



Life Under Lockdown

BLATCHINGTON MILL

Cover art: Leila F and
Julia Bodroghy-West



Happy Bitter Birthday
An Excessively Angry Letter to Lockdown

March,
A Geography classroom.
Cheering and laughing
As we hear
That we are going into lockdown.

April,
Aliyah's room.
She's sitting on her chair
Chromebook in front of her
Writing a story, when she should be
working.

May,
Aliyah's phone.
A series of messages ping onto the group
chat
With excitement, stating the rumour
That lockdown will ensue for the rest of the
year.

June,
Downstairs, in the kitchen.
Aliyah is finally getting on with her work.
It's warmer, and easier to think -
for the time being, at least.

July,
The back garden.
Aliyah and Dad stack liquids in a test tube
As Mum accidentally explodes an egg
Which she was trying to put into a bottle.

August,
Summer holiday at last.
One mellow eternity later,
It feels off. Strange. As though summer
Had not happened at all.

September,
School once again.
Aliyah was hopeful to make new friends,
And not get bullied or feel constantly lonely.
But her hopes were in vain.

October,
The car, on a steady tour across town.
Dad at the wheel, whilst Aliyah
Clutches envelopes filled with sweets
To deliver to her friends - a sort of virtual
trick-or-treating.

November,
The front room.
Aliyah is now fourteen, and feels
as though somehow everything and nothing has
changed
At the same time.

December,
Nana and Grandad's house.
The family open presents
And try to pretend as though they actually think
That it feels like Christmas at all.

January,
Back in the kitchen and back on lockdown.
We did not manage to undergo
6 days of the New Year without disaster striking.
Whoop-dee-doo.

February,
The living room.
I write a Valentine to myself
(because self-love is the most important type of
love)
and a birthday card to Dad.

March,
Fin's room.
He wakes us all up with an excited shout at 7
AM. Thanks for that.
We all celebrate that he is 12 now
And try to forget that this is not the only birthday
this month.

Lockdown, our one-year friend.
We welcomed you at first,
But enough now. You have us begging for
normalcy to return.
You have successfully robbed us of one year of
our lives.
Happy birthday. I hope you're proud of yourself.

Aliyah C



One day I thought to myself
What we doing with this world
Do we think about what we do?
Virus spirals out of control
Deaths are added to the toll
I wonder what is going on

And did you think about the wars
Soldiers killed and many more
What is there that we can do?

And do you know our racist past
Gay marriage is allowed at last
Still prejudice fills our streets
And I'm living in this world, wonder why
all of this is going on

Chorus

So close your eyes and just dream
And we'll make it better
All we need is some care
Then we'll make it better
And tonight we'll make it better

This world is still so incomplete
People can't afford to eat
How isn't that a human right?
Sexism floods through sports
Climate change needs more thought
But still we have time for change

And I'm living in this world, wonder why all
of this is going on

So close your eyes and just dream
And we'll make it better
All we need is some care
Then we'll make it better
And tonight we'll make it better

Pre-chorus

Oh woe what is this world
Oh no what have we done
Oh woe this messed up world
Oh no we've ruined the fun

Chorus

So close your eyes and just dream
And we'll make it better
All we need is some care
Then we'll make it better
And tonight we'll make it better

Listen to 'Make it Better' -

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AnlUY-k0DBrBiBOQMkIUs4B_0070Q?e=kKgPXq

Rosa S



Dear Macie,

I hope you're doing well, I know I could just text you or call you but I thought writing a letter would be a nice change. I just went on a walk in the country, it wasn't as quiet as I thought it would be. There were a lot more people around. I guess lots of people are wanting to get out at a time like this. You know, since shops and everything are still closed it's not like there's much else to do. I still had fun on the walk in the end though. Would you like to go on a walk in the park with me by the way? It's fine if you can't, we can go another time. I'm happy we can still go on a walk with one other person, it's a shame we can't go with our other friends though.

My family has got pretty annoying so it would be best if I got out. I love them but after spending so much time with them I can get sick of them. Especially my sister. Maybe that's just me, do your family annoy you? On call I hear you shouting at your brother so I'm guessing yes.

There really isn't much to write about, huh? Well, I hope you get back to me about going on a walk. Until then I'll find something to do, might be hard since I've already done everything I can in my house. Bye!

From Isabella

Jess M

Dear diary,

Today I have been at home sitting down at the kitchen table doing my home learning with my friends. The world feels so different now that covid has been released into the world (I just wish it would go back to how it used to.) I can't do the things I used to do. I can't go out and see my friends, I can't go into school and see all of my friends. The whole way of life has changed and everyone has changed. Now you have to social distance from people and you can only meet up with one person. I feel like I'm imprisoned in my own house and I can't escape! The world feels different. The way of life as I knew it has changed. I can only see my friends through playing online games with them or only see one of them. I want to be able to meet all of them. But there has been a good side to it. I have been able to spent more time with my family. There is more things to talk about as a family. And it is nice just to be at home where I have everything I need.

Albie T



I lie in bed,
Motivation non-existent,
My mind crowded with pointless
thoughts,
Wondering when the pandemic will end,
This endless abyss,
This bottomless pit,
Lonely,
Alone,
Deserted,
Stripped of my day and my month and
my year,
Trapped amidst the rest of society,
My life is insignificant,
Unimportant,
And life seems meaningless

Leila F

It's scary.
Nowhere to go, no one to see, I feel like I
have become a hostage inside.
On a day like this people flood through
the town faster than speed.
Go out, stay in, they all say.
Classrooms empty, not a human in sight.
Shops gone.
But there is one place that people go
flooded with people old and small.
Hospitals.
Not enough beds to fill them all.
Will they survive? That's just for time to
tell.
Jabs in their arms is a symbol of hope.
How long will it be until it all reopens.
Our lives have gone into outer space.
All we do these days is copy and paste
on machines.
Is my screen too bright? I forgot that
meeting!
Pubs vanished.
Restaurants don't exist.
A life without facemasks wouldn't it be
bliss?

