

Limericks in Lockdown:

History repeats on itself – the first time as tragedy...



Each person may cast two votes. These need to be sent to mark.philp@warwick.ac.uk before the close of play on Wednesday 17th February – with the strapline ‘Limerick vote’.

Each limerick in this collection has a letter and number combination (eg A1, B2 etc) – the letter being the first in the first line – the number being their order as a subset of the alphabet. Their order is alphabetical and otherwise random.

To vote simply identify your

First preference:

Second Preference:

We begin this collection with a 'limerick epic'. Judges external to the Department have described this as a heartfelt work of staggering genius and deserving of a category of its own – which it thereby wins - but they ruled it out of contention with the other limericks on the grounds of a violation of the spirit of the limerick form (as set out and defended by Edward Learing, in *A Guide to the Platonic Limerick Form* (Middleton-at-Sea, 1898), vol iv, p. 864). It is included here as a warning against the temptations of versification for those of a fragile or febrile disposition.

The university has launched an inquiry into the amount of spare time that historians seem to have, as a result of discovering this contribution.



The Coroniad

Sing, Muse, of the coronavirus,
whose vicissitudes now inspire us
to set out in rhyme
how this miserable time
has dispirited, dismayed, and tired us.

Who was it who started this thing?
A dead bat and a dead pangolin?
It's a global affair,
It's just everywhere!
Unlike us – who now have to stay in.

We're teaching in Microsoft Teams,
It's hardly the stuff of our dreams.
The students are worried,
And we're far too hurried
To do much that's worthwhile, it seems.

My seminar plans are in tatters,
And the students begin to get at us.
In search of some calm,
I partake of the balm
Of the great man Spinoza's *Tractatus*.

“All is one,” the philosopher says.
That’s alright, but he’s not in this mess.
His idea of God, it
Is clever, but sod it—
It won’t help save our NHS.

There can’t be too long to hold out
Now the vaccine is being rolled out.
If the virus mutates
Then we’ll trust to the Fates
Or wait ’til it isn’t so cold out.

Every word that comes out of Chris Whitty
Makes life just a little more shitty.
But it still could be worse:
In the US they’re cursed
With a leader who’s like Walter Mitty.

Boris Johnson has now got his Brexit,
But everything else, he just wrecks it.
And he gives not a toss,
For it isn’t his loss
While the Tories won’t show him the exit.

The end isn’t anywhere near,
And the worst’s yet to come, it seems clear.
The kids are home-schooling,
My mind is unspooling,
And I’m not allowed out for a beer.

Yes I wish the virus would desist.
It will not be very much missed.
When the pubs are reopened
Then I’ll cease to mope and
Go out and get thoroughly pissed.

A1



A classical scholar named Boris
Delivered a lecture on Horace
If only he knew
MMW
We might have avoided this chaos

A2

An old man in forced isolation
Was searching for verse inspiration
He wrote three or four lines
Then cursed several times
And died in mid-peroration!



A3



A lazy incompetent Tory
Set out to win himself glory
His schemes for world-beating
Were just self-defeating
And that's not the worst of this story

A 4

A professor was teaching online,
Making points both astute and refined,
But with impact diluted,
By microphone muted,
Though their students did not seem to mind!



B1



Boris Johnson, our PM (ex-Mayor),
Sports a wig made of Trump's own fair hair,
But Donald has gone,
And Boris looks wan,
For where is the hair for repair?

B2

Boris Johnson and Warwick-grad Carrie
Thought this was the time they should marry.
But 'No!' cried the Gauleiter Priti,
And 'Fraid not', said mild Doctor Whitty,
'Till all Brits are jabbed you must tarry.'





FROZEN?

L1

In lockdown the WIFI is king
It's how we do everything
But when it goes on the blink
It creates a great stink
And all you can do is sing!

L1

Lockdown has transformed the classroom.
Online teaching is having a boom.
Teams, Tabula, Moodle,
The whole kit and caboodle.
But not that unsafe one, Zoom.



L2



Lockdown teaching is hardly a hoot,
And caring for children to boot!
Teams classes can be dour,
When filled every hour,
With the frantic cry: "YOU'RE ON MUTE!"

T1

'The vaccines are ours', cried all Brussels,
'We'll grab them with rule-books and muscles.'
But for all their great fuss
They'd just missed the bus
And lost all Ursula's tussles.



T2

There was a department at Warwick
Dispersed by a virus historic
There is a vaccine
But not that I've seen
Perhaps it is phantasmagoric?



T3

There once was a lass named Fiona,
Who lived in the town of Daytona,
She drank beer with lime,
It made her feel fine,
'Til a virus spiked all the Corona!



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T4

There was a young lady called Tabula
Her mind was decidedly modular
We thought she was thick
Until we got sick
And now we can't manage without her

T5

There was a young man called Dan Remmick
Who found himself in a pandemic
He turned to Foucault
But then thought, 'Pooh! No!'
'It's a vaccine we need, not polemic!'



T6

There was a young scholar in History,
whose location was shrouded in mystery
he could not be found
by man or by hound
But had become wholly virtual rather wistfully



W1

'We can have cake and eat it', said Boris,
Who claimed that the quote comes in Horace.
He said too that Ovid
Knew all about Covid,
So Classics and Cake give us solace.



W2

While reading my e-mail today,
I was surprised I'd been invited to play,
A limerick game,
With the stated aim,
Of alcohol in lieu of pay.



The End

.... although I am proposing to throw down the gauntlet to Graduates and Undergraduates to see if they can do better! So watch this space!