

# CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## June 2020

**Dear Friends** – Gillian has been prevented from doing much keyboarding as she has broken her right shoulder and has her arm in a sling. But she is making good progress and has been delighted with the usual – indeed, more than usual – inundation of articles for the newsletter without, as she put it to me, having to do very much. Steve Betts is providing her with a handrail for the staircase so that she can now go downstairs forwards instead of backwards – which, as Brian Skeet put it, ‘is a step in the right direction’. Jade and Eka have opened up her front garden to enable friends to visit her for tea, keeping at a suitable distance, of course; but it would be as well to give her a ring before taking advantage of this kind offer. Meanwhile, the communal life of our meeting continues apace by all the electronic means we’ve now become used to since lockdown began, and it may not be too long before we can return to our real home for worship, perhaps even with some much-missed hugs and handshakes. For now we see as through a Zoom screen, darkly, but then – hopefully soon – face to face. **David Parlett, assistant editor**

*Do you cherish your friendships, so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect? In close relationships we may risk pain as well as finding joy. When experiencing great happiness or great hurt we may be more open to the working of the Spirit.*

*A&Q 21, chosen by Julia*

### News of Friends

**Olivia (‘Livvy’) Edgson** celebrated her 13th birthday on 31 May and we sent her a card with our love and birthday greetings.

Welcome to **Michelle Dumont** and **Laurence Hall**, our new tenants joining Blair and Aidan in the flat. They have just come out of lockdown in Guernsey and were planning to travel on Wednesday 3 June. Michelle attends Guernsey meeting and Laurence is a member of London West, worshipping at Westminster meeting.

**Liz Collins** was rushed to hospital last week with gall stone problems and was kept in for a few days. She will return later for an operation. She’s glad to be home (obviously) but sad to be ‘socially distancing’ herself from husband David, just to be on the safe side.

**Laura** and **Andy** are managing to work from home, taking it in turns to do so and alternating work with home-schooling Albie and Jacob.

**Margie** has spoken to **Therle** and **Roland**, who report that they are doing well in the circumstances, and she (Margie) and Rachel have been ‘meeting for dog-walking’.

**Kay Papadopoulos** has sent us this picture of the meeting house garden. With no one currently tending it, it has bloomed of its own accord and now looks more like a natural meadow. It would seem a pity to spoil it!



## To placidly go

### **During the last three weeks I have taken part in a group meditation for forgiveness:**

forgiveness for others, but also for ourselves. Often we find we are our own worst critics, beating ourselves up mentally about mistakes we have made in the past. To open our hearts and forgive ourselves is just as important as forgiving others.

In Meeting for Worship this morning (31/5/20) lines from *Desiderata* – by Max Ehrman, one of my favourite poems - came to mind. It used to be quoted quite a lot in ministry when I first started attending Croydon Meeting way back in 1971. I remember Mark Hayler often ministered something uplifting towards the end of a Meeting for Worship that had seemed a bit gloomy with people ministering about problems in the world. I remember Mark ministering about the sun is still shining and the birds are still singing.

Here are a few lines to give you a taste of it::

*Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there  
there may be in silence.....*

*Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not  
distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and  
loneliness.*

*Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of  
the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.  
And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it  
should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be.*

*And whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life,  
keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it  
is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.*

**Pam Sellman**

## My Covid-19 Lockdown Blessing

### **On Easter Saturday I was in mourning.**

News of my American cousins was not good. One was spending his birthday in isolation having succumbed to the effects of Covid-19, the other after a long illness had died just at the time that I had been asking about him. A subsequent phone call confirmed this. Sunday came and I was still feeling very low. Then there was a change. Steve, my neighbour at Number 19 brought me some handmade sweets and an A5 envelope, not the usual size for an Easter card. In it was a hand written letter written in green ink. It was from his daughter. It read, 'Dear Joyce. Hello. I am Lilyanne. I'm 9 years old and I live at number 19. As we are in Lockdown I thought I would write you this little letter.' She then told about school, and her best friend Gabi whom she misses, and about what she is doing in lockdown time, 'a lot of painting when I'm not doing school work.' She also told about her five year old brother, James, and his best friend Ryan whom he too misses. As I read I felt that for Lilyanne, friendship was very important.