Liyala N



Another hour, another day,
It's as if the entire world's just grey,
Children are lonely, adults have snored,
The amount of time I've said 'Mum I'm
bored.'

Online school, virtual PE!
It's all so boring just you see,
Another announcement at 5 o'clock.
Were finally getting out. What a shock.

Imogen W

Lockdown haiku

Not really feeling it,
Not quite doing anything,
Bored Bored Bored Bored Bored.

Anon

We are all stuck in lockdown,
not allowed to go in town,
wearing masks wherever we go,
the rest of the year going by slow.

Doing schoolwork all online,
using gadgets to fill up the time.
lack of time and friends to hangout,
causing many people to pout.

We've been in lockdown for a while,
it's getting hard to raise a smile,
everyone is becoming restless,
if we go out we might stress less.

Less and less of socialization,
also lack of education.
Many people growing apart,
when will high schools start.

Everybody is impatiently waiting,
what will happen when things start
beginning.

Anya K

Keeping up with school work is pretty hard,
When it feels like the world's on Jupiter or
Mars,
No friends to talk to,
Nothing to say,
When I sit by myself all day,
Tried playing piano,
It's difficult,
I'd rather launch myself from a catapult,
Clair de lune, Why'd you do this to me?
Feels like I'm anything but free.
Quarantine! Quarantine!
We stay inside 'cause of covid 19,
Quarantine! Quarantine!
We do it 'cause of covid 19...

Amy C



I yearn for the day,
when my friends and I can just play

A packed stadium, a screaming crowd,
all cheering for their team so very loud.

Eating Pizza and garlic bread at the Bull,
laughing and playing sounds really cool.

Going to Spain on an aeroplane,
to get away from the English rain.

Going wild in the aisle, filling up my trolley,
spending all my saved up lolly.

What has this taught me; to enjoy every
instant?
To appreciate a cuddle, seeing the family
who are distant.

Being able to go out freely in the car,
visiting new places and viewing the world
from afar.

We all can't wait for the day,
when this naughty virus goes away.

Ellie D

Hours spent looking at Instagram,
Tik Tok,
You Tube,
Playing games,

Everyone's thinking it,
When will it end?
Most things are shut,
And there are lots of rules.

Listening to music,
Drawing a picture,
Watching films,
Facetiming friends.

School is at home,
Google Meets,
Google Classroom,
Google Mail.

Going for walks outside,
On the beach,
On the Downs,
At Devil's Dyke.

These are our lives in lockdown.
We're getting bored,
We're running out of things to do,
We want things to go back to normal.

Esme T



Using all my determination I stretched open my eyes, finding myself in a pool of sunlight. I stared at my clock in disbelief.

8:15. Oh great, now I only have 15 minutes to get dressed, give my rabbits food, eat breakfast, clean my teeth, set up my desk and chromebook for school and somehow be ready for my first google meet and 8:30. To make matters worse, I feel like my ears are going to pop as my dear brother is unfortunately practising his violin which is not the most flattering sound to hear at 8:20 in the morning. I'm starting to wonder how I could have ever sleep through that ghastly noise... I drag myself out of bed and walked blindly towards my chest of draws, managing to trip over several times.

Finally after many bruises and the killing pain of standing on 3 boys worth of lego in the hallway I tumble down the stairs and rush into the bathroom to clean my teeth. Somehow doing that without any bumps I hurry to set up my chromebook (as I had discarded the thought of breakfast years ago) for the first google meet of the day.

Logging on, I feel the most strange sensation. Something feels wrong. I shrug and press 'Join meeting.' I soon find out why something feels weird. As soon as I'm met by strange glances of the people on the google meet I know what I have done: my clothes are completely back to front.

Amelie G

Dear Diary,

Life is mainly the same everyday now. I get up at 8.00am ready to start school at 8.30am. It kind of feels like you're working in an office and you feel like you should be getting paid because it's so hard. I would rather be playing on my Nintendo Switch all day, playing my favourite games 'Fortnite and Minecraft'. I am now very used to lock-down, not like when it started and I thought it was the end of the human race. I was a little bit panicked, but either way I managed to get a gaming headset out of it! So basically every day is like a groundhog day; I get up do my work while sitting at the lounge table with my younger brother and sister working opposite me. Then after lunch, I finish school and go out on a walk along the seafront or to the shop with my Mum, my brother and sister; but my Dad is at work. Then I go home and play on my Nintendo Switch and sometimes Facetime my Grandparents, who are shielding. Also my Aunty lives very close to me and she lives on her own, so she is part of our bubble. I am going back to school next week so hopefully that means I only have one week of home learning left.

Milo E



The door is opened, I step through. There is a light, its huge... what is it? I remember now, it's the sun. Something familiar fills my nose... what is this smell? I remember now, it's fresh air. Something swirls around me... what is it? I remember now, it's the wind. How come I had forgotten all of these things even though I had known them all my life? I remember now, lockdown. We aren't safe outside, that's why I stayed in the house, to get away from the germs. But how long have I been in there? A day or two? No. I remember now; it's been three weeks. That doesn't seem like long now, But it felt like an eternity. What day is it? I remember now, Saturday. Wait... I'm forgetting something else... what is it? I remember now, a mask. I pull the mask out of my pocket and put it on my face. The fresh air is gone. Now the air is stuffy and thin. I didn't forget this smell. Am I forgetting anything else? Yes. But what is it? I remember now, hand sanitizer. I take a bottle from my bag and tip some cool, gloopy, liquid onto my hands. Now they feel wet, and cold. I didn't forget this feeling.

