

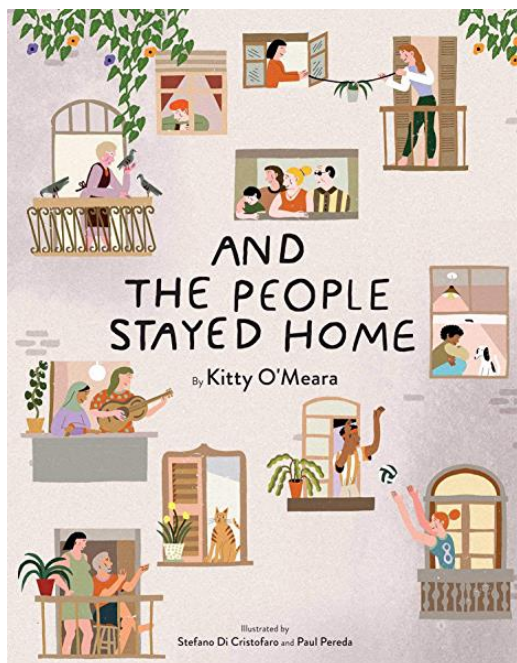


Mental Health Matters: A new year, a new hope?

January 1st, 'New year's day', is of course just another day ... but one on which many are prompted to reflect upon the experience of the year past and anticipate the year to come and maybe draw out some learning or hope to take from one to the other ... resolutions.

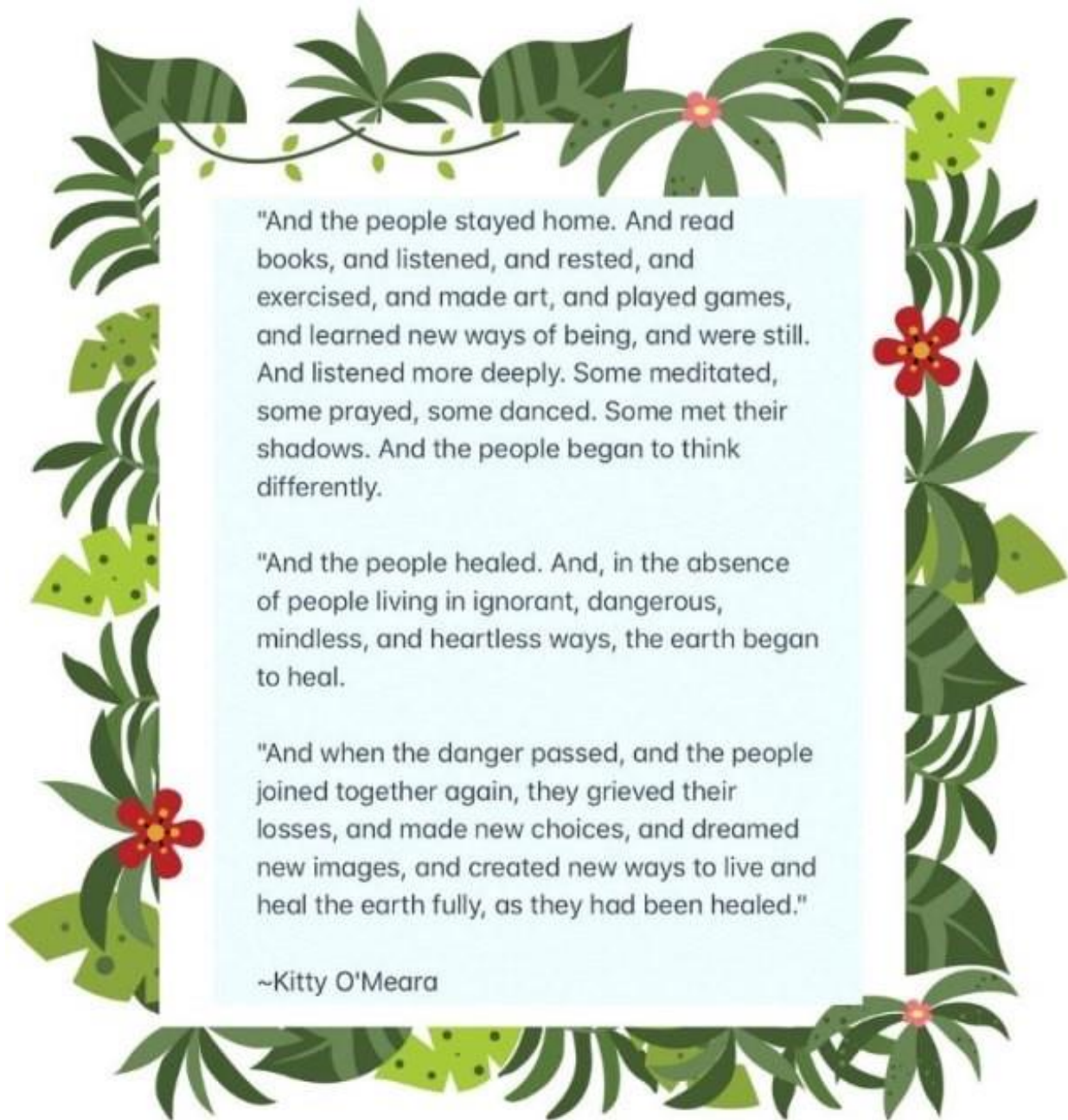
Our poets often catch and carry insights, learned from life, on how to live and how to live well. At their best they can help put words to our experience and give it back to us in ways that enable us to see something more clearly.

We now know a great deal about how people can catch things from one another in ways that damage our health, but hope can be contagious too. Former teacher and Chaplain Kitty O'Meara's



poem 'And the people stayed home' has 'gone viral' ... and been taken up around the world as a contagious articulation of hope. When writing last March, she cannot have thought these words would still be so relevant nearly a year on. Renamed, 'In a time of pandemic', her poem has been much shared and copied ... so much so it's now offered as a free printable graphic for those who may like it in their homes and has become a children's story book too.

<https://women.salvationarmy.org.nz/resource/time-pandemic-free-printable-poem>



"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

"And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

"And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed."

~Kitty O'Meara

It may seem like a romantic overstatement to consider that poetry can be 'life saving' but it can clearly have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing for some ...

<https://anthonywilsonpoetry.com/2014/07/06/the-most-popular-lifesaving-poems/> Do you have any poems that have helped and you'd like to share?

All good wishes

Glenn, Kate and Sophie, for BradTog MHM

Ps. Do let us know if you have suggestions or offers to make for future postings