

Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?
World Book Night 2020 - call for participation.

This year we have a selection of books and poetry nominated by Csilla Biro, Sarah Bodman, Nancy Campbell and Linda Parr. The exhibition, video and publication for 2020 will be coordinated by Sarah Bodman and Linda Parr.

In light of Nancy Campbell's book *The Library of Ice: Readings from a Cold Climate* (Scribner, 2018) we have decided not to travel. Instead we will be travelling virtually through fiction and libraries. Our set texts for WBN 2020 are: W. G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (New Directions Books, 1998), Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights* (Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2018), and the poem 'Questions of Travel' by Elizabeth Bishop (1911 –1979).¹ Please choose one or read them all.

In an interview with Tim Youngs (2018)² Nancy Campbell talks about the ethical, environmental, cultural and financial considerations of travel, and quotes a line from Elizabeth Bishop's 'Questions of Travel': "Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?". Nancy then goes on to say of writing *The Library of Ice*: "A lot of what lies behind my book is sitting in libraries and imagining other places.". Intertwining ideas of travel with personal reflection and historical facts as an inspiration for WBN had placed Sebald and Tokarczuk on the 'to do' list in 2018. But now we need to also consider whether it is necessary for us to travel at all. Can we sit in libraries with books and travel through our imaginations?

WBN 2020: the brief for participation.

We invite you to sit in a library (real or imagined), then send us a postcard describing where you are (text or image). The postcard you send can be an existing postcard, old or new, or homemade, you can write/draw/collage/type/print on one side or both, it's up to you. If you can't afford to post us a physical postcard then email Sarah the text or image you would have written or drawn on it and she will stick it onto a blank postcard (Sarah.Bodman@uwe.ac.uk please put WBN2020 in the subject line).

WBN United artists will exhibit all the postcards together over the month of April 2020 at Bower Ashton Library, UWE Bristol, UK. We'll make a pdf download catalogue of all the entries. We will also print a little folded keepsake/folio which will contain one copy of an editioned postcard produced by us, WBN United artists on 23/04/20 (typewriters, collage, rubber stamps etc.) and one of the submitted postcards. Each contributor will receive a little album/keepsake with our postcard and a postcard from someone else as a mail art exchange.

Send your postcard to: Sarah Bodman, CFPR, UWE, Bristol, Kennel Lodge Road, Bristol BS3 2JT, United Kingdom.

Three important things to note: 1) Please write your name and where you are posting it from clearly on the postcard. 2) Maximum postcard size is 15 x 10.5 cm. (3) Please email Sarah your name and postal address so we can send your copy of the mail art exchange keepsake: Sarah.Bodman@uwe.ac.uk

Nobody will travel except in their imagination, but we will all be collectively in the library. The deadline for receipt of postcards is Tuesday 31st March 2020.

¹ <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/questions-of-travel/>

² Tim Youngs (2018) 'Interview with Nancy Campbell', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 22:4, 406-419, DOI: 10.1080/13645145.2019.1606008. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2019.1606008>