Bourne toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

"If you had known about lockdown and pandemic life say 3 months before it happened, how would you have prepared? What would you have done differently?"

@KitdeWaal

Futureproofing

by Saffron Swansborough

If the pandemic had unfurled with a warning
A stone would have found my head against which to bang itself.

If we knew what was coming next
The birds would have filled the skies sooner with song.

Had I known about summer lockdown
I would have cleared all the chocolate from my office drawers.

Not having time was just an excuse
To not do the things I did not want to do because they didn't need doing right at that moment.

I would have stockpiled pasta
Labelled KEYWORKERS ONLY to place on empty supermarket shelves.

Rewiring my brain to cope with disaster
Could have been a disaster if this all turned out to be for the best.

I could have reconfigured my living arrangements
By sofa-surfing for three months with everyone I'd like to sleep near.

Perhaps I could have said No to things without guilt
To get in some practice.   "Are you coming out?" "No" (me, 18 months later).

If I'd had clairvoyant skills
I could have worn a sandwich board outside the Tube to warn everybody.

Supposing I'd re-trained to get lockdown skills:
Barber, gardener, carpenter, baker, masseuse - only now do I know what it takes to survive.

I would have become the National Hug Project Manager
Guaranteeing everyone last hugs if they were about to die.

Out would go everything that was not going to be needed
Making loft space in which to hoard all the stuff my children would grow out of.

I'd have had a crew cut. Not panicked about the late MOT.
Snogged friends that would let me, a series of a brief encounter moments by a steam train.

Let us say I could control time, I'd have quantified the lockdown hours
Because when we say "Well, that's three months of my life I'll never get back" I could totally mean it.

I'd have travelled to Bali by train, bus and boat to learn the Gamalan
Then I wouldn't need to change the background to something more tropical on Zoom calls.

Endurance happens, whether you want it to or not
If you wake up, you have survived. It's not optional. Given the choice, I'd rather not know what's coming.