I'm walking along a road now, I can see two other people. Both wearing masks. Both nowhere near each other. What was this road like before the pandemic? I remember now, busy. People didn't mind if you went near them. Now you're not allowed within two metres of other people. When was the last time I hugged someone? When was the last time I gave someone a high-five? When was the last time I got someone in tag? When was the last time I gave someone a piggyback ride? I don't remember that... I suppose you can't remember everything. But it can't have been that long ago, right? No. It was long ago... nearly a year. How did that happen? Where did all those days go? They seemed to fade away into dust. Will I even remember the virus in a few years time? Yes. I don't think anyone could forget... but what if there isn't a cure by then? What if it's like this forever? I hope not. I don't like masks. I don't like hand sanitizer. I don't like social distancing. And I definitely don't like lockdowns. But I don't like getting sick much, and chances are I wouldn't like getting the virus. So I have to wear masks, and put on hand sanitizer, and social distance, and I even have to go into lockdown. Even if i don't like it, I have to. To stay safe.

I hope that I forget this soon....

Scarlett C



Life under lockdown
23rd March 2020
Life under lockdown
People had never had this many worries

Life under lockdown
Coronavirus entered
Life under lockdown
Masks and PPE entered

Life under lockdown
The shops were closed
Life under lockdown
Everyone was enclosed

Life under lockdown
Home learning began
Life under lockdown
The prime minister laid out his plan

Life under lockdown
Stay at home
Life under lockdown
Nowhere for kids to roam

Life under lockdown
Toilet roll challenges were the new trend
Life under lockdown
It was all "make do and mend"

Life under lockdown
Test test test
Life under lockdown
Children were becoming pests

Life under lockdown
Online school's out
Life under lockdown
A mini heatwave came about

Life under lockdown
Summer summer summer
Life under lockdown
Was this all over

Life under lockdown
Real school's back
Life under lockdown
Lockdown's back

Life under lockdown
Second peak
Life under lockdown
It was all bleak

Life under lockdown
Christmas and winter
Life under lockdown
Would things get any better

Life under lockdown
Lockdown 3
Life under lockdown
Would it ever flee

Life under lockdown
Vaccines are here
Life under lockdown
The end still wasn't clear

Life under lockdown
Boris and his roadmap
Life under lockdown
Everyone wanted it to say "That's a wrap"

Anon



Coronavirus...

Maybe it wasn't the first two cases on the 31st of January
Maybe we weren't as 'careful' as we could have been
Maybe we knew there was nothing we could change
Only lots of things could have been changed
Either way something drastic happened
Something that will forever leave an impact on thousands of lives
The people we will never see again
We zoomed in at society where some individuals were above others
But difference brought us closer
Difference moved us forward in how we treated others and
In how this world had seemed to be formed
Maybe all that was caused by a pandemic
Something that could affect anyone
Any class, any race, any ethnicity
It didn't matter to a virus
It could put everyone's life on hold if it so wished
And so it wished
The economy came to a stop
Many businesses closed down yet new ones managed to blossom
We managed to give each other hope
Pulled each other through tough times
And even though it isn't over yet it will have made us stronger 'better'
people

Erin G

Lockdown has been hard. Everything has gone up in price, my friendships are on strings, and it's gotten harder to think about anything but Covid. My stress levels have gone through the roof, my computer's been on the fritz, and the only thing keeping me together is the hope of normality. Masks hurt my lungs, distancing hurts my brain and sanitation hurts my hands. I don't want it to be like this. I want lockdown to end. I want Covid to end. I want to get out of my house.

Luca D



March 2020, in Brighton, where we lay our tale
A sudden outbreak leaves us dead or frail
The air is no longer safe to take in
And a twisted series of events slowly start to begin
Hospitals fill up very quickly indeed
A spike in vulnerability to those most in need
A year this March of strife and toil
Let's wait and see how things uncoil

Olivia H

Blindfolded and put in a locked box,
Afraid that we're going to crash into the rocks,
No-one can hear our weak cries for help,
Just wait a few months and this crisis will be dealt
With,
There's a gap in the door, we can see a way out,
We gave up too soon,
The small box becomes a cocoon,
Scrabbling and clawing, trying to get out,
After months we wonder, "Can we get out?"
Finally we see the light at the end of the tunnel,
Now we are walking to the end of the tunnel.

Lola G--D



Safety
Protection
Light
Soft
Pattern
Essential

Me: Oh, I almost forget you!

FM: Rude! I'm essential now!

Me: At least you're pretty.

FM: You should have seen my ancestors! Most people were scared of us!

Me: If I say I have sensory issues, am I excused from using you?

FM: In theory, everyone should use me. I am for your protection.

Me: Aargh! Claustrophobic and soggy, shielding my view.

FM: Loop me round, lift me up! Let me get close to your skin.

Me: Who would have thought? It's so sci-fi!

FM: You didn't think it would be you, did you?

Me: No.

FM: I get sweaty being here all day! Oh, we're going back home now.

Matilda B

'We are all in the same boat!' people say, but I would disagree. There are so many different sailing crafts, all upon a stormy sea. Some sail on ocean liners in comfort, style and ease, relaxing on their balconies and sipping their G & Ts. Some speed along swiftly in their fancy motor boats as if everything is ok, with little care for motor crafts which may get in their way. Some struggle on their battleships where nothing seems to go right, endlessly preparing for the next relentless fight. Many huddle in their fragile lifeboats and pray that they'll be saved, hoping and wishing for a calmer sea and fearing every wave. Some drift around on their flimsy little rafts, they barely stay afloat, they're praying for a change of luck and chance to board a boat. So whilst you're on your journey, to a safe and calmer spot, look out for fellow sailors, who may need some support.

