

# isolation inspiration!

Poems for a Pandemic

by

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isolation

inspiration

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*What a lovely surprise to finally discover how unlonely being alone can be.*

- Ellen Burstyn

quarantine (n.)

1660s, "period a ship suspected of carrying disease is kept in isolation," from Italian *quaranta giorni*, literally "space of forty days," from *quaranta* "forty," from Latin *quadraginta*"forty," which is related to *quattuor* "four" (from PIE root \**kwetwer-* "four").

So called from the Venetian policy (first enforced in 1377) of keeping ships from plague-stricken countries waiting off its port for 40 days to assure that no latent cases were aboard.

# A Note from the Creators

Social distancing, isolation, quarantine - all these were words that we didn't use in 2019. But here we are, home-schooling, working from home and finding new ways to keep ourselves occupied.

These poems were all written during the period of staying indoors, to amuse ourselves and to bring cheer to others. It is also more than that. As writers and poets, our feelings are often expressed in words and while we worked, talked to our families, went for our permitted jog or shopping, we also wrote about what we are going through.

And that's what creative artists do. Reflect the world around them and help all of us look at our situation from a different perspective

We hope you enjoy reading these poems. If you wish to recite them on video and share with the world, do let us know too. Our social media contacts are available at the end of this short book.

Let's hope for a better world where we unite against all kinds of evil, not just a virus.

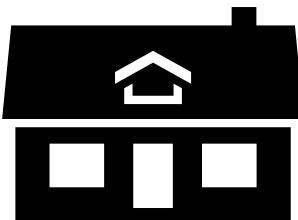
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# Corono Song-A Virus

*A sing-a-long*

In we go and lock the door  
watch our throats aren't feeling sore  
wash your hands and keep away  
we'll be close another day.

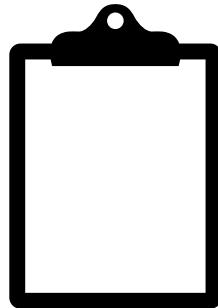


- Dom Conlon



# Be Nice

Watch a movie, play a game.  
Write a poem all the same.  
Do some reading, do some sums  
Be nice to your dads and mums.



- Chitra Soundar



# Downtime

I'm suppose to be connecting  
With all my friends from school.  
Group chatting on the Internet  
Is now the social rule.

“Isn’t technology wonderful!”  
Proclaim my mum and dad,  
When last month all I ever heard  
Was “Too much screen is bad.”



I’m virtually in my classroom,  
PE is on TV,  
I’m overwhelmed by download treats  
Directed straight at me.

I've used up all my data,  
And my wireless keeps on dropping,  
I imagine it's because  
Everyone's internet shopping.

So instead I'll paint a picture,  
Bake a cake, or write a rhyme,  
Plant a seed or sing a song  
And try that thing called 'downtime.'

- Margaret Bateson-Hill



# The History Lesson

I've read a book about Romans,  
Been to a Norman keep,  
Learned about Tudors and Stuarts,  
Can talk Victorians in my sleep.

2

World war films, I've watched them,  
Have a piece of the Berlin Wall,  
Cold wars, hot wars, star wars,  
I've been taught about them all.



The Millennium and the Twin Towers  
Happened not so long ago,  
But that was still before I was born,  
To me that's the past, you know.

2

But now it's the time of Covid 19,  
Home schooling and TV keep fit,  
Virtual chat and lockdowns  
And I am living through it.



I wonder when I'm older  
How I'll recall this time,  
History in the making -  
Only now this time is mine.

- Margaret Bateson-Hill



# Soap

I'm all in a slather  
Of that thing that we lather –  
It's that wonderful thing we call  
Soap!

This small superhero  
Turns a virus to zero –  
It's that wonderful thing we call  
Soap!

So wash away troubles  
With creamy soft bubbles –  
It's that wonderful thing we call  
Soap!

- Margaret Bateson-Hill



# Don't play...

**D**on't play tug of war  
But if you must, stand 3 metres apart.  
Don't play hug of war,  
Please take this to heart.

Where everyone waves,  
Instead of hugs,  
And everyone huddles  
To avoid the bugs.  
Everyone cancels plans  
For cruising tours.  
Everyone washes their hands,  
And stays indoors.



- Chitra Soundar



# Three Weeks In

I t's week three of isolation  
We're all stuck here in the flat.  
And I'm turning green with envy  
At one thing in here...my cat.

He can go outside and jump and run  
And roll around and play  
While I watch TV and do another puzzle every day.



The cat doesn't have to home school  
No cat spelling or cat math  
He can go and visit neighbour cats  
That he meets along the path

There is no cat social distancing  
They just don't seem to care.  
While we have to leave two metres  
When we pass folks on the stairs

But my cat does seems to know  
When we need cuddles or need space

'cept first thing in the morning  
When he lays across my face.

So, I'm jealous of the cat  
Every time the cat door clicks  
But I'll be grateful for his purring  
And his cuddles if I'm sick.

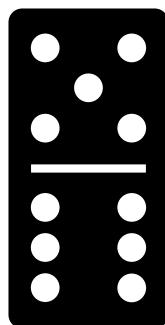
- Mo O'Hara



# ALONE

**T**here're so many online lessons  
That I just can't seem to start.  
And lots of virtual chat rooms too,  
But I want to stay apart.

