



## Bad verses from post lockdown Britain 2020

by Victoria Cooper

Heard the one about the old man with the covid cough?  
He hangs around shop doorways and smokes a roll up  
You hear him before you see him and it makes something inside rattle  
He may be going through a war, but he's not going to survive this battle

Hack, hack, hack he goes, labouring up the hill  
And hack, hack, hack he returns black phlegm moving inside him still  
I block out all the sound banging saucepans and clapping hands  
Even though that stopped that weeks ago up and down the land

Have you heard about the songbirds, shouting their morning chorus?  
They've bought blue tooth speakers from Amazon now  
Just because they adore us  
We loved them then, way back when, only a few weeks ago  
But we don't hear them anymore our ears filled up with sourdough

Tweet, tweet, tweet they sing so sweetly above our face masked heads  
Tweet, tweet, tweet we tweet pompously, lying to the dead  
We block out their melodies, their lost soundscapes disappear  
A snippet that was snatched from time, unlearned again, I fear

Have you heard about the kids in school?  
Have you seen them sitting alone?  
The teacher cannot shut them up, away from PC or phone

Lonely icebergs together now, impatient for a push  
Wanting to melt together now, expectant of the rush

Chat, chat, chat they go, mostly talking bollocks  
Chat, chat, chat we hear them, longing to be heard  
All they want is to shove and kick, tag and Chinese burn  
Let them, teachers say, this is not the time to learn.

Have you heard the one about the policeman?  
How you seen the footage of his crime?  
Have you taken a long hard look at yourself?  
And realised that this is now the time.

March, march, march they go with resounding heavy steps  
March, march, march and on, through the summer to the next  
Times we hope are changing, the unimaginable has been here  
Horizon is getting nearer, is it truth or lies we fear?

Heard the old man has died now and I will not hear him cough  
I will not line the streets to mourn him, I will not see him off  
Life is rolling forwards even though for him it's not  
Let's not miss a single moment now, let's remember what we've got.