

## Arts in the Time of Covid-19

Issue 3

June 2020

Welcome to another packed issue of our Arts Newsletter.

We also have a Poetry Quiz for you this month provided by Julia Eversham. We will make answers available at the start of July.

If you would like to contribute to the next newsletter then please contact Paula.  
[Groupco@woodleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:Groupco@woodleyu3a.org.uk) .

Introduction

### Recommendations from Eileen Bravey, Galleries and Museums Convenor

“Fine Art is that in which the hand, the head and the heart of man go together “ -  
 John Ruskin

As galleries and museums adapt to our temporary new world there is still a world of wonder out there, albeit for the time being virtual. Paula has taken us on many wonderful virtual journeys on Saturday afternoons in the last three months, how time flies by even in lockdown.

My offerings for this month's newsletters are personal favourites.

Sadly the brilliant potter Alan Caiger Smith of Aldermaston Pottery passed away just before lockdown, one of Berkshire's brightest stars. His work is on permanent display at Reading museum and the Ashmolean accords him the honour of displaying his work alongside that of William de Morgan.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/mar/18/alan-caiger-smith-obituary>

<http://collections.readingmuseum.org.uk/index.asp?page=index>

Staying with potters I have also attached a profile of the brilliant Barbara Hepworth.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/dame-barbara-hepworth-1274>

The Hepworth Gallery in Wakefield is home to a large group of her work and is a great space to visit when it reopens in August. You can see some of her pieces on their website. The other place for Hepworth fans is of course the Hepworth museum at St Ives, which was her home and workshop.

<https://hepworthwakefield.org/our-art-artists/collections/>

[https://www.tate.org.uk/search?gallery=hepworth\\_museum&type=artwork](https://www.tate.org.uk/search?gallery=hepworth_museum&type=artwork)

You don't have to be a poetry fan to enjoy the selection of Samuel West's Pandemic Poetry, brilliant characterisation from this excellent actor. I have spent some of my favourite times from the last few weeks enjoying his dulcet tones, one moment guaranteed to melt your heart and make you smile is his daughter's giggles as he recites Ning Nang Nong by Spike Millican.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-115260978/sets/pandemic-poems-by-samuel-west>

Visuals Art and Poetry

**Music recommendations from Paula.**

Live streaming concerts from the London Mozart Players look worth watching. The first one has happened but you can catch up on YouTube and there are two more to come including pieces by Copland, Vaughan Williams and Vivaldi.

<https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/london-mozart-players-post-lockdown-concert-series/>

I would continue to recommend the wonderful live concerts via Zoom, Oxford Folk Weekend ones – they have some great gigs coming up. The sound quality is good – it not using mobile phones but professional equipment!

<https://folkweekendoxford.co.uk/what-s-on>

Other live music can be found at the Live Room at Saltaire – they have some great UK and USA folk, blue and Americana artists coming up.

<https://theliveroom.info/>

For something a bit more highbrow the Metropolitan Opera in New York are streaming a different Opera every night.

<https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/>

Jeff has sneaked in an excellent Music recommendation in the Film section.

**Focus on Bristol**

Bristol Arts Channel is a city-wide collaboration between arts organisations who want to offer a lockdown lifeline for their audiences missing the buzz and community of Bristol's brilliant arts scene. It includes a huge range of events ranging from drama, music, art and virtual tours – do go and explore.

<https://www.bristolartschannel.com/>

**Recommendations from Paula, self-confessed theatre addict**

The Old Vic, Bristol has been streaming performance during June – the last one is the wonderful "Grinning Man", based on the Victor Hugo story. This is streaming from this week for just a week so make sure you catch it while it is available. I am sure you will love the huge dog in it just as much as I did when I saw the play in London.

<https://bristololdvic.org.uk/whats-on/the-grinning-man>

There are still some great plays coming up at National at Home – Amadeus was a spectacular production so don't miss that and the Rattigan play "The Deep Blue Sea" is also well worth watching.

Please do consider donating to the theatres if you watch and enjoy a performance.

