

What is life? (A 2020–21 Victorian lament)

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What is life if you can't go to work?
 "Better than death," I hear some smirk.
 "I stand with Dan,¹ stay at home, stay inside."
 But what if your room is only 2 metres wide?
 An hour to exercise outdoors you may²
 And go to the park where the kids cannot play.^{3,4}
 "That's stage four. It's for your good, get a grip."
 The police are outside⁵ cracking C.H.O.'s whip.⁶

So where are we now, united as one?⁷
 The rich catch their yachts to have fun in the sun.⁸
 The borders are closed,⁹ and so are the schools¹⁰
 So parents at home are relaxing the rules.
 "In front of the television; just sit there!"
 "Fail grade 1? ... the devil may care."
 So what is life, if you're not really working?
 Be careful what's said, Big Brother is lurking!

So what is death in these pandemic times?
 Consider what's written in the following lines:
 Is it confinement to room with no air on your face?
 With no friend to hug, and not leaving your place?
 Is it crushing debt, and losing your job?¹¹
 With head in hands, ready to sob?
 Is it purpose lacking, and absence of meaning?
 Is there more to life than simply breathing?

The scientists say, "Just look at the numbers!"¹²
 But look at the calendar, look at the slumbers.^{13,14}
 The time spent in lockdown, the time isolate'
 Are times that one could spend with a mate
 Or friend, or fam'ly, or community.
 How long must we wait for immunity?
 So what is death if you can't go to work?
 "Better than 'life'," I hear some smirk.

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