

# Poems in a Time of Coronavirus - Issue No. 2



This anthology contains poems chosen by a group of friends from St Paul's Church Grove Park Chiswick on the theme of 'Eastertide',  
read to each other via Zoom on 9 April 2020.

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## ***Easter Wings* – by George Herbert**

Lord, who created'st man in wealth and store,  
Though foolishly he lost the same,  
Decaying more and more,  
Till he became  
Most poore:  
With thee  
O let me rise  
As larks, harmoniously,  
And sing this day thy victories:  
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne  
And still with sicknesses and shame.  
Thou didst so punish sinne,  
That I became  
Most thinne.  
With thee  
Let me combine,  
And feel thy victorie:  
For, if I imp my wing on thine,  
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

**Chosen and read by Caroline Ashford Russell**

[www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44361/easter-wings](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44361/easter-wings)

## ***Saint Aidan's Prayer* by Saint Aidan**

Leave me alone with God as much as may be.  
As the tide draws the waters close in upon the shore,  
Make me an island, set apart,  
alone with you, God, holy to you.

Then with the turning of the tide  
prepare me to carry your presence to the busy world beyond,  
the world that rushes in on me  
till the waters come again and fold me back to you.

**Chosen and read by Katharine Makower**

[www.prayerfoundation.org/aidans\\_prayer.htm](http://www.prayerfoundation.org/aidans_prayer.htm)

## ***Love [bade me welcome]* by George Herbert**

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back  
Guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,  
If I lacked any thing.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:  
Love said, You shall be he.  
I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,  
I cannot look on thee.  
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,  
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame  
Go where it doth deserve.  
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?  
My dear, then I will serve.  
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:  
So I did sit and eat.

**Chosen and read by Bea Vickers**

[www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44367/love-iii](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44367/love-iii)

## ***God's Grandeur* by Gerald Manley Hopkins**

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

**Chosen and read by Sheila White**

[www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44395/gods-grandeur](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44395/gods-grandeur)

## ***The Tree* by Phillip Larkin**

The trees are coming into leaf  
Like something almost being said;  
The recent buds relax and spread,  
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again  
And we grow old? No, they die too,  
Their yearly trick of looking new  
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh  
In fullgrown thickness every May.  
Last year is dead, they seem to say,  
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

**Chosen and read by Catherine Jessop**

[www.poeticous.com/philip-larkin/the-trees](http://www.poeticous.com/philip-larkin/the-trees)

## ***Soap Suds* by Louis Macniece**

This brand of soap has the same smell as once in the big  
House he visited when he was eight: the walls of the bathroom open  
To reveal a lawn where a great yellow ball rolls back through a hoop  
To rest at the head of a mallet held in the hands of a child.

And these were the joys of that house: a tower with a telescope;  
Two great faded globes, one of the earth, one of the stars;  
A stuffed black dog in the hall; a walled garden with bees;  
A rabbit warren; a rockery; a vine under glass; the sea.

To which he has now returned. The day of course is fine  
And a grown-up voice cries Play! The mallet slowly swings,  
Then crack, a great gong booms from the dog-dark hall and the ball  
Skims forward through the hoop and then through the next and then

Through hoops where no hoops were and each dissolves in turn  
And the grass has grown head-high and an angry voice cries Play!  
But the ball is lost and the mallet slipped long since from the hands  
Under the running tap that are not the hands of a child.

**Chosen and read by Jackie Rayer**

[www.poemhunter.com/poem/soap-suds/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/soap-suds/)

## ***No Second Chance* by Lenora McWhorter**

If there was no resurrection,  
there would be no hope for mankind.  
We would have no second chance  
and no peace of mind.

The love of God is clearly seen  
in the sacrifice of His Son,  
who took our punishment and our sin  
and offered redemption for everyone.

Had not Jesus died on the cross,  
had His life not been sacrificed,  
there would be no forgiveness of sin  
and there would be no eternal life.

Jesus did no wrong and knew no sin.  
But for love's sake He died...  
so our sin debt could be paid in full.  
He gave Himself to be crucified.

The good news of salvation  
comes to us by the way of the cross.  
God raised up Jesus from the dead  
so that no man need be lost.

Oh, what love the Father has for us,  
shown by the gift He freely gave.  
So that we could have a second chance.  
God raised Jesus from the grave.