Honey-Rose S



Some of us must stay at home
And not go out the door
Some of us are working
Like we've never worked before

Oh Boris! Why've you caused me
Such a lot of trouble
I really don't know what to do
With this flippin' 'social bubble'

Lockdown's like a tunnel
And we're nearly out the end
The vaccine is the light
and the masks are the new trend

Even though we're locked inside
We learnt those new names quick
Captain Tom, George Floyd
And PE teacher Joe Wicks

Corona, corona.
What have you done?
We missed our holidays
You ruined our fun!

Mia W

2020 was one of the hardest years,
With lots of baking, crafts and tiers,
We found ourselves staying at home a lot,
Which was particularly hard when it was hot.

Captain Tom raised thousands of pounds,
By walking 100 laps round and round,
He sadly died a few weeks ago,
Whilst we were still holding our rainbow.
Stupid, Stupid Covid,
Please leave us alone,
I'm getting really bored and addicted to my
Phone!

I want to go on holiday,
Far Far away,
Somewhere where you won't be
mentioned every single day.

With the vaccines in full swing,
We know it's a good thing,
It's coming to an end and things are on the
Mend.

Phoebe R

Do you remember? Normal life?
Life before it. Before it came, emerging from the depths of hell, the
jaws of Satan.
Do you remember? I do.
Walking along the shore, my toes sinking into the golden sand.
Feeling every grain;
sliding between my toes,
the sun's warmth spreading through me. Its brilliant fingers bathing
the world in an amber hue.
The gentle lap of the shore, back and forth.
The water like liquid emerald, glittering in the sunlight.
I remember.
Do you?

Miller M



Dear future self,

What is it like in the future? I bet you don't have to worry about social distancing and wearing face coverings anymore. I had been homeschooling for weeks and I just went back on Wednesday; you won't understand the strange feeling you get when you finally meet twenty new people that you were on google meets with but never actually got to see. Nevertheless, I'm glad to be back. Not long ago, me and my whole family had Covid - it was my youngest brother who developed symptoms first so we got him tested just in case. In the end, it came out positive so we all got tested and we were all positive as well. However, I was the only one without any symptoms. I wonder if you will ever have to spend two weeks confined to your home and not being able to leave at all. Because I have to tell you - it wasn't fun :(Anyway, you've probably got other things to do but just one more thing: have you got any spare toilet paper stored away (you know - just in case).

From, Maria

Maria M

~~Hello diary, morning diary, Hi!~~

Anyways, I woke up to the oddest thing! There was nobody around me! Nobody would come near because of this thing called '*Social distancing*' and because 'Boris said so.' 🙄 Who in the name of Jesus' bacon is *Boris*? Never mind. He just appeared on the TV. Is that hair or a wig or hay? Anyway. I couldn't even go and get my daily burrito because the corner shop was shut! What is this, a zombie apocalypse? Anyway I guess I should head home. Life don't make sense anymore! I guess we'll just have to wait for hay-hair's next speech.

Fast forward one year! ▶▶

ARE WE STILL HERE? *Still* here?! It's been an entire year and this supposed *Boris* can't work out how to stop a virus 🙄? Hopefully we'll all be micro-chipped by another supposed *Bill Gates*? That's what my friends told me over a 🖥️ **ZOOM**. Others told me I won't get mine until about April. I hope it's not an April fool joke. Would be quite funny though? No? Ok. That brings us to now!

Ben B



A world of virtue caught unaware,
Taunted by a pernicious nightmare,
Locked inside for the foreseeing future,
The loneliness hung like the cracked frame
of a picture.

We thought it would be over by the month of
May,
They said it was like the flu, and would soon
go away,
On the 26th March the government finally
took stock,
As lockdown was announced, at 8 o'clock.

Rules have not always been crystal clear,
About who we can visit and who to not go
near,
We follow the guidelines and correctly obey,
Because a wave of harsh fines will come if
you don't stay away,

Normality, freedom and even lives,
COVID takes all of these things and it still
thrives,
Feeling sad, down and low,
When will this end? We simply don't know.

Masks make faces barely readable,
Some items are not always available,
Make sure to stay six feet apart,
Because hospital admissions are off the
chart.

Isolated from family and friends,
Stuck inside until the crisis ends,
Wishing that we could turn the clock back,
Because this is a life with no colour, only
black.

Isobel B

Loneliness is an invisible fear,
It's that overwhelming feeling of not being
here,
Feeling lost within yourself,
Feeling like dust on a shelf,
It cannot be described,
As it is just so vast and wide,

Building confidence is like building blocks,
Step by step your mind unclogs
It seems so clear,
Yet still is here,
Clocks will tick 'n' time will turn,
Time slows down loneliness burns,

Taking that leap of faith,
Reaching out will seal your fate,
The view on the other side, it drains your
fear,
That satisfaction of finally being here,
Your safe place,
An incredible space,

Whoever you are, persevere,
Don't be afraid to combat that fear...

Alexander M



I started off in March 2020 overwhelmed that we may all be dead by the end of the year, and suffered an untypical panic attack on a motorway during which my sister had to call an ambulance. But then it appeared we maybe weren't all doomed and the sun also seemed to come out permanently.

I was surprised at how much I enjoyed being with my family all the time, especially spending time with my daughter. After her school work we'd often go on long cycle rides or play tennis - the courts were closed but we found car parks worked well in the meantime!