At the bottom of the page was a beautifully painted rainbow with the Happy Easter Greeting in purple. The mere receipt of a friendly letter from a nine-year-old and which was decorated for Easter really lifted my spirits no end especially when I was enjoying not only the letter but also the sweets that had come with it. In my reply I told Lilyanne how on Saturday my spirits had died and how her friendly Easter letter had made them rise again. I also told her how her rainbow had reminded me of the second stanza of a poem written by Christina Rossetti, which at age nine I had learned, and I wrote it out for her. *There are bridges on the rivers/As pretty as you  
please/But the bow that bridges heaven/And overtops the trees/And builds a road from earth to  
sky/Is prettier far than these.*

On the following Saturday I had another letter from Lilyanne, this time written in purple ink, and decorated with the drawing of a unicorn in colours. In it, she told me about her 'poem book for every night' and that her favourite poem was the one for the 30th March which was her birthday, and that it is called *Against Idleness and Mischief* written by Isaacs Watts. It was *How doth the little busy bee/Improve each shining hour,/And gather honey all the day/From every opening flower!* Was it co-incidence/God-incidence that this poem also revived my childhood

memory? Lilyanne wrote the whole poem, all four stanzas. Well, at just about Lilyanne's age, at nine years, I was made to learn the same poem which is in my West Indian Reader, Book 1. I had to refer to my reading book to confirm that the poem was really written by Isaac Watts. In the 1930's in British Guiana learning was by rote, and if maybe we knew that what we leaning was a poem, no one told us about the poet; indeed, as I remember it, when we were reciting *The Naughty Boy* by John Keats, we would end: '*He stood in his shoes and he wondered, he wondered/ He stood in his shoes and he wondered, John Keats*'. It was not until I had to study his poetry in the sixth form that I realised that the poet who had written *A thing of beauty is a joy forever* was the same poet who had written *The Naughty Boy*. The name Isaac Watts at the end of the poem had no significance.

Lilyanne's letter made me do my own lockdown homework. It is no wonder that Isaac Watts (1674-1748) named the poem *Against Idleness and Mischief*, because in researching him I learned that he was a devout Christian, a Non-Conformist, and that many of the hymns that I was singing for most of my adult life, the words were written by him, for example *When I survey the wondrous cross* and *O God our help in ages past*. For most of that Saturday I spent going through an old edition of an Anglican Hymn Book and counted nineteen entries by Isaac Watts. But then I noticed something special about this edition – every hymn was introduced by a verse from the Bible, including those by Isaac Watts. I had made a discovery, namely that a hymn book is in fact an anthology of Christian verse/poetry. Very often we are so carried away by the tunes that we do not stop long enough to pay attention to the words. So often I find modern poetry so unsatisfying, having no rhythm or rhyme you can easily memorise. Not so my poems in my hymn book. Now I read them even though sometimes I do not know the tune. I find the words uplifting. Thank you, Lilyanne, my Covid-19 Lockdown Blessing.

**Joyce Trotman**

### The Whirr of the Inner Wings

**Pema Chödrön, the American Tibetan Buddhist nun, teacher and author, gives a new take on W.B. Yeats's famous line in her best-selling publication *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times*. (2016)**

Chödrön writes that, when experiencing despair owing to circumstances where things seem to fall apart, opportunities may be presented to us which test and heal. Often, when confronted with challenging issues, we believe that the whole point of it all is to 'pass the test' and overcome the problem before us. It could, however, be a chance to experience a new humility and note that there is no longer very much room for our previous iron-clad certainties and idealism. She suggests that we might consider times of perceived helplessness as tools to help us to examine and let go of our old unskilful ways whilst becoming more intimate with ourselves. This is necessary before we can begin to offer authentic feeling for others. Chödrön's teacher, Chogyan Trungpa Rinpoche, advises that we lean into the 'sharp points'.

She believes that all is transition and much doesn't really get solved but that things fall apart and come together again only to fall apart again. Nothing ever 'sums itself up in ways that we like to dream about'. The healing comes from remaining present and letting there be room for all of this to happen:

'Room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy'.

