

These are the times (for Year 6, summer 2020)

These are the times, and the days, and the ways.
Who knew? Who thought? Who dreamt
what would sneak up upon us
one mid-March day,
To steal us from school and from friends.

Now all of a sudden, my 'normal' is gone.
My routine disrupted
My certainty shot
full of holes; what on earth –
what on **Earth** – has gone wrong?
The time line's unfolding:
What's next, and what's new?
Is anyone certain
what's fake and what's truth?

There's danger, there's risk:
You must shelter in place.
Isolate; shield;
Stay distant; keep safe.
The world has shrunk
To the size of my house:
I must stay at home;
I mustn't go out.
Home is my safe space;
The walls hug me tight –
And who knows how long
This will keep us inside?

Now I'm here in my home,
Stuck at home, on my own.
Not alone, but it's lonely:
My family close,
But my friends at a distance –
Stuck at home, on *their* own.

I'm alone at my desk;
Alone in my room;
Alone in my head;
Alone with my moods.
My moods that have swung

all over the place:
From worried, to silly,
Through to bored,
Through to rage.
And applause in the street
Every Thursday at eight
Is a strange new routine
That tallies the days.

We've stared through windows,
We've stared at screens.
We've been for walks –
We've watched as the trees
Went from bud-spattered branches
To riots of green,
As the dull days drag their indistinct feet,
Now the hours outlast what used to be weeks.

This weird new world is outside my control,
But time still trudges; nothing's on hold:
I'm drawing near to the end of my time
At the school where I've spent these last years of my life.

But it's different for us than in previous times:
How will *we* celebrate? Say a proper goodbye?
I want to sign shirts, and I want to hug friends,
But my class is fragmented. Is this how it ends?
It's not what it should be:
It isn't the same.
It's really unfair
That it's ending this way.
No trip, no production:
It cannot be helped.
So we'll do what we can – our resilient selves –
To close out this chapter with meaning and fun;
There's no-one like us: an exceptional bunch.

There are changes ahead,
And these challenges met
Have strengthened our minds
For what's to come next.
What will you take?
And what will you leave?

What's best left behind?
And what do you need?

What did you learn?
What did you forget?
What to take forward?
And what is best left
behind in your memories –
Kept safe in a head
Made older and wiser
By challenges met.

Because time still marches:
We thrive, we bloom;
Our minds will blossom,
Our lives will bear fruit.
But we'll always remember
These days we lived through:
This is part of us, now.
We held on,
And we grew.

Anonymous