



20 Poems for 2020

from the Pop-Up Poetry Club

Together! 2020

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Introduction

On 10 March 2020, Together! 2012 CIC launched a Join in from Home programme from our website www.together2012.org.uk.

This has included a comprehensive programme of home-based activities, linked to our Clubs year-round programme of creative workshops for Disabled people. We have also provided individualised support for our regular Clubs participants; Zoom-based Clubs; and a live-stream, Together Unlocked!, going out on YouTube three times a week. We invited participants to submit poems on the theme of 'Together' for this anthology.

The Together! 2012 Pop-Up Poetry Club began in 2013 with funding from the People's Health Trust. Since then we have delivered a weekly poetry workshop on a Wednesday morning from a range of pop-up venues. As with all of our Clubs, everyone is welcome, there is no need to book, and there is no charge. Since 2019 the Clubs programme has been supported by the **National Lottery Community Fund.**

We now employ two part-time workers, the international installation artist **Alison Marchant**, who leads the Clubs, and **Noel Guinan** who provides engagement support.

In July 2020, we were able to commission a bespoke system to enable us to re-open the Pop-Up Poetry Club as a phone-based group, that can also be managed without internet access. Many of our participants are digitally excluded, so Zoom was not a substitute. Now, Noel is able to phone participants and add them to a group call by 10.30am, our usual start time, and we pay for the participants' costs ourselves. Alison is then able to lead the Club as previously, with Noel supporting participants, and both assisted by our Chair **Julie Newman**.

The Pop-Up Poetry Club brings together Disabled people to read, write and perform poetry together. Club sessions include reading aloud poetry that participants have written or have enjoyed; taking part in breathing and voice exercises; and writing a poem on a theme during the session. We have been able to do all of this by phone still, with just the free hot drinks and biscuits needing to be supplied at home.

Of course, a free phone-based group is still not accessible to everyone, including myself as the Editor of this anthology. But our live-captioning service on Together Unlocked!, funded by **National Lottery London Emergency Fund**, has enabled Deaf and hard of hearing poets, and others like me with hidden communication impairments, to contribute here too. (Though my contribution is an older poem, because I felt it best expressed what I wanted to say.)

We hope you enjoy this collection, which is just a small sample of the wide range of poems being written at the Together! Pop-Up Poetry Club and by participants in our wider Join in from Home programme, from amateurs to professionals. If you are interested in joining us, email [**info@together2012.org.uk**](mailto:info@together2012.org.uk) We always welcome poems, filmed, recorded or in writing, to share on the Together Unlocked! live-stream.

With warm wishes for a creative and safe 2021.

Dr Ju Gosling FRSA

Artistic Director

Together! 2012 CIC

Fitting In

If we were squares

We could make up a Rubik's cube

But I would still not fit in

A bright silver in an orange side.

If we were sheep

We could form a flock

But I would still not fit in

A Jacob amongst the Merinos.

If we were seeds

We could make a garden

But I would still not fit in
A red poppy in a bed of roses.

If we were clouds
We could chase across the sky
But I would still not fit in
A thunderstorm amongst the Cirrus.

Let us instead make a quilt
With different patterns, shapes and
textures
Each piece with an equal place
Creating warmth and beauty together.

Ju Gosling aka ju90

Together

We will rise together
Each and every one of us
Holding a virtual hand
This ain't no disaster
It's a cleansing of the land.

Some may clap the NHS
And others bang their lids
People standing in the streets
Men, women, dogs and kids.

As air pollution decreases
The Himalayas emerge
Showing their strength and beauty
Secrets on the verge.

Clear waters now run in Venice
First time in an age
No more millions of tourists
A turning of the page.

Nature is now healing
From devastation caused by man
In a way it's payback time
It's all part of the plan.

Sadly, lives will be lost
From one thing or another
Hand gel can't save us all
And nor can the Holy Mother.

So what will get us through?
The power of the mind
Living in the moment

And always being kind.

A collective of positivity
Connecting to the source.
Being non-judgemental
Will keep you all on course.

So 'Breathe motherf*****r!'
Just like Wim Hof says,
And find a productive way
To while away the days.

Let us be creative
And discover who we
are
Everybody matters
Those close and those afar.

All rise together guys
And be a shining light
This time is a blessing
My love to you day and night.

Emily Bonner

together!

together unlocked!

is as

flexible

as leather.