There are games and there are puzzles  
Piled up under the stairs.  
And box sets all downloaded  
But I just can't seem to care.



Our normal life and expectations  
Are now all put on hold.  
And everything like scores and tests  
That mattered leave me cold.

I used to live my life so fast  
I thought I would combust.  
And now those plans and things I worked for  
Crumpled into dust.

We'll have lots of time to learn and make  
If this pans out like they say.  
So, I'll spend today alone I think  
But maybe you can stay?'

- Mo O'Hara



## BOXED IN

There aren't many good bits 'bout being locked in.  
'Self Iso- what-ever'  
is all pretty grim.  
But there's lots of deliveries with boxes you see,  
So I now have a box fort as tall as a tree!

- Mo O'Hara



# Never All Alone

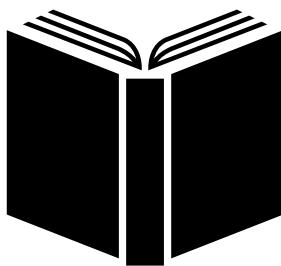
“ You can’t go out with friends to play!”

That’s all I hear all day,  
But don’t they know I’ve worked it out -  
How to get away.

If you can’t go out, go in instead,  
Open up a book!  
Come on! It’s not that scary  
To peek and take a look.

There are dinosaurs and  
monsters,  
Fast cars and flying kites,  
Ballet stars and treasure maps,  
Fierce cats in endless fights.

Mysteries, whodunits,  
Things to make you laugh,  
Comics and old paperbacks  
To read when in the bath.



And time goes very quickly  
When you go though the portal  
To meet Greek gods, alien twins  
And the occasional plain mortal.

So if playing out with friends is off,  
Don't cry an endless moan,  
You soon find when you read a book  
That you're never all alone.

- Margaret Bateson-Hill



# Home School

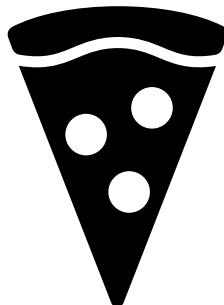
The kitchen table is our class.  
With no chance of a toilet pass.  
We're stuck inside, these few days,  
It's a bit scary in many ways.

Our new teachers are the best,  
They come to class not fully dressed.  
Then it's my turn to teach art to him.  
But my baby sister wants jungle gym.

No one seems to have a clue.  
Should there be a lesson in the loo?  
Pizza served with a side of fractions.  
I wish my parents had more distractions.

Maybe my parents are breaking a rule,  
This is no way to run a proper school.  
If OFSTED inspects, this school won't pass,  
There's a baby in my year 3 class.

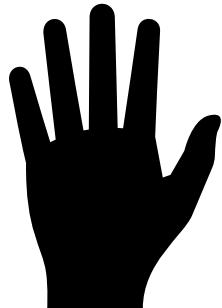
- Chitra Soundar



# Wash Your Hands

W ash with soap from palm to palm.  
We must carry on keeping calm.  
Germs won't get a single chance.

Twist and turn in a finger dance,  
Scrub the thumbs and finger tips.  
Let's prevent an apocalypse.  
Wash with water, wipe your hands.  
Let's show the virus where it stands.  
Let's stay at home, let's stay snug.  
Let's stand up to this evil bug.



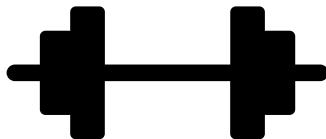
- Chitra Soundar



# I've got a gym inside my kitchen

I've got a gym inside my kitchen  
And the seaside's in my room  
The world has shrunk so blooming much  
That I can touch the moon.

The hallway is the motorway  
I use to see my dad,  
But no-one checks my licence card  
So that part's not so bad.



I flush the loo (now that's the train)  
Whilst chatting to our Jack,  
I take a ticket from the roll—  
It's good for there and back.

We've had to change the clocks to suit  
The way the world's so small  
Or else I'd be the fastest kid  
Gold medals? Got them all!

So now I say I've travelled well  
Now that the world is small  
But that gym inside my kitchen  
Isn't getting used at all.

- Dom Conlon



# About the Poets



Margaret Bateson-Hill is an author and a storyteller. She has published picture and fiction books, including the prizewinning Masha and the Firebird and the Dragon Racer trilogy. As a storyteller she has worked in a variety of settings including Kensington Palace, the V&A, the British Museum and is a resident storyteller for the Horniman Museum.  
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Mo is a storyteller, NY Times Bestselling author of the My Big Fat Zombie Goldfish series & various picture books and mom to two kids and two cats. (All of which have been inspiration for her books.) <https://moohara.co.uk/> Twitter: @Mo\_OHara



Dom Conlon, raised by wolves and fed on a diet of crumpets, is the poet behind This Rock That Rock, the collection of fifty poems inspired by the Moon and praised by former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell. Dom has been sighted online at [domconlon.com](http://domconlon.com) and on Twitter @dom\_conlon



Chitra Soundar is an internationally published author of over 40 books for children. She is also an oral storyteller and writer of many things. Chitra writes picture books and fiction for young readers. Her stories are inspired by folktales from India, Hindu mythology and her travels around the world. <http://www.chitrasoundar.com/> Twitter: @csoundar