When it was warm enough to swim we discovered the river at Barcombe Mills and probably spent more weekends there than on Hove beaches. I also loved how quiet everything became. We look over a busy square and early evening I'd often sit reading on our balcony and it was so peaceful in comparison.

Winter lockdown has been harder but again has got us into new things - we now walk about three times a week up Newtimber Hill on The Downs. It's only 15 minutes drive away and a nice alternative to the packed promenade.

All in all though, lockdown can be summed up for me as a feeling of enormous gratitude at small positives. I actually think it's rewired my brain and I really hope it continues beyond it!

Julia B-W





the lives that fell astray
the hours that have disappeared
the ones we have become distant to
the people whom we used to know, no longer get a hello
what shall we do in such a time?
are we ought to sit here like puppets?
the world is off its leash
but will it heal overtime?
this shall be saved as an unsolved puzzle.

what shall one do in such a time?
stay rooted? stay fixed? stay safe?
or shall we
go out, take risks, and be unsafe?
yet no one shall
bravado

we all share different emotions
some good..yet some not
and some are yet to be discovered
some keep it hidden
and some express themselves in numerous ways

if i were to say i was alright during this mess shall it be incorruptible?
i should think otherwise
the families that beared suffered
they shall be the strongest of them all

in loving memory we shall keep them all
never forgotten and always loved
shall remember this time in history for many years
we shall become heroes who lived through the hardest of times

the lives that fell astray.

Anon



We were all in it together, all in the same boat - but were we? People who looked like me were more likely to be front line workers and, whatever their status, more likely to die. My children's cancelled public exam results were more likely to be estimated down by two grades than they would actually have achieved. People who look like me have lost more jobs and been negatively financially impacted at higher levels than any other group.

I listened to people talking about enjoying making sourdough bread, learning new languages, loving not commuting, or discussing how they'd spend all the money they'd saved on fuel and lattes. I thought about the children without access to technology, the increased mental health fragility and an acquaintance who owns a portaloos company. Despite the loss of festivals, business was booming. Within a month of lockdown beginning, they'd provided sanitation services for several police forces dealing with a spike in domestic abuse linked homicides.

Then the world replayed the 9 minutes 29 seconds it took for a police officer to nonchalantly snuff out the life of George Floyd. Perhaps it was the pandemic, but despite the killings before, despite the systemic, historical discrimination and the lack of diversity and inclusion in organisations that allegedly champion diversity and inclusion, this event, this murder impacted. People across the world shook off their blinkers and noticed. For me, a lifetime of facing microaggressions and racism flooded to the surface and the weight of living with a burden of not talking openly about my reality, behind the middle class, degree educated, professional career facade, lifted.

That All Lives Matter should be a given, but it is not at present. In this pandemic year, I have left a job and moved into another, supporting organisations that genuinely want to create a more equal society.

Melanie Anning #BLM



My bedroom smells like a pot noodle.

I set my alarm for 7:30- that way I'd have plenty of time to have a cold shower, a cup of water, eat a nutritious breakfast and possibly even meditate. That didn't happen. I pressed snooze, 7:45 - I pressed snooze, 8:00-snooze. 8:15 - brilliant I'm late. The thing about being in lockdown is you don't really feel like you're late; mum and dad are working and the teachers are just behind a computer screen so who is there to actually tell me to get up and start working? All that being said, I still forced myself out from under the covers and let my feet feel the scratchiness of the carpet. Today will be just like yesterday and I'm 99% sure will be the same as tomorrow. I opened my computer screen- why did I choose to put the brightness on full? My eyes' instant reaction is to shut while fumbling for the brightness button. I don't know what my timetable is for today, you would think with all this time at home I would've taken the time to learn it. I try to clear my desk from the remnants of yesterday: a mug with stone cold tea, a pencil that I've sharpened too much and the lead has fallen out, an old pot noodle that has made my room smell musty and an empty chocolate wrapper. Yes, that has been my diet for the majority of the past two weeks. I then fiddle with whatever I can because honestly whoever says that in lockdown they got straight on with the work and didn't procrastinate is lying. My phone screen flashes bright: incoming facetime - Daisy Peterson. I slide to pick up. Daisy and I have facetimed everyday since we started homeschooling, we don't even talk a lot and most of the time we aren't doing the same lessons, but it's just nice to have someone to complain about what life is like now to and know they are going through the exact same thing as you, even if they are experiencing it differently.

Matilda W

Life Through the Eyes of Me

I come from Hove, upset, sadness, happiness
I come from depression, sparkling water like bubbles from a watery grave, technology
I come from remembering little to nothing from every year before this
I come from the depth of despair

I come from the smell of decomposing batteries, old electronics, unfinished D.I.Y projects
I come from beauty, I come from grace, I come from having a change of pace
I come from angry parents, to happy parents, a never ending cycle
I come from being poor, getting money, wasting it and being miserable

I come from not being able to handle my own mental baggage
I come from wasting my life with stupid things,
playing video games, no friends
I come from boredom

I come from the UK

Anon



Our life less ordinary.

Oh what a strange year it has been. Living through disease, unease, and distress. A host of nations assailed by an invisible stalker, claiming us, rich or poor, black or white, young or old in the most unsympathetic of ways.

We huddle in our small familial groups trying to keep each other safe. Often only being asked to follow some sometimes simple, sometimes convoluted, but mostly divisive rules.

Even in the face of death we squabble over who or what or why. Taking for granted those who don't question, they just do. Whether it be a teacher, a nurse, a refuse collector, or cashier in a supermarket.

I hole up feeling largely useless, concentrating only on that which is important to me. I do so, doubting the knowledge that what I'm doing is helping those that are taking all the risks, but here I sit, waiting for a better day.