We are advised to stay in the present moment and try to relax into the process of change and sit with uncomfortable feelings such as hopelessness. To keep a pool of calm amid the chaos. Chödrön believes that it is only self-compassion for our own darkness and the practice of lovingkindness that will allow us to offer light to others. As Quakers, we too seek to 'know an inward stillness' in order to discern fresh opportunities and to 'attend to what love requires' of us. (A&Q: 28) We may go further and encourage in ourselves and others a 'dependence on God's guidance'. (A&Q: 3)

When we turn to consider our own Quaker tradition of silent worship it gives us wide scope for spiritual contemplation, compassion for self and others and letting go of the armies of 'shoulds' and 'oughts' which ego so loves to highlight in times of strain or distress. We are asked to consider in *Advices & Queries* whether we 'respect that of God in everyone' (A&Q17). Grace, Love and connection to the Divine and to other people might, for some, be more easily felt in the silent and attuned space offered by a Quaker Meeting. At the moment, this could be on a

platform such as Zoom, a Distant Healing gathering of Friends, or in Friends' meditation or prayer practices.

In times of unpredictability and general feelings of fragility, letting go of some of our more rigidly held expectations may provide that all important space recommended above. The following words from Walter Lanyon prompt us to turn within:

'Be still – be quiet – rest a moment in the consciousness of this transcending Power, and you will feel the whirr of the inner wings'. **Barbara Earl**

*When Things Fall Apart: Tibetan Buddhist Nun and Teacher on Transformation Through Difficult Times*, Maria Popova, brainpickings.org  
*A Temple not Made with Hands*, Walter Lanyon (Kissinger Legacy Reprints)

## Coping with the world in lockdown and beyond

**I know I'm not alone in this. I wake up in the morning and the television news tells me things that seemingly contradict what the same programme told me yesterday or last week.**

This is important because I want, perhaps need, to have some kind of a coherent view about what's going on. Clearly, it's not possible to settle for a pre-packaged summary from once reliable, or certainly, predictable, media sources. After all, nobody is even pretending that, to coin a phrase, we are all in this together and so governed by the law of moral equivalence. (This is a radical idea that states whatever is wrong for you must also be wrong for me).

I'll really have to devise a view, a perspective for myself. But it's so difficult to have an opinion about what has happened and what will happen next....and how my life (and that of my family), this country, the western world and the entire planet will be affected. Hold your horses... how should I go about – calmly, yes, calmly – approaching this?

If this were a research project, I'd know what to do. What's my focus, who's written about it before and what research method – perhaps participant observation – am I going to use to collect my data? Basically, it's a piece of cake – but, of course, it isn't. All this time at home has given me time to question everything, even the stuff I've spent a fair chunk of my life doing. Sometimes it seems necessary to really question the assumptions, the models, the very language used to understand and explore what's going on and how things are changing.

I wish that I had a fiver for every time the words 'paradigm shift' have fallen from my lips. (I'd be living in Monaco, probably next door to Shirley Bassey). You know the sort of thing. There we were in the midst of a discussion about change in society and something is needed to express the move from A to B, perhaps A to Z. Something that expressed the profound nature of the change that is or is about to get underway. So 'paradigm shift' it is and has been for decades. But, today, as we try to come to terms with the coronavirus, we also can see the probability of vast change underway in the globalised economy, in political processes and outcomes, cultural expectations.... is there anything that isn't changing with results, consequences that can only be guessed at? Unknown unknowns, 'black swans'... all express that very uncertainty, the very unpredictability, the complexity and the 'inter-linkedness' of it all. So, any discussion of change, whether specific to one organisation and one set of circumstances or in terms of sweeping generalisations about situation and context, has to be treated with great care. Well, we all know that. But, let it be said, there are no easy answers when we don't necessarily know what the questions are.

Am I 'over-thinking' this? Is it necessary to adopt another, more helpful and meaningful approach? As ever, *Quaker Faith and Practice* comes to the rescue (or perhaps it's Gillian who has been circulating helpful quotes in the WhatsApp group). Mary F Smith (20.08), way back in 1936, in a decade where cataclysmic events were going to happen, advised that 'Prayer is an exercise of the spirit, as thought is of the mind. To pray about anything is to use the powers of our spirit on it, just as to think clearly is to use our mental powers. For the best solution of every problem, both thought and prayer are necessary'. In short, we've not to let our preoccupation with thinking to limit our action, 'the energy, will and striving' which we put 'into the work (as) mattering a great deal'. That in learning to be and being truly yourself - to be authentic – it is necessary to act with integrity, rather than conforming to any external moral system or societal culture.

