

Time Travel

This is a new time, they tell us:

Looking back, we will say,

‘Oh, that was in the time of coronavirus’;

Or maybe, ‘Before the time of Covid, life was thus and so’.

Yet time itself is changed.

Clocks run on, the season turns,

But days, weeks, months are cut loose from the calendar,

New milestones mark the shifting sands of time.

Old ways emerge: time taken back

To long, slow kitchen hours and meal-time clock;

Diary dates pruned to birthdays and holy days;

Afternoons sprawling out of bounds.

And yet, captive in our private space,

Faces and voices venture far abroad.

Is this the traveller’s way in future time:

Flung through the ether, in instantaneous flight?

On ancient Port Meadow, time spirals out of mind

To long-ago plagues, a scarce-remembered flu.

All passed. All shall pass. The geese still graze.

The skylarks rain down song from a clear sky.

Phillipa Hardman