If you missed the amazing Imelda Staunton in Gypsy then you can pay to stream the show:

[https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/musicals-plays-pay-fiver-stream-online\\_51620.html](https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/musicals-plays-pay-fiver-stream-online_51620.html)

Some ticketed live productions are starting to be available – Lungs at the Old Vic and The Last Five Years are ones happening this month.

BBC IPlayer continues to have some great drama – along with RSC productions there are now newly filmed versions of the superb Alan Bennett Talking Heads monologues. The cast list is amazing – includes Imelda again.

## Recommendations from Jeff Green, Afternoon Film Group Convenor

Film selections this week on BBC iPlayer and Netflix

### **BBC iPlayer**

#### **99 Homes**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0009mf3/99-homes>

Indie US film set in the 2008 financial crisis caused by Collateralised Debt Obligations

(CDOs) – remember Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae and Northern Rock?

Naive, hardworking blue-collar handyman gets duped & then sucked into the financial skulduggery. Eventually becomes the fall guy after having moral qualms.

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/99\\_homes](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/99_homes)

#### **Trumbo**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0003wxk/trumbo>

The excellent Bryan Cranston as a Hollywood screenwriter fighting the blacklist at the height of 1950s McCarthyism. Great support from Helen Mirren & John Goodman.

<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/trumbo>

#### **Twelve Monkeys**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01fhfjy/twelve-monkeys>

Terry Gilliam's post-apocalyptic time travelling sci-fi thriller starring Bruce Willis & Brad Pitt. Excellent film despite the unhinged performance of Mr Pitt ...

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/12\\_monkeys](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/12_monkeys)

### **Netflix**

#### **The Kominsky Method**

Highly amusing TV series which will appeal to those of us reaching a certain stage in our lives. Starring Michael Douglas & Alan Arkin with an ensemble of great supporting actors.

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the\\_kominsky\\_method](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the_kominsky_method)

#### **Springsteen on Broadway**

The Boss's bravura one man Broadway show captured on film.

Semi auto-biographical musical journey, though as the man says, he makes his living by making things up...

Renditions of classic Springsteen songs, cut back, raw and sometimes rough but packed with emotion.

Riveting.

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/springsteen\\_on\\_broadway](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/springsteen_on_broadway)

Film

### Recommendations from the Books for Book-lovers group

- **'The Trouble with Goats & Sheep'** by Joanna Cannon – publisher: The Borough Press  
This intriguing book is set in the long hot summer of 1976, in a neighbourhood of seemingly 'ordinary' people. The child narrator does not have an agenda but everyone else has "something to hide". The two 10-year-old friends see the world without a filter and gradually uncover a series of small mysteries behind closed doors, and a wider history of deception and long-buried secrets gradually emerges.
- **'Circe'** by Madeline Miller – publisher: Bloomsbury  
The Greek myth of Circe, daughter of the sun god Helios and ocean nymph Perse, is given a modern slant in this novel; an up-to-date story of the struggles of an outsider. Derided, neglected and rejected, always a loner, Circe is banished by her father to endless exile on the island of Aiaia, where she hones her emerging magical skills in order to survive. Sadness, despair, fear and joy ensue before Circe finally realises her destiny and contentment.

A recent book group choice, this is a tale of one individual developing strategies for coping with adversity and isolation, in an effective lockdown, so relevant to these difficult times! For me, the tale of Circe is encapsulated in the description of the tapestry, woven by Penelope while she was a guest on Aiaia: "The solitary swimmer striking out into the stormy deep". Incidentally, the Greek myths seem to be having a moment, with '[A Greek Odyssey](#)' on Channel 5 and '[Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics](#)' on Radio 4

- **'The Silver Darlings'** by Neil M. Gunn – publisher: Faber & Faber  
In the wake of the highland clearances, fishing offered displaced crofters an alternative lifestyle. Gunn, a fisherman's son puts his finger on the heartbeat of Highland life then, capturing the spirited struggle with the sea along the rugged Caithness coastline. Using the strong sense of community comradeship, he tells a story that echoes beyond Scottish shores. A family saga is lucidly written, rich in character details.

Highland clearances were a brutal injustice. The lure of the sea was the hope of catching the 'silver darlings' (herring) to sell. Behind family and community settings is the cold hand of economics. Behind the pressganging of Tornad are the economics of war. Behind positive change for Catrine is the economic reality of a small inheritance. Poetic description creates atmospheric settings and Gunn expertly shifts from epic scale to intimate momentary events. He factors elements of history, politics and economics into a gripping, very moving family saga.

