

## FEBRUARY

### 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):

#### Up High (David)

Unusually for me, this is short:  
Precisely just six lines.

Have I gone mad, or am I suffering from writer's block?  
I must confess I was going to do an acrostic poem for January  
Gosh I thought to myself, when I saw so many already done.  
How can I do one now? Whoops I've done it here instead...

#### High up (Mary)

There's a great chimney on a huge house that I can see  
from my bed. It has wonderful chimney pots. The first  
year I came here there were five families of jackdaws  
brought up in the chimney. I spent hours watching them.  
They went off in the morning in a certain order and came  
back in reverse order with much gossip and chat before  
they jumped from the tiles and settled down.  
There aren't so many now. Just one family this year and  
I worry where they've gone. There's buddleia growing  
out of the brickwork so it hasn't been improved; there's  
never smoke so it's not used. Where are they?

#### Look Up (Pauline)

Look up, wander up to join them, It's easy - Give it a try.  
We don't need a magic beanstalk or lectures on how to fly.  
Pull up a chair, even a pew; Chant, affirm, whisper, the choice is open, it's up to you.  
As long as you are trying to care.  
Charity work, plans to expand will not amount to much if we fail to care or understand.  
If we don't attempt to fill the beggar's hand.  
Tears and good intentions are not much use, If we don't still the hand that deals abuse.  
We can never rise up and join them there, If, in our hearts, we don't really care.

Comfortable clutter (Bill) I gather all of you around me like long-lost friends, you've become a  
real comfort to me over the years. I'm quite aware of the neighbours making snide comments and  
occasionally being quite abusive and unkind. What am I to do? I can't let you go, it would be like cutting  
off my right arm - far too painful. Someone's coming to see me today, quite a rare occurrence. My  
social worker suggested this person might be able to help me with my problem. I can see in my rational  
moments what an absolute mess my house has become over the years; indeed a real health hazard.  
The lady has come and gone, to be honest she was absolutely lovely: really helpful. I feel quite calm  
now; perhaps with her encouragement and support I may be able to say goodbye, with a heavy heart,  
to some of you dear friends; who knows, perhaps make one or two real friends in the future.

Birds (Marlene) Birds are flying high, you know  
what I mean. It's a new day, it's a blue day. And  
I'm feeling good!

Birds (Cyra) All shapes and sizes: Bella the  
Allen's Humming Bird to Giant Eagles, Flamingos,  
Pelicans etc. Such a variety of Wetland Birds:  
Whistling Ducks, Herons, Mute, Whooper,  
Bewick, Black Swans, Coots, Mallards and more.  
Freezing Emperor Penguins - amazing crowds.  
One hunts, the other looks after baby. They  
huddle together. Incredible how families find  
each other. Delightful Garden song Birds:  
Blackbirds, Robins, Sparrows, Pigeons, Collared  
Doves. My Neighbour's Cockrell crows. Then, the  
Cuckoo: "Summer Is A Coming In - Sing Cuckoo."  
She lays her egg in another Bird's Nest. The Chick  
hatches and throws out the Host's eggs but they  
don't seem to know, continuing to feed it. The  
Peacock, showing his feathers and dancing.  
All manner of seagulls. Amazing, beautiful, clever  
creatures: Birds - I adore them all.

### Photos, artwork and the beautiful bouquet which someone sent me, on behalf of BV, as a thank-you for moving premises.

A late Christmas wish; images inspired by Becca's art-packs; other artwork and Mark's photo which prompted his 'Luminous'.



## FEBRUARY DETAILS

### You, our participants

currently contribute to our rent at Bank House 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.

#### Weight (Jane)

It's that time of year, we worry about digits Those little extra pounds we put on at Xmas Thanks to that fantastic Christmas spread of turkey, pud, mince pies and trifle.

We make resolutions of going to the gym To shed that extra holiday weight A gym membership that never lasts What's weight really but a load of numbers? As long as you're healthy and happy in your skin why worry about a little extra digit?

#### Song (Sheena)

When I came back to Leek in 1980 we used to try to go the Abbey pub on a Sunday night. If you stayed until after 10 o'clock an old guy would get up and start playing the piano in the bar. All the old songs, like the ones Mary mentions in her writing plus a favourite 'I'll take you Home Again, Kathleen'. Practically everyone sang and sometimes people cried. The room was always packed. Pubs were such fun in those days when they were about talk and chat and song. Before they either died or became restaurants.

#### Luminous (Mark)

The vanished rain shaped drops hanging perfect as liquid pearls from the umbrellaed dead flower head. Each drop snatched the last gasp of the day's light; intensified then blazed it back. For one brief moment Toulouse-Lautrec sauntered my garden path; as he passed I caught a gay, Fin-de-Siecle Parisian laugh.



#### Contact details:

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

**Phone: 01538 528708** (this number isn't currently connected so, for now, please use the mobile number below)

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

Email: [info@borderlandvoices.org.uk](mailto:info@borderlandvoices.org.uk)

Website: [www.borderlandvoices.org.uk](http://www.borderlandvoices.org.uk)

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

# Borderland Voices

23 years of arts for mental wellbeing



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

## Newsletter

## FEBRUARY 2021

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

You'll find all **Becca's art packs** on our website. Our next **occasional Zoom art drop-in** is on **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 1.30-3.30**; contact **Andy** for the Zoom link. This month Becca has introduced an **'Artist of the Month'** to discuss during the session. The work of photographer **Polly Borland** relates to Morphing – the theme of the pack.

Andy was thrilled to receive a **fabulous bouquet** as a thank-you for moving premises; photo inside.

Our next **Trustees' Meeting** takes place on **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30pm** (on Zoom). If you want to raise **any issues, please talk to Mark, Bill (or Andy)** beforehand.

Gordon MacLellan has recorded a **short video of BV words and images** for the first phase of an **international WWF project** called **'8 Billion'**. More details next time.