salter	'That spring' See https://www.mmu.ac.uk/write/that-spring-.php
Slide 15: 8 th June	Carla Grosch-Miller	'There is a time', in <i>Lifelines: Wrestling the Word, Gathering up Grace</i> (2020)
Slide 16:	As Slide 3	