Soon, when this has passed, will we have been forged in empathy that allows us to be better toward our species, or tempered by an impotent rage that prevents us from being better, doing better, wanting better.

At the end of all of this, will we recognise who patched up our ills and moulded our children's futures, and thank them with overwhelming gratitude? Or will we turn inwards on each other once more?

All I can do is keep my own family safe, all in the while, with nothing but an abundance of time, keep allowing these issues to turn over in my mind. Hoping against hope that our better angels come forward to unite us.

The erratic nature of isolation follows the erratic nature of these words, mind skipping back and forth, dancing between issues. I either focus intensely on a subject far too long or give a vague and brief amount of time to focus on what was once important.

So affected yet unaffected, lockdown, isolation, fear of an invisible enemy, non-stop media coverage, political chicanery, child safety, financial woe, longing for absent friends. Never in my life have all these ingredients been tossed into the same bubbling cauldron of madness. Now it seems, even as I convey thoughts as written word, the difficulty of focus is present even here.

It's not easy feeling useless and useful, bored yet challenged, hopeless and hopeful and full of anger and empathy simultaneously. I'll be glad when this Schrodinger's cat of an event ends, so then as a bare minimum, I don't need to see Boris Johnson everywhere I turn.

Anthony R



In remembrance...

STAY HOME. ESSENTIAL TRAVEL ONLY. SAVE LIVES. I had made the journey to Northamptonshire in lockdown twice before to visit my dying mother. This time, however, I was accompanied by my children and grandchildren – we were going to her funeral.

Nine of us, close family only, stood at the side of the grave in which my father had previously been buried. We were in luck: the rules had been relaxed, so we could have yellow roses as well as the white lilies. Typically, after all those days of glorious sunshine, it rained. My sister and I conducted the ceremony: she gave the eulogy we had written and I read the poems, which my mother had clearly put by for this occasion. My daughter paid tribute too. It was personal and heart-felt. One of the pallbearers had even been taught by 'Mrs Rintoul'.

Back home, I learnt that a dear friend had died that same day – totally unexpectedly. I helped her daughter write the eulogy and delivered it in another poignant and intimate ceremony. This time the flowers were red and purple and we were indoors at Woodvale Crematorium while the sun shone outside.

Neither of these deaths was from COVID-19 but, at another time, the mourners for each woman would have filled a church.

Anne H

Ode to summer!

Fresh emerald grass- tickling your toes when barefoot,
Flying like feeling when walking on the warm ground,
Worms wiggling, ants marching; what a life under my feet.

When the sun is hot and the wind is soft- this is all I need,
Clouds carve from shape to shape; from horses to bees,
But my favourite is when the sun and clouds play hide and seek,
The sky's a canvas- it changes everyday making a palette any artist would love,
My favourite colour from this piece; can only be the blood-red sunset when setting,
O, What a priceless painting!

When the waves hit the shore- the sound is nothing but endless,
The silhouettes of people swimming in the lukewarm sea,
Bring free joyable time to everyone including families!
Fishermen chuckle as they put their hooks into the sea.

Thou summer is great, it always carves memories.

Anon



Garden of Memories, Home of Longing
An Ode to What Was

Step outside, feet clothed in boots,
Frost crunching underfoot. I bend down
To examine a blade of grass, perfectly preserved
With frost.

A year or more ago, if I had seen
Where I am now, I would have squealed with
delight
No school, three snow-days in a row
And poetry writing.

Look around, see that bush over there
The one that was there since before I was born?
The one that almost a year ago
Housed Easter eggs for the very first time.

Before last year I would always wish to be sick
I could stay home all day and lie in my bed
Now, I laugh at myself, a bitter laugh it is
What I'd give to go back there, to that time and
place.

Frost bites at my nose, the warmth of that house
beckons
I pull my collar up and walk stubbornly on
Remembering the claustrophobic confines of my
mask
What I'd give to wear it now, if it meant being
somewhere else.

I loved this place, the place I grew up
I loved it and wanted to stay in it long
But now, I'd give anything to leave it just once
And see my friends again, just one more time.

My gloves are pure failures - my fingers are
shivering
They freeze and fidget, beg me for warmth
I can give it to them, but I could also
Stay here a little longer, forget where I am.

Look at where I started out, look at where I am
now
I see the trampoline, the one that kept
me and my brother sane, back when we thought
"Thirteen days before Easter" would end it all.

I was the one who heard the news first
That we would spend our precious year
shut up at home
My word, you'd have thought our birthdays
had come early
Oh, young me, bless your heart - you don't
know what's in store

The things we were planning to do that
school year
The trips and the gatherings, parties and
plays
My brother said farewell to primary school
Missed out on so much fun (except SATs,
lucky rascal).

Sit down on the bench, and try hard not to
think
Of the numbness in your hands and in
your head
The world is on fire - and here I am, frozen
Don't want to go back. Not yet.

Don't want to go back where I'm shut up
and lonely
Don't want to go back to the
same-old-same-old
No - I want to go back further than that
I want to go back to the calm before the
storm

My hands are both frozen as I hug myself
In that escapist place, as flecks of ice
dance in the air
But I now must return, to routine and to
numbness
Better to be in a static place of warmth
Than free
and
frozen.

Aliyah C



Life under lockdown is a race in thick fog.

You don't know where you're going, don't know what's happening, don't know where the end is or even if one exists. You don't know if there are any twists and turns, barriers or blockages. You can't see a way past this, it seems like forever.

New announcements every week, you're dreading what they're going to say.

Can't do this, can't do that, won't see your friends for I don't know how long, 2 meters away from each other, and always remember to wash your hands.

No parks, no hair cuts, exercise... with mum!?!

