



A trip to the pharmacy, 31 March 2020

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31 March 2020 (17:30) I went to get my prescription earlier. Bizarre and stressful. So many people