

Someday By Steve Denehan

We are far removed from it all
or most of it
at least
there is still no cure
nor hint of one to come

someday our grandchildren will ask us questions
shaking their heads in disbelief
at how we used to hug each other on the street
how we would introduce ourselves
to *strangers*
with a handshake
how we would play when we were young
piggybacks, blood brothers
passing a can of Cidona between us on hazy summer nights
nights when we had no cause to doubt
that we would live forever

now, life is statistics
daily updates
phone lines humming with love, with hope, with, "Someday..."
now, my daughter practices smiling
with her eyes
so that people can tell she is happy
that she really is happy
underneath her mask

The Old Cowboy Pictures By Steve Denehan

My ringtone was muffled in my pocket
I slipped out the phone
looked at the screen

Dad

we went through it
the snooker, the virus
the weather, the virus
Christmas, the virus

“There is nothing for me now.
I wish there was a little white tablet
that I could take
and just slip away.”

it hung there
between us
father and son
I laughed
“Thanks a lot Dad!”
he laughed
“Oh yes, sorry, sorry, yes.”

we went on
his granddaughter, the virus
the garden, the virus
the football, the virus

prone as he is now
to repeating himself
he said it again

“There is nothing for me now.
I wish there was a little white tablet
that I could take
and just slip away.”

it hung there
between us
father and son
I laughed
“What about your cowboy pictures Dad?”
silence and static
“Dad, are you still there?”
silence and static
“Sorry, yes, ah yeah, I’d miss the old cowboy pictures.”

Christmas In the Year of the Virus By Steve Denehan

At the end
of a year like this
Christmas was a sigh
but we had made it
to watch her
stand outside the sitting room door
her hands clasped beneath her chin
shivering trembles
trembling shivers
almost not wanting to walk in
walking in

I am sure that the grass in our garden
the bushes, the trees
the hay in the fields for miles around
leaned towards our home
to bask in the spray of the dam-burst of joy
that came when she opened the door

daytime took the morning
soundtracked by gasps and laughs
phone calls full of love and talk
about the virus and Santa Claus and the virus

Christmas dinner was pizza
eaten in paper crowns
from Christmas crackers
bad jokes, good food

night-time took the day
the flames a lazy blaze
my daughter flickering
sad, a little
telling us that she doesn't want to go to bed
because then it will be over

Christmas, in the year of the virus
different in some ways
the same in others
better in most