

DECEMBER

Writing from online 'Zoom' workshops (send anything to share)

People write at home and exchange work via email, post and regular online 'Zoom' meetings, Tuesdays at 10.30. Apologies, some items reformatted to save space:

The Great American Dream (excerpt) (Pauline)

New York has grown skyscrapers where the wealthy dwell. Fifth Avenue gives way quite suddenly to a living hell of beggars roaming the sidewalks, modern day gangsters with hidden guns. Our appetites have outshone us, stripping us of our decency. Our humanity is in shreds. The Great American Dream has become a nightmare. 'We have become Gods, the destroyer of worlds.' God Bless America, 'Where no one has bad teeth and everyone has a lavatory.'

The kestrel hung like a knife (Mark)

The kestrel hung like a knife, sharp over an opal membrane of late-afternoon light, stretched taut and shimmer-bright across Goldsytch Moss. Rimming up at either side, the last slip and dip of the Goyt syncline Snaked south, twisted, dissolved, resolved then climbed into tangled towers of quartz. I felt that moment as if a pendulum had stopped and I was poised between two worlds; one drop would snap the tension, send me plunging earthward from my delicious suspension.

Reminiscences of St. Edward's - Night-watch (Marion)

I saw something that made me shake and shiver all night and I couldn't believe it myself. It was faceless but had a slim body dressed in a Sister's uniform with a white cap. It was walking up the corridor and into the office. When I was accompanied by one of the patients and peeping round the corner no one was there. It had gone. It was seen by quite a lot of people but no one told the tale. Nobody wanted to be on that ward. 'Put Hammond on it,' they said. 'She won't bother about it.' But I did. These homes will become vacant and close, as spirits walk forever.

Lockdown bubbles (Mary)

You know if you're playing with soap bubbles, some of them come out big, which is what you're trying for and sometimes you get a bunch of small ones and they are faceted together with flat sides so you can look through from one to the other, but always rainbows shining on the other side?

My lockdown bubbles have been like that.

There are the phone calls to family you haven't seen since February - the emails - and there's been Zoom - BV, Keele Poets, Slimming World, Early English.

I do miss the handshake; the hug. But I pull a blanket round myself and remember the hugs, and my own arms are long enough to hug myself.

I am so grateful to people in BV. Kindness, support, great thinking and writing, humility, love.

Popping (Tim)

Through the entrance and exit I pop, my readiness and the route in mind. All otherness is out there still, but the diverse editions which we gain by leaving, affect us, sometimes tightly. They pass us by mostly. A can of pop at the pictures, what an idea! Where do ideas come from? The popping of fuchsias never came to me as an idea. It became action from some-thing like necessity, like my person - body and mind - writing and drawing these words as if also from somewhere, automatically.

Friendship (Bill) A friend to share, a friend to wear those heavy clothes that have become too hard for you to bear. A friend to laugh, a friend to cry, a friend to meet with by and by. A friend to walk the long, long road of doubt & fear, sorrow and pain. These times will change, we will meet again, till then I offer you a fond embrace until for real, face to face.

Photos, artwork, a preview of Becca's Christmas art-pack and the room we hope to use at the Health Centre in 2021.

Thank-you to Becca and all who have sent images for our 2020 newsletters.



DECEMBER DETAILS

You, our participants

currently contribute to our rent and help keep our 'virtual' services going with donations, large and small, in cash and in kind.

You are also supporting one another through this time.

Our lockdown bubble (Marlene)

I realised I wasn't in a bubble anywhere until it was pointed out to me that I'm in a bubble with this writing group. I was so pleased! The contact on Zoom (now that I know how to do it) is vital to my well-being, especially for me as for various reasons I now live alone. My thanks to participants and organisers and also thank-you for being patient with my lack of technical knowledge. 'It's not my fault.'

Soup (Cyra)

Thoughts of Soup thrill Mum, Cassiopeia and me. Human Mummy Cyra occasionally allows us Soup. In Sainsbury's yesterday she walked past Sheba Soup, got us the usual Felix Meat Jellies. We do enjoy that. But it's nice to have some Sheba luxuries. It is rather rich though. Can play silly games with our tummies. Humans eat Soup as a Starter. We just go straight into the food. We don't even have Desserts, like they do. Never mind, Human Mummy Cyra does know what is best for us.

Popping Jane)

You sit in anticipation, waiting, the hymn from the machine; watching each rotation, waiting; you hear the first one pop, then another. Pop, pop. Suddenly a crescendo of popping like a machine gun in a rat-ta-tat-tat! Just as it's about to reach its grand explosive finale... A beep. It's done. Time to eat



Contact details:

c/o Leek Health Centre, Fountain St
Leek, ST13 6JB (Andy currently collects mail weekly)

Phone: 01538 528708 (calls come up on Andy's tablet; she will respond to numbers she knows and picks up messages weekly)

Mobile: 07760 138395 (use WhatsApp if possible, as Andy's mobile signal is poor at home)

Email: info@borderlandvoices.org.uk

Website: www.borderlandvoices.org.uk

Borderland Voices contact **Andy Collins: working from home**



Borderland Voices

22 years of arts for mental wellbeing



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2020

Zoom writing every Tues 10.30: All welcome, contact Andy.

Find **Becca's fifth art pack (Land Army)** on our website.
Inside is a preview of her **Christmas edition**.

Our **new address** is on the back of this newsletter.

Andy is just waiting to hear when **our beautiful 2021 calendar** will be delivered.

Our heartfelt thanks to **Sheena**, for sorting everything before the move and distributing people's artwork, **John (Collins)** for doing most of the moving, **Liz and Barry** for dismantling shelving.

**Merry
Christmas**