**Helen Johnson**

*Prayer is an exercise of the spirit, as thought is of the mind. To pray about anything is to use the powers of our spirit on it, just as to think clearly is to use our mental powers. For the best solution of every problem, the best carrying out of every action, both thought and prayer are necessary... To pray about any day's work does not mean to ask success in it. It means, first to realise my own inability to do even a familiar job, as it truly should be done, unless I am in touch with eternity, unless I do it 'unto God', unless I have the Father with me. It means to see 'my' work as part of a whole, to see 'myself' as not mattering much, but my faith, the energy, will and striving which I put into the work, as mattering a great deal. My faith is the point in me at which God comes into my work; through faith the work is given dignity and value. And if, through some weakness of mine, or fault of others, or just 'unavoidable circumstances', the work seems a failure, yet prayer is not wasted when it is unanswered, any more than love is wasted when it is unreturned. Mary F Smith, 1936 (Quaker Faith & Practice 20.08)*

### Another week!

#### **It has been an odd week for me.**

Many years ago I joined a local poetry group, two friends founded the group as a spin-off from the small choir that we all belonged to. It was very new, learning as we went, taking turns to research a favourite poet and give a presentation every month. My choice was Wendy Cope.

I gained a lot of pleasure from the monthly gatherings, always eager to learn a bit more. My love of poetry comes from my parents and the delight in sharing words with my children when small. So for quite a few years I kept going. Then somehow life was busy, other commitments came, and for me, somehow I did not go any more.

During this lockdown I had an email saying that the poetry was going via Zoom - first date not good, but this last week just fine for me.

The topic was Spring.

Lots of time looking through some books getting side-tracked, then back into choosing a piece to read at this Zoom event.

All set, put code in and waited, and waited, screen said poetry group 'please wait, your host will connect'.

I waited for 25 minutes! And then left, hoping for a better connection this coming month. So, perhaps friends will enjoy *Spring Morning*, my chosen poem?

**Margie Ashley**

### Spring Morning

Where am I going? I don't quite know.  
Down to the stream where king-cups grow -  
Up to the hill where the pine trees blow -  
Anywhere, anywhere. I don't know.

Where am I going? The clouds sail by,  
Little ones, baby ones, over the sky.  
Where am I going? The shadows pass,  
Littles, baby ones, over the grass.

If you were a cloud, and sailed up there,  
You'd sail on water as blue as air,  
And you'd see me here in the fields and say:  
'Doesn't the sky look green today?'

Where am I going? The high rooks call:  
'It's awful fun to be born at all'.  
Where am I going? The ring-doves coo:  
'We do have beautiful things to do'

If you were a bird, and lived on high,  
You'd lean on the wind when the wind came  
by,  
You'd say to the wind when it took you away:  
'That's where I wanted to go today!'

Where am I going? I don't quite know.  
What does it matter where people go?  
Down to the wood where the blue-bells  
grow-  
Anywhere, anywhere. I don't know.

**A.A.Milne.**

### On the premises (update)

**We have all been missing one another since the meeting house had to close, but I thought** you would like to know that, on behalf of Premises Committee, work has been going on in the meeting house to make it even more welcoming for when we eventually return.

The floors in the foyer and common room have been sanded and varnished, and now have a lovely golden glow that warms and lightens the whole atmosphere on entry to the meeting house. The common room walls are being painted by Steve Betts, who has already cleared and painted the office walls, ceiling and floor ready for when we can furnish it with storage for the meeting records.

Small repair, cleaning and maintenance jobs are being carried out upstairs, in the East and West Rooms, so that they will be ready for when hirers and the Family Group return, and the Friends' Room will be prepared for the storage of the meeting's archives and the return of the study group.

It's been a difficult time for all of us, but the support we have received from one another through WhatsApp groups and the Zoom meetings have kept us going, and we look forward to seeing one another again in our spruced up meeting house!

