

The South Street Frontier

by

Paul Bowler

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We shared a street for fifteen years,
but not a postcode, or even a country
The top of the hill was in England,
Wales began just past the post office

Only in times of sporting rivalry
was it possible to define the border,
as St George prepared to descend
upon the Welsh Dragon of rugby or football

But it was all friendly enough,
and our community was happy, until that October day,
when under threat from an unseen enemy,
the boundary that split our road became physical

Overnight, half of us were turned into virtual prisoners
It was illegal to pop next door for a chat, or a cup of tea
I'd mowed Mrs Jones's lawn the week before
but I couldn't do that again, I guessed

From my landing window I saw
people up the hill going about their daily lives
doing very English things, like chatting freely,
and buying goods suddenly denied to us

Our movement was restricted,
whereas they could travel freely
The police could even turn us back
if we ventured over the line without good reason

We all knew it wouldn't last forever,
but for those few weeks during that autumn
although we were still neighbours,
it seemed we may as well be a thousand miles apart