- **'Sweet Tooth'** by Ian McEwan – publisher: Jonathan Cape  
The year is 1972, the Cold War is far from over and Serena Frome, in her final year at Cambridge, is being groomed for MI5. Sent on Operation Sweet Tooth – a highly secret undercover mission – she meets Tom Haley, a promising young writer. First she loves his stories; then she begins to love the man. Can she maintain the fiction of her undercover life? And who is inventing whom? To answer these questions, Serena must abandon the first rule of espionage: trust no one. I found this an enjoyable read, funny at times, thought-provoking and an entertaining novel.

Thanks to Sue, Philippa, Moira and Suzanne for your recommendations. I can't wait till we can meet in person once more to discuss what we've been reading!

## Famous Poems and Poets Quiz

### Who wrote the following lines?

1. 'Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone'

A. W.H Auden	B. Philip Larkin	C. T.S Eliot
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*For a bonus point, what British movie from 1994 made this poem extremely popular?*

2. 'I love chocolate cake. And when I was a boy, I loved it even more'

A. Roger McGough	B. Roald Dahl	C. Michael Rosen
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3. 'Do not go gentle into that good night'

A. Dylan Thomas	B. John Keats	C. Elizabeth Browning
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4. 'No man is an island, Entire of itself'

A. George Herbert	B. John Donne	C. Andrew Marvell
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5. 'Whose woods these are I think I know'

A. Robert Graves	B. Robert Frost	C. Rupert Brooke
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*-For a bonus point- can you name the poem?*

6. 'You may tread me in the very dirt, But still, like dust, I'll rise'

A. Toni Morrison	B. Sylvia Plath	C. Maya Angelou
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7. 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?'

A. Pablo Neruda	B. Elizabeth Barrett Browning	C. William Shakespeare
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*-For a bonus point can you remember the next line?*

8. 'If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you'

A. W.H. Auden	B. W.B. Yeats	C. Rudyard Kipling
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9. 'How do I love thee? Let me count the ways'

A. Elizabeth Barrett Browning	B. William Shakespeare	C. Pablo Neruda
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10. 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves, Did gyre and gimble in the wabe'

A. Robert Burns	B. Lewis Carroll	C. Edward Lear
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*-For a bonus point can you name the poem?*

11. 'Tyger Tyger Burning Bright'

A. William Shakespeare	B. William Blake	C. William Wordsworth
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**Fill in the missing word from the following opening lines from famous poems**

12. 'When I am an old woman, I shall wear \_\_\_\_\_ ('Warning' by Jenny Joseph)

A. purple	B. fur	C. pearls
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13. 'On the Ning Nang Nong, Where the \_\_\_\_\_ go Bong! ('Ning Nang Nong' by Spike Milligan)

A. bells	B. cows	C. mice
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14. 'I wanted one life, you wanted another, we couldn't have our cake, so we ate \_\_\_\_\_',  
'Cake' Roger McGough

A. each other	B. my mother	C. your brother
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15. 'Not a red rose or a satin heart. I give you an \_\_\_\_\_' ('Valentine' by Carol Ann Duffy)

A. i-pad	B. onion	C. orange
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16. 'I wandered lonely as a \_\_\_\_\_ ('Daffodils' by William Wordsworth)

A. cloud	B. shepherd	C. dream
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17. 'I was much further out than you thought, And not \_\_\_\_\_ but drowning' (by Stevie Smith)

A. swimming	B. waving	C. floating
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**Odd one out: Name the poem that was NOT written by the poet**

18. Alfred Lord Tennyson

A. The Charge of The Light Brigade	B. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner	C. The Lady of Shalott
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19. T.S Eliot

A. The Owl and the Pussycat	B. Macavity, The Mystery Cat	C. The Hippopotamus
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20. Lord Byron

A. She walks in Beauty	B. So, We'll go no more a-roving	C. O Captain! My Captain!
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21. Seamus Heaney

A. The Death of a Naturalist	B. Digging	C. Please Mrs Butler
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