I wouldn't be doing

so well

without Noel

Alison

Ju

Julie

Robin

and Josh

life would be splosh

and the other

together poets,

know it.

together is the

feather

in my cap.

Duncan Bridgstock

Together! 2012

Together is fun

Together has a lot of activities so you can take part

And there are a lot of people that come together

Some people I have never met

Like Duncan

I didn't know Duncan until I met him on Zoom

And now we are very good friends

And I think my family are very pleased

As I'm not at home getting bored.

Crystal Peasy

Together

Time in the house
Or on the doorstep
Going nowhere
Everyone eternally indoors
Together for now
Hoping for the future
Everyone wishing for a life
Returned or reimagined anew.

Taylor Henville

Together

What is together?

What is togetherness?

A thought?

A feeling?

An abstract state of being?

In uncertain times,

Our focus drifts from we to me,

Stuck inside with a sense of ennui.

But in order to fight the gloom,

The impending cloud of doom,

We must unite,

Act as a societal guiding light.

We must highlight the heroes,
Lift up those who are isolated,
Feeling cast aside like zeros,
Celebrate life and love,
Celebrate the bright and the good.

Together we can create,
A thought,
A feeling,
An abstract state of being,
Of strength,
Of might,
United despite.

Josh Surgeoner

No longer together

Happy, free and relaxing life
Moving around with partner or wife
Having good neighbours
Talking and laughing all hours
Sweet friends singing and dancing
Kind folks hooting and whistling
Roads, shops, pubs and trains
- regardless of bad weather and rain -
Are full of people busy and jolly
Moving around happily.

All this while we have been relaxed and
comfortable

But the News is horrible

Suddenly “Watch the TV”

“What is it Mummy?”

Asked my son with a learning disability

“What is it and why?”

You’re upset – not singing me the lullaby?

Dangerous germs are all over the air

Self-quarantine is not really fair

Wash our hands and use masks,

Gargle with warm salt water from the flasks

Stay indoor being curfewed and locked
down

This is the era and season to be always in a
night gown!

Paizah Malek Neave

Together

Together London came for sports in 2012, as did many other countries, and even 8 years on we are still Together.

Together is how we become, sometimes physically, sometimes mentally, even emotionally, at times all three ways. All our senses together.

Of course life gets hard, but we will get through when we are together as one with our inner self.

Getting together while staying apart, clapping for our key workers (minus the government), with the chance to be social we take even if it means only spaces available till 10pm. We still Get Together.

Everyone is individual and everyone is acting their way and let us remember that.

Time, something we don't respect enough,
tick tock goes your clock as you read this
and think.

Thinking about what you are reading,
listening to it in your head. In your head
there lies a maze of cells and electrical
energy.

Healthy, am I? I guess so, I'm still here,
more than likely writing another piece while
you're still reading this, notice, you sped up
a bit, thinking 'oooh I want to read the rest
and the next piece', don't worry you're
more than half way through this, don't
worry, this helps my mental health, sorry
you can't see below my surface, my mental
health is mine and remember not
everything is visible.

Equally, that's how I would love to be
treated, will this ever be the case? What is
equal, what is normal, lots of love and hugs
are felt along with the rest of life?

Ready, ready to go, go out where?, go
inside instead, go to bed.

We are ready when all our senses are together, the more support the better, going on forward together, the best way is together.

Even if we are apart physically, remember we are together, together key workers work, together is the way we learn, remember those working together for us, let's come together for them, and together we will have our best lives.

Blake Jarrette Gibbons

Together Forever

Together we are strong
Together we can
We can make it
The sun is shining
In the sky
The birds are singing in the sky
Children are playing
And going to school
We made that happen together
We are best friends together forever.

Ellen Goodey

Together

In a Brummie accent like in the advert
Everybody say “We want to be together”
Together. “We want to be together”
Together. We stand together
Stand together. Together
Sit to face each other
Facing one another
Talk about the weather
Like strangers becoming friend
Friends becoming lovers
In a Brummie accent everybody say;
“We want to be together”
Together. We mingle together
Together. We become like one another
Together. We speak for one another

Speak for your comrades. Brother
Like you alone can group together
You and me will work this thing together
In a Brummie accent everybody say;
“We want to be together”
Together like this together like that
Two words that go together
Together we get it together
Today’s the same, tomorrow’s a change
Come on let’s get it together
Come on let’s get our world together
All together in a Brummie accent say
“We want to be together”
And let’s say it now together
In our own time but together
Like its a new rhyme together
And we’ll speak these lines forever
It will sound fine together

We'll get along strong together
Everybody in a Brummie accent say.....

