

#7

BOOK STUFF

Poems of the Week

Lockdown Blues?

'Going Places' by Lemn Sissay (b. 1967)

Another
cigarette ash
television serial filled
advert analysing
cupboard starving
front room filling
tea slurping
mind chewing
brain burping
carpet picking
pots watching
room gleaning
toilet flushing
night,
with nothing to do

I think I'll paint roads
On my front room walls
To convince myself
That I'm going places.

Thoughts on evolution

'Mrs Darwin' by Carol Ann Duffy (b. 1955)

7 April 1852.
Went to the Zoo.
I said to Him –
Something about that Chimpanzee over there
reminds me of you.

"No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting" Mary Wortley Montagu

Slogans for our times?

Ten years ago the novelist Douglas Coupland started creating slogans to capture contemporary life. In the midst of lockdown they seem spookily spot on!

**DOING NOTHING
HAS BECOME
VERY HARD
TO DO**

**THE PRESENT
AND THE
FUTURE ARE
NOW THE SAME
THING**

Source: The Guardian, Saturday 30th May 2020

Dear Diary

Samuel Pepys (1633 – 1703) is best-known for the diary he wrote for ten years from 1660-1669. He lived through and recorded extraordinary events including the Great Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of London in 1666. But what makes the diary gripping is that he also writes about how things affect him personally, as when he wonders how the plague will change fashion:

'Up; and put on my coloured silk suit very fine, and my new periwig, bought a good while since, but durst not wear, because the plague was in Westminster when I bought it; and it is a wonder what will be the fashion after the plague is done, as to periwigs, for nobody will dare to buy any haire, for fear of the infection, that it had been cut off of the heads of people dead of the plague' (Sept 3, 1665)

Maybe this could be a good time to start keeping a diary about what happens (and doesn't) day to day during lockdown and how you feel about it? Does it dominate everything or is there headspace for other things?

Whose diaries?

Match the quotations to the diary writers:

1. 'The old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born; now is the time of monsters.'
2. 'December 25, weight 140 pounds plus 42 mince pies. Alcohol units, oh thousands. BUGGER OFF!'
3. 'Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale.'
4. 'I have never seen a dead body or a female nipple. This is what comes of living in a cul de sac.'
5. 'If you live in a graveyard, you can't weep for everyone.'
6. 'Some people stand by you in your darkest hour while others walk away; only a select few march towards you and become even closer friends.'
7. 'Never forget that a saint is a sinner who keeps on trying.'
8. 'A casement violently opened just over my head, and a woman gave three frightful Screeches, and then cry'd Oh! Death, Death, Death!'
9. 'The best person I know is Myself.'
10. 'Will I ever be able to write something great, will I ever become a journalist or a writer? I hope so, oh I hope so very much because writing allows me to record everything, all my thoughts, ideals and fantasies.'

**EVERY DAY IS LIKE
SUNDAY
TUESDAY
FRIDAY
THURSDAY?**

- i. Jeffrey Archer, *A Prison Diary* (2003)
- ii. Jeff Kinney, *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (2007)
- iii. Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722)
- iv. Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl* [Anne Frank died in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in March 1945. She was fifteen years old.]
- v. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (1929-1935) [Gramsci was an Italian Marxist imprisoned by the Fascist regime]
- vi. Sue Townsend, *The Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 ¾* (1982)
- vii. Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996)
- viii. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* [Solzhenitsyn was a Russian novelist and political dissident who spent eight years in a Soviet labour camp]
- ix. Nelson Mandela, *Conversations with Myself*, 2010
- x. Robert Scott [of the Antarctic], *The Diary of Captain Robert Falcon Scott*, 1913



ANSWERS

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|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Gramsci | 4. Adrian Mole | 7. Nelson Mandela |
| 2. Bridget Jones | 5. Solzhenitsyn | 8. Daniel Defoe |
| 3. Robert Scott | 6. Jeffrey Archer | 9. Wimpy Kid |
| | | 10. Anne Frank |