

## In A Time of Distance

By Alexander McCall Smith

The unexpected always happens in the  
way

The unexpected has always occurred:  
While we are doing something else,  
While we are thinking of altogether  
Different things - matters that events  
Then show to be every bit as important  
As our human concerns so often are:  
And then, with the unexpected upon us,  
We look to one another with a sort of  
surprise;

How could things possibly turn out this  
way

When we are so competent, so pleased  
With the elaborate systems we've  
created -  
Networks and satellites, intelligent  
machines,  
Pills for every eventuality - except this  
one?

And so we turn again to face one  
another

And discover those things  
We had almost forgotten  
But that, mercifully, are still there:  
Love and friendship, not just for those  
To whom we are closest, but also for  
those

Whom we do not know and of whom  
Perhaps we have in the past been  
frightened;

The words *brother* and *sister*, powerful  
still,

Are brought out, dusted down,  
Found still to be capable of expressing  
What we feel for others, that precise  
concern;

Joined together in adversity  
We discover things we had put aside:  
Old board games with obscure rules,  
Books we had been meaning to read,  
Letters we had intended to write,  
Things we had thought we might say  
But for which we never found the time;  
And from these discoveries of self, of  
time,

There comes a new realisation  
That we have misused our fragile world,  
That we have forgotten the claims of  
others

Who have been left behind;  
We find that in our seclusion,  
In our silence; we commit ourselves  
afresh,

We look for a few bars of song  
That we used to sing together,  
A long time ago; we give what we can,  
We wait, knowing that when this is over  
A lot of us - not all perhaps - but most,  
Will be slightly different people,  
And our world, though diminished,  
Will be much bigger, its beauty revealed  
afresh.

## D-Day

By Barbara Phillips

No one knows the date of time  
Though many like to speculate  
No one knows the reason or rhyme  
Some come early  
Some come late  
We only know  
He calls us  
He calls us to His throne  
We only know  
He loves us  
And brings His children home.

## Give All to Love

By Ralph Waldo Emerson

Give all to love;  
Obey thy heart;  
Friends, kindred, days,  
Estate, good-fame,  
Plans, credit and the Muse,—  
Nothing refuse.

'T is a brave master;  
Let it have scope:  
Follow it utterly,  
Hope beyond hope:  
High and more high  
It dives into noon,  
With wing unspent,  
Untold intent:  
But it is a god,  
Knows its own path  
And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;  
It requireth courage stout.  
Souls above doubt,  
Valor unbending,  
It will reward,—  
They shall return  
More than they were,  
And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;  
Yet, hear me, yet,  
One word more thy heart beloved,  
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—  
Keep thee to-day,  
To-morrow, forever,  
Free as an Arab  
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;  
But when the surprise,  
First vague shadow of surmise  
Flits across her bosom young,  
Of a joy apart from thee,  
Free be she, fancy-free;  
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,  
Nor the palest rose she flung  
From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,  
As a self of purer clay,  
Though her parting dims the day,  
Stealing grace from all alive;  
Heartily know,  
When half-gods go,  
The gods arrive.