**Kay Papadopoulos**

**We have had a trickle of interest from previous hirers enquiring about returning and we** propose to make the ASH available to them while the social distancing guidelines are still in place. We are grateful to Steve Betts for the hard work he carried out on the Gent's toilets in the ASH last year, which now look very much more presentable. We plan to make use of the double doors in the ASH which Nightwatch access, not only for ventilation purposes but also to introduce a one-way system to avoid any bottle-necking when group members arrive and leave. We will also be setting up hand sanitiser stations at entrances for visitors to use. So far we have had interest by Aspire Driving Courses and also Cressey College for their GCSE exams. It will be a very pleasing sight to see the Meeting House and ASH in use again. **Gillian Turner (via Steve Betts)**

### Book review: Humankind

**You don't have to read Bertrand Russell's *Why I am not a Christian* (1927) to understand** why some people, including even Friends, are reluctant to tar themselves with the same brush that brought us the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the doctrine of 'original sin' – which Jesus himself, an enlightened Jew, had never heard of, let alone endorsed. And which the American theologian Matthew Fox (no relation) railed against in his book *Original Blessing* (1983), to the delight of Croydon Friends some 20 years ago.

For those who embraced Fox's doctrine of 'creative spirituality' a new book has just appeared that builds on this more positive approach to the human condition. In *Humankind* (2020), Dutch writer Rutger Bregman (author of *Utopia for Realists*, 2013) argues that human beings are in general kinder and fundamentally more moral than we often give ourselves credit for.

He starts by pointing out that in WWII both British and German politicians claimed that the mass bombing of civilians would engender such panic as to bring the enemy to its knees through disorder, revolution and anarchy. In fact, the reverse was the case: both civilian populations – those who survived, at least – pulled themselves together in a spirit of friendliness, cooperation and humour. Both crime and psychological stress went down rather than up.

The whole of his book is framed against the backdrop of conflict between the view of Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651), who regards mankind as having in the natural state no idea of goodness, and being 'vicious because he does not know virtue', and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in *Discourse on Inequality* (1754), holds that humankind is naturally good and spoiled only by civilisation. (Echoed by Yuval Noah Harari, in *Sapiens*, 2011, who categorises the Agricultural Revolution as 'history's biggest fraud', and by Bregman, who writes: 'It can be no accident that the first archaeological evidence for war suddenly appears approximately 10,000 years ago, coinciding with the development of private property and farming'.)

If you find this incredible you need to read the ways in which he expands upon this theme with well-documented historical examples. Chapter 2 covers the now prominent story of the six teenage schoolboys marooned in 1965 on a remote South Pacific island, and who, far from emulating the dystopian example of Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, devised a way of living and

working harmoniously together until they were picked up (I find myself reluctant to use the word 'rescued' even in inverted commas) 15 months later. Bregman puts their better behaviour down to native human kindness, though some might say it reflects better on the Catholic boarding school at which they were pupils.

It was the schoolboy story that alerted me to Bregman's book a few weeks ago when I read Andrew Anthony's review of it in *The Guardian* and prompted me to order it immediately. Equally enticing, when it eventually arrived, was the title of Chapter 19, *Homo Ludens*. Bregman starts by arguing western children are increasingly being moulded into incipient consumers and vote-fodder by being deprived of sufficient opportunity to play. The chapter goes on to offer an enlightened view about education.

Two more thoughts are worth quoting. 'If *Homo [sapiens]* is such an innately friendly creature, why do egomaniacs and opportunists, narcissists and sociopaths, keep coming out on top? How can it be that we humans – one of the only species to blush – somehow allow ourselves to be ruled by specimens who are utterly shameless? (p.221). 'If someone sprays your house with graffiti we call it vandalism. But for advertising you're allowed to deface public space and economists will call it "growth"' (p.310).

You might find yourself doubting his optimism with such questions as 'What about Auschwitz? Or the Milgram shock experiments?'. But Bregman has got these covered in part 3, 'Why good people turn bad', and he goes to great lengths to support his arguments with well authenticated references.

*Humankind* is the most enlightening book I have read since Gaia Vince's *Transcendence* (2019) and Harari's *Sapiens* (2015), though I'd have been happier if it had been translated into proper English rather than colloquial American.

