

# Twelve River RIPPLES

## Members' Poems



### **A Disrupted Sonnet for Strange Times**

Today takes shape – but it will shift  
as hours pass, numbers will change  
on the clock face to read back  
to front/upside down – time loses  
its own truth. We'll retreat, signing  
on a cave wall - our hands, a stick figure  
we can touch, re-touch, add, subtract  
another limb, wonder if it looks like us.

Is the truth still found inside our breath?  
We begin to wonder - or shall we lie down  
and let ourselves be counted by others  
(because the truth of it is we don't count).  
We'll watch the hours eat themselves  
and then see how the day turns itself inside out.

*Pam Job*

## Members' Poems

### Pleura

The diaphanous material swells,  
sags,  
collapsing like a punctured rascalion balloon.

The wave returns to shore before  
bellows deflate as the breeze moves on  
over the bronchial branches.

No clamour accompanies the depression.

*Leslie Cuthbert*

### Topical Tankas

Frost. A crisp, clean world;  
a brilliant crescent moon  
brightens the dark sky:  
that happy, healthy new year  
we all wished one another.

Cold comfort. In truth  
our world is crumbling, poised on  
the brink of ruin,  
crushed by a creeping virus,  
ravaged by global warming.

Should we rage against  
Covid, rage against earthquakes,  
shore up defences,  
put our trust in new vaccines,  
and applaud all our heroes?

Should we rage against  
governments, lobby MPs,  
write scathing letters,  
give way to hopeless despair –  
or should we embrace changes?

Time for reflection  
mocks us if there is no change,  
if there is no spark  
that ignites the groundswell of  
voices that clamour for change.

*Julia Duke*

# For a Ripple of Laughter

## Learning on the job



After months of continual and heavy use  
the pulp drier needed major repair.  
Deep in the bowels of the massive cylinder  
the apprentice was in his element,  
liquid metal and sparks flying everywhere  
as his oxy-acetylene cutter melted the holding bolts.  
Sudden darkness — the flame had failed.  
Turning to the distant hatch he shouted  
“I haven’t got a light, Tom” — a pause  
then the old fitter languidly suggested  
“Get one off your trousers boy”  
as flames started to creep up his leg.

*Ivor Murrell*