Richard Downes

No space

When people are together there's not
enough space

There's no space on the yoga mat

There's no space in the house

When people are together and I am tired.

But when we are together I am fine

I'm happy when it's nice

When we are walking together

Bowling with my friends

Happy together.

Pritesh Patel

WHY TOGETHER?

Why together is important?

Do you understand what together is?

TOGETHER

No need to answer.

BUT

Together is one community.

TOGETHER

To support each other.

To care for each other.

To avoid fighting and war

To avoid politics and injustice.

Do you get it?

TOGETHER

Peace, love and freedom.

To be happy, laugh and relax.

Together is one community.

Together forever.

TOGETHER.

Sahera Khan



Waiting



to go out,



by Sterre Ploeger



All of us



are meeting



on the computer.



We are all



happy.



Waiting



to go out.



No!



We are



not



together.



No



meeting.



Not



going out



for dinner.



No



dancing.



Not



happy.



Angry



and sad.

Waiting to go out

All of us are meeting on the computer

We are happy

Waiting to go out

We are not together

No

No meeting

Not going out for dinner

No dancing

Not Happy

Angry and Sad.

Sterre Ploeger

Going Mad

Before the lockdown we used to be all together

But now we are all alone

We see each other on Zoom

But it's not the same

It's so sad

I miss my friends

I'm all alone talking to the TV

I think I might go mad.

Awa Jagne

Together

Together as young people
We can build a relationship
Together as adults
We can show love
All in the world
We can empower one another
We don't have to hate
Let's do it together.

Grace Fundu

Come dance together

When I am standing on the stage
And I tell them Good evening
And I'll dance to a Congolese song
I'll be dancing and everyone might say
He is a Congolese dancer
He is a superstar
Everyone will come down to the stage
And sing and dance together
And I'll say on my microphone
Everyone come dance together.

Glory Sengo

Words For Together

Collaborative Innovation

And Independence

Hopefulness

Thoughtfulness

Kindness

Consideration

Unity is Strength

Pushing Boundaries

Creating Change.

Alison Marchant

Pull Together

Let's all pull together
And help one another
Now times are bad.

Let's be kind
And loving
And respectful.

Let laughter be around
And smiles
To brighten up our lives.

We need to try and be positive
Even though life is so upside down.

I know there are days
When we don't feel good
But let the sunshine through our hearts
And know
There are good times to come.

Dawn Barber

Together We Will Out

Turning our attention to the absence of
symbiosis

A waterfall with no water is just a wall of
rock

A movement without a generation is a
vacuum from hope

An orchard without a snake a fallacy, but

Together we are not just a part we are a
force

Is it possible to be a harbinger of
merriment?

A portent for the indolent to get off their
arses

To care for community, for solidarity, for
humanity

And back to symbiosis, a bi-curiosity of
indulgence and lust

To forgotten moments of wisdom and
wander that exists in a realm

Nay, a reality of intellectual inequality borne
upon clouds of delusion

Hoisted by their own petard the denizens
of class collapsed by an omnipotence

As together we are struck by a vandallous
infection

Inalienable rights revisited in the dust of
yesterday's parties

Inalienable rights revisited in the dust of all
tomorrow's parties

Who would have thought, I say again, who
could have thought?

The product of a splenic dystopia will
cleanse the walls of slogans of capital

Stupefying the masses into a frenzy of
luxurious hopefulness

Yet with every fibre of the fabric of a fanatic
My utopia, myopia assuaged, together we
will out, Together! we will be whole again.

Robin Surgeoner

Together

Before and after.

Sunshine and rain.

Sweet and sour.

Again and again.

Poetry comes in many sizes...

Verses large and verses small.

Words that sing in many guises,

Opposites attracting, short and tall.

Poles apart that push, then pull...

Seeming empty, then so full.

Is it up, or is it down?

Is it night or is it day?

In the country, or the town?

Is it working or at play?

Picking words to tell a story...

Writing forward then reverse.

Something that will shine with Glory,

Something subtle but in verse.

How to spin the words together,

Some are better, some are worse.

Is it bitter, is it sweet?

Is it open, or is it closed?

Is it head, or is it feet?

Is it top or is it toes?

Together we can make a change...

Using words to tell a tale.

Some we struggle to arrange,

Some will seem to work then fail.

How it looks, how it flows?

It's a story that just grows.

Julie Newman