**David Parlett**

Rutger Bregman, *Humankind: a hopeful history* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020)

### SLAQM area meeting May 2020

**23 Friends took part in a Zoomed area meeting on 24 May hosted by Streatham & Brixton**, clerked by Sarah Totterdell and Ginny Baumann. After a reading from Quaker Faith & Practice (26.12, by Geoffrey Hubbard) we recorded the deaths of Marjorie Evans of Croydon meeting (19 March 2020) and Susan Day (8 April) on 19th March 2020. We heard a minute of record of the life of Susan Day prepared by Sutton Meeting and a memorial meeting will be held in due course.

We were notified of two applications for membership, both from Streatham & Brixton, and Friends were appointed to 'visit' them by Zoom.

Our treasurer presented the Area Meeting core accounts for 2019 and her accompanying report, which we accepted with thanks. We noted that there is a further deficit projected for 2020 and encourage Friends to increase their standing order if able.

We confirmed AMC's appointment of Barbara Cairns to serve on AM Legacies Committee to 31 December 2022 and appointed Pam Sellman to serve as Trustee of South London Area Quaker Meeting to 31 December 2022. Gillian Turner and David Parlett were appointed to serve on the Special Nominations Group for the Nomination of Elders and Overseers for the next triennium

Area Meeting Trustees reported that the legacies fund currently contains more than foreseeably necessary to support Friends to attend events and Area Meeting Concerns, and we asked them to consider when and how quickly the funds should be run down.

We approved the revisions to our governing document proposed by our Trustees.

We approved Streatham & Brixton LQM's decision move to a system of corporate Oversight. They will appoint an Oversight Contact to liaise with Area Meeting.

We received a minute from Purley meeting which welcomes the record of a meeting held between Purley co-clerks and LQPT representatives to consider Purley's experience of laying down their meeting house and were grateful for the progress made in resolving what has been a very difficult and painful time for Purley Meeting. We also welcomed the recommendations in an attached minute for LQPT to clarify and improve communications between LMs, AMs, AM Trustees and LQPT.

Area meeting in session next meets on 20 September, to be hosted by Croydon LM. The next AMC meeting will be on 21 June, also hosted by Croydon meeting.

**David Parlett**

## Events

**Meeting for upholding**, incorporating Prayer for Healing, will be held by Zoom this Sunday, 7 June, from 9.50 to 10.10, allowing then a 20-minute break before normal mfw begins at 10.30. The same login details apply ([zoom.us/j/786763002](https://zoom.us/j/786763002), no password required).

**Meeting for worship for business** is due to be held (by Zoom, of course) on Sunday 14 June (time and agenda to be announced) and

**Area Committee Meeting**, through the same medium, hosted by Croydon Friends. The primary function of AMC is to plan the following area meeting, which doesn't take place till 20 September. All who are in membership of SLAQM are welcome to attend. (Zoom details as above.)

## Love to all

Elders and overseers have been meeting weekly online to review the life of our meeting and its members, to whom they take this opportunity of sending their love and good wishes. If you have been adversely affected financially by the current situation please don't hesitate to contact our clerk of overseers, Margie Ashley, with relevant details so that we may consider how best to help.

## Collections

**Collecting in June: 7** Quaker Work at Home and Abroad, **14** Children's choice, **21** Open (tba), **28** Brummana High School. For Quaker work at home and abroad you can donate via <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/533#!/DonationDetails>. Alternatively, and for other beneficiaries, you may donate via the meeting and the treasurer will forward your donation. To do that please make a BACS transfer using the following details:

Account name: Croydon Quaker Meeting  
Sort code: 08-90-79  
Account number: 5007 8529

For Payment Reference, if you can fit your chosen beneficiary into the pathetically small number of characters allowed, do so. Otherwise enter 'see email' or similar and send an email to Croydon treasurer with your instructions. Further information at <http://croydonquakers.org.uk/collect.php>

**The deadline for the July edition is Sunday 28 June 2020**  
**Please give, send or email contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to Gillian Turner Tel 07805087981 email [gillianturner033@gmail.com](mailto:gillianturner033@gmail.com)**

## The Bright Field

I have seen the light break through  
to illuminate a small field  
for a while and gone my way  
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl  
of great prize, the one field that had  
the treasure in it. I realise now  
that I must give all that I have  
to possess it. Life is not hurrying  
on to a receding future nor hankering after  
an imagined past. It is the turning  
aside like Moses to the miracle  
of the lit bush. To a brightness  
that seems as transitory as your youth  
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

***R S Thomas***