

A Time to Change

by Sue Hitchcock

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.
Mankind rejoiced at the arrival of a vaccine.
The battle was won, but the war continued.

The Earth was changing,
The ice was melting,
The sea was rising.

The moon sucked the tide over the rattling pebbles onto the land,
leaving the briny soil fit only for seabirds.

Mankind retreated to higher ground, still increasing in number.

Cities were crowded,
New viruses came.
Water polluted,
food poisoned
people starved.

We must live uninsured!
We must accept death.

Prolific species all meet their prey.
Look at Dutch Elm disease,
Look at Ash die-back,
Rhinos and elephants meet ivory hunters,
till they are too few to survive.

We are locusts, we are fire-ants, knowing no limits.
We are doomed, one way or another
to starve,
to suffer plague,
unless we stop growing.

When we are few, we can be more -
shorter, sweeter lives, with treasured, fewer children
shared between many.
Old folk, glad to hand on all they have
and depart, untrammelled, in peace.