Fear is a Bubble of One

Today I read 14 poems about plagues.

What else is a cat with 10 lives to do?

It won’t suffice to pick through our recent despair,

Let me look back, even better, compare

the pain of kin I didn’t know,

the sign on death’s door daubed long ago.

It’s just about conditions underlying.

Bring out your dead.

It’s just for the old, whose lives are for dying.

Bring out your dead.

Let out those with lives worth living!

Bring out your dead.

The real pestilence is fear.

Not me, not me - denial runs shallow.

Hands. Face. Space. Daub. Bell. Barrow.

I ponder, on 1348, in bubbles went peasants,

Fortune’s ancestors sowing seed into the present,

Imprinting their fears into future years of plagued generations.

Baking scones, pretending mum’s in a spa,

not a makeshift intensive care,

sucking and gasping to find scant air,

climbing walls for breath,

ripping clothes off to find that desperation is…everywhere.

Wondering if a nurse will stand beside my restless bed.

They might take me to the barrow, mistaken for dead;

Pronounced by aliens with doctoring beaks.

Tell your kin all the real things,

before you lay you down to sleep

And pray the Lord your soul to take,

the truth is that you might not wake

like Mo, or Jim or the sweet Asian auntie, or that man in the corner bed.

A life leaves behind a curtain.

Close the curtain, abracadabra, gone!

Close the curtain, abracadabra, gone!

And for my next trick, says the beak, as he scans the thinning ward.

I pretend to sleep, I’m not falling for that at all

I’m just not ready yet to take up the final call.

fear is a bubble of one; and of all.