**Chosen and read by Audrey Jennings**

[www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/no-second-chance](http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/no-second-chance)

### ***Hills of the North Rejoice* by Charles Oakley (original version)**

Hills of the north, rejoice;  
river and mountain spring,  
hark to the advent voice;  
valley and lowland, sing;  
though absent long, your Lord is nigh;  
he judgment brings and victory.

Isles of the southern seas,  
deep in your coral caves  
pent be each warring breeze,  
lulled be your restless waves:  
he comes to reign with boundless sway,  
and makes your wastes his great highway.

Lands of the East, awake,  
soon shall your sons be free;  
the sleep of ages break,  
and rise to liberty.  
On your far hills, long cold and gray,  
has dawned the everlasting day.

Shores of the utmost West,  
ye that have waited long,  
unvisited, unblessed,  
break forth to swelling song;  
high raise the note, that Jesus died,  
yet lives and reigns, the Crucified.

Shout, while ye journey home;  
songs be in every mouth;  
lo, from the North we come,  
from East, and West, and South.  
city of God, the bond are free,  
we come to live and reign in thee!

**Chosen and read by Sue Hearn**

[www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/hymn-lyrics/hills\\_of\\_the\\_north\\_rejoice.htm](http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/hymn-lyrics/hills_of_the_north_rejoice.htm)

## ***To the end of the World by Frank Topping***

A meditation on Matthew 28.20 "I am with you always to the end of time"

How bleak  
that sad, dead day  
the tomb was sealed with stone,  
how deep the groans of grief  
from those who talked  
and laughed and ate  
and shared the dusty road;  
had seen the eyes,  
had touched the hands,  
had heard the voice  
that promised life.

And then,  
mourners on the road to Emmaus  
broke bread and saw his face.  
At a breakfast meal  
on a fisherman's beach,  
his broken hands gave bread,  
and those who witnessed knew  
that the Lord of love  
crucified and buried,  
was the Lord of life.  
Risen Lord,  
who, every day, triumphs over death,  
you are with us now.

Let me live my life  
aware of your presence.  
Open my eyes that I might see  
your thorn crowned head  
among the poor, the hungry,  
the suffering and oppressed.  
Make my heart your home.  
That from the deadness of sin  
I might be raised to the life of love.

**Chosen and read by Victoria Lynch**

## ***Easter by George Herbert***

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise  
Without delays,  
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise  
With him mayst rise:  
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,  
His life may make thee gold, and much more just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part  
With all thy art.  
The cross taught all wood to resound his name,  
Who bore the same.  
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key  
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song  
Pleasant and long:  
Or since all music is but three parts vied  
And multiplied;  
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,  
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

**Chosen and read by Michael Riley**

[http://www.georgeherbert.org.uk/archives/selected\\_work\\_03.html](http://www.georgeherbert.org.uk/archives/selected_work_03.html)

## ***Easter by George Herbert (a song appended to the poem)***

I got me flowers to straw thy way:  
I got me boughs off many a tree:  
But thou wast up by break of day,  
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The Sun arising in the East,  
Though he give light, and th'East perfume;  
If they should offer to contest  
With thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,  
Though many suns to shine endeavour?  
We count three hundred, but we miss:  
There is but one, and that one ever.

**Chosen and read by Simon Surtees**

[http://www.georgeherbert.org.uk/archives/selected\\_work\\_03.html](http://www.georgeherbert.org.uk/archives/selected_work_03.html)

### ***The Donkey* by G K Chesterton**

When fishes flew and forests walked  
And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood  
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry  
And ears like errant wings,  
The devil's walking parody  
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
Of ancient crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,  
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;  
One far fierce hour and sweet:  
There was a shout about my ears,  
And palms before my feet.

**Chosen and read by Peter Capell**

[www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47918/the-donkey](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47918/the-donkey)

## **The Prologue to Canterbury Tales (an extract)**

When April with his showers sweet with fruit  
The drought of March has pierced unto the root  
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power  
To generate therein and sire the flower;  
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,  
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,  
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun  
Into the Ram one half his course has run,  
And many little birds make melody  
That sleep through all the night with open eye  
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-  
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,  
And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,  
To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.  
And specially from every shire's end  
Of England they to Canterbury wend,  
The holy blessed martyr there to seek  
Who helped them when they lay so ill and weak

**Chosen and read by Sam Hearn**

<https://tigerweb.towson.edu/duncan/chaucer/duallang1.htm>