Schooling from the lounge,
chromebooks, screen times, I must meet the deadlines

Where are the teachers? They don't know your name, they haven't met you yet.

You can't have rainbows in the fog,
so people drew them on their front doors.

Eventually,
with the vaccines we all have a bit of hope.

Gael B R

When a pandemic strikes

It all started with a rumor, and we all joked about it until we realised what was happening. Infections soared and the first lockdown came. Stuck in homes without school. I decided to write a blog. Cheer people up. My teacher enjoyed it. Looking after grandma, zoom, Skype, online quizzes, music pieces, Spanish readings, she became the technology queen. I grew tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce and onions. Go outside to exercise; so I did, started a running program and within 3 months I ran 5k! We all thought no school would be fun but it got boring and everyone wanted to go back.

My mum has always been my hero, in the pandemic as a nurse, she became everybody's hero. Every Thursday at 8 pm people went out on their balconies or front gardens and clapped. Some people even banged the lids of frying pans. She got treats, she got free meals and eventually appropriate PPE. Then, with full armour, she went to work and I was allowed to chalk rainbows on the front wall!!!

Summer came, I couldn't go to Spain, swapped la Costa del Sol for la Costa del Hove, it was quite good after all. Freezing sea, currents, tides, ice cream, sunrise, long swims...touch the buoy, yes I did!

Brecon B R and Mum



It started with a virus, but it will end with us.

The pandemic spreads
Through our beautiful world
Like the silent hunter
Feeding its infinite hunger
Creeping through the defences

The pandemic spreads
Illness engulfs the world
But in our country
The front lines fight
Doctors, nurses - warriors of health

And the pandemic spreads
And from the darkness angels rise Captain Tom, raising more than just money Lifting spirits in his
wake
Walking his way to victory

And the pandemic spreads
But happiness is emerging
Cooking, talking, clapping at 8
Beating down this terrible virus
With the determination of the human race.

And the pandemic slows
And so ends the first lockdown
And freedom is cherished
But perhaps too far
As a second lockdown approaches

The pandemic spreads
And weariness is forced upon us But we do not falter
We look towards the future
And we see the light

The pandemic spreads
As the end of the year draws close The virus slows
But sadness returns
The dampening of the holidays

The pandemic is fought
In this new year
We fight with more vigour
Avenging those we have lost
In the swaying battle against COVID

It started with a virus, but it will end with us,

William W



Daily news announcements, death toll increases, liberty restricted and hugs reduced.

Offers of kindness and support between neighbours, our street WhatsApp group gives all reassurance.

Supermarket shelves devoid of pasta, bleach and sanitiser; stockpiling loo rolls!

Sewing scrubs bags and face masks; clapping on doorsteps, for carers and the NHS

Walking the neighbourhood, new streets explored; remote contact to check family and friends are ok.

Virtual museum tours, seeing theatre online; webcams connect us with the outside world.

No commute means time to sit, catch the morning sunrise on your face.

A pheasant in the street, fox cubs in the garden, sparrow hawk on the fence and a mouse in the house.

Neighbour's cat curled up on my lap for hours; the sound of silence in the city.

Ever changing rules... told to 'stay home, save lives, protect the NHS'; or 'hands, face, space'

Choose a 'bubble family', respect the 'rule of six' and 'stay local' if you can.

'These are unprecedented times'; 'not anytime soon'; what will 'the new normal' be?

'Work from home if you can' (probably have a haircut there too); read a book a week.

Choose Zoom or Teams? 'You're on mute'; online fitness, gatherings, quizzes, and yoga.

Weekly rambles, explore muddy routes; calm on the beach, to the sighs of the sea.

Solitude or loneliness? Much time for reflection; gratitude and appreciation of the small things in life.

Vaccines offer optimism to shielders or elderly, give freedom to others, so life can resume.

Planning for freedoms, hope for the future, lessons been learnt, a stronger resolve.

A time we will never forget...



Trauma

Wax-like skin,
sliced neatly,
one inch long
black brown crevice
contained within.
Unnatural
to see layers of the epidermis. The cut so deep,
it draws blood from below, pain etched with a
blade, the lips of the wound
part crisply,
fresh and thin
on my little girl's arm.

I am seeing another slash of self harm.
Seared on my brain
like a flash
and I see it again and again, long after she twists
away, purses her lips,
sets her brow
to let me know
she won't talk now.
Closed down
and taught,
a frown
or just a blank stare.
I am cast out,
scrabbling to cope,
trying to show I am there, here,
anywhere,
that I care
about the overwhelming grief, sadness,
despair
that comes for her fiercely and that she cannot
share.

Anon

The Unknowing Loves

These I have loved:
Mutterings of mice and stoats, bright-eyed,
Intelligent and wily; and subtle, bark-like
cinnamon;
Soft dew, gleaming in the light; the delicious
odour
Of crispen waffles; and many preening birds;
Moonlight; and the salt-slick skin of dolphins;
And the soft chirrups from hidden cicadas;
And the hug of a confidant, that reassures and
refreshes;
And the confidant themselves, trusted and kind;
And then, the rustle of Autumn leaves, that
soon
Soothe all troubles; and the cold reliability and
hardness
Of steel; rough stone; fresh-mown grass
That is controlled and cut; velvety chocolate;
the keen
Impassioned spark of a struck fire;
The blessing of the sun; silks to touch;
The simple scent of home; and other such -
Sleep; and long books; footsteps in the silence;
And apples; and white half-moons, shiny-bright;
And new whittled sticks; and glistening blue
water -
All these have been my loves.

William W



So Where Do You Fancy Going Today?

