

VISIBLY FADING

'I'm cross with god who has wrecked this generation.'

– John Berryman, *The Dream Songs* #153

Cross because it was all avoidable: no-one had to invent mobile phones or Facebook. Crosser still because my fingers are too big to use the keys and I don't understand why you'd want a music collection in your pocket, why you'd prefer to live life with a soundtrack rather than experience what's going on.

What's going on? Well, there's a pandemic spreading around the world, and food supply chains are becoming difficult to manage. We can't travel or visit each other, my whole world has become a TV and computer screen, family we video call about once a week if the internet holds up.

Who could imagine this dystopia? Who think that these fools might be in charge, democratically elected! Don't mind me, I'm grumpy and getting old; don't mind me, my hearing's gone, scratchy records still sound great. My books are foxed, my desk and study cluttered; unread books are piled up on the stairs.

This is the way the world ends: a quiet virus of despair.

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