If your mind is also a cur, and its yellow fangs
worry your synapses, make believe it's nothing.
This does not affect the normal service,
so you can still progress on your direction of travel.

There is a shake from the lead that signals the cur
is about to make a move outdoors and
your mind might go there too, so for the moment
you are able to continue on your direction of travel.

Consider the empty buses of the pandemic, unconcerned
with rush hour or key workers, that take no one
and their dogs to local beauty spots. No one
reads the safety information posters, or about the
weekend coach trips for nobody. Then imagine the
vibrations as the driver changes gear and the bus
climbs, the engine labours. No weight in the seats to
anchor them and nobody asks if droplets drift like invisible
smirr in the air, and land on the windows and form
condensation that runs in a downward direction of travel.

At night the empty bus passes like a moving slice of hi rise
or an exclusive arcade in the week before Christmas.
It is aquarium bright and fishless to the brim.
Its sides rock with watery momentum,
spill as it nudges its way onwards
on its direction of travel.

A Breckenridge

Life in lock down was quite hard for me because only one of my friends went to Blatch with me because none of my other friends live near enough, so I wasn't really seeing my other friends, so I wasn't really seeing anyone. Lock down was a bit lonely for me.

It was also a bit hard with the home learning because I wasn't getting as much support and help with my learning.

Anon



I come from Hove

I come from the smell of burnt toast, crawling up my nose,
I come from the bath bombs that explode in the bath that smell of beautiful rose,
I come from the salty stench of fish and chips, covered in grease,
I come from the crackling logs in our fireplace, the funny little china ornaments sitting on the mantelpiece,
I come from breaking my collarbone after being pushed and spun around on a towering chair,
I come from the countless times my mum spent time braiding my hair,

I come from the sensation of my friend's dog giving me massive hugs and kisses,
I come from my mum cooking my favourite mexican dishes,
I come from West Ham, the cockney language and the dirty streets,
I come from Upton Park where everyone used to meet,

I come from my favourite childhood teddy, with a missing arm and one button eye,
I come from the odour of fresh new steak pie,
I come from the fragrance of the salty sea,
I come from the feeling of being free,
I come from the streak of light sharp against the dark of cloud,
I come from Hove.

Poppy D

Day 6574

Today's my birthday. I was born the 16th of March 2020 and I don't think I could have a worse birthday if I tried; I mean the first day of an 18 year lockdown isn't exactly a day of Celebration- especially now infected people are being killed on sight. Mum told me that when all of this first started people thought the lockdown would last weeks but since I turned twelve the covid-19 mutations started to become more and more lethal; the most recent one so bad that only 1 in 500 survive. I'm Sky, this is my life and, who knows, maybe it's yours too.

Jacob M-C



When This is Over

When it's all over and the birds truly sing again,
I'm hoping for the best,
A life that is familiar, not different and strange,
When the chance comes again, to not snap it up will be to finish losing,
The shouting voices and washing waves and traffic lights flashing,
With a crunch of stones and the sifting sand,
Ice cream dripping like a cool waterfall.

Blocked out by the invisible wall stopping any continuation,
Nothing moving, just an eternal waiting,
But when long enough passes, voices will clamour to be heard,
When the escalators of reality move again, nothing will hold back the tide of opportunity.

And when brakes start screeching and the doors start banging,
when the queues start growing and the intercom droning,
it will be high time for celebration.
You can't hold back the tide forever.
When the trickle of a river of opportunity starts
nothing will stop it.

Sliding doors sliding and taxis beeping,
the trickle will turn into a babbling brook,
winding its way through the hills of humanity
And when the brook grows to form a tidal wave,
nothing will stop it.

The smell of seaweed and warm chips wafting over the air
When the cards start buzzing and the coins dropping,
I'm hoping for that tide of opportunity,
As no-one can avoid it.

And when it comes it will wash away the damage caused,
in its wake of happiness and freedom
I won't be the one to stop following the current,
and as it sweeps across the city,
just follow the tide.
And jump in for the ride

Calvin C-R



Ode to the Simple Things

Ode to the rain, both raucous and reserved.
Its pitter patter against the pane.
The frigidness and chilliness,
Tart on my skin.
Life's remedy on days where it gets tougher.
Ode to the forces, holding firm and down.
Keeping me sheltered and at serenity.
Lifting Earth's weight by hauling it down.
A mountain resting on its shoulders.
Ode to the hot chocolate, soothing and still.
Slipping down my throat, a warm torrent.
Steam lifting to only withdraw.
But not be gone, for more will emerge.
Ode to the nurses, their hands clean.
They help just as much in the time of yearn.
Thy calming voice and cordial manner.
As the crucial person services the abundant
work.
Ode to the busker, strumming on the avenue.
Performing charm, a ballad of truth.
The coins ebbing into their case.
With a nod and a beam to the depositor.
Ode to the birds, chirping a song.
Their tweeting and twittering with no affliction,
Stirring me, up to their rhymes of proclaims.

Tess B

When We Go Back to Normal

When all this is over I am planning
To meet you at the beach without
Our masks, at 6 am to beat the bleeding reds
of the rising sun.
Where we will sit close to keep warm whilst
Sipping on our hot chocolates

I'm hoping for the summer to be endless
So we can make up for lost time,
I hope for sun a plenty and
Rain drops not

I want to never be inside,
Spend all day out
Swim in the salty sea
And lounge on the pebbly beach

Starry nights above the skylight
Lighting up the motorway
My grandma's hug is all I wish
So to keep me calm and alright.

I wish to get back on the pitch
To run and slide and
Get covered in mud
Hear the cheers of celebration
After a goal

Laughter and smiles
And happiness
To fill the air
And only then will I know
That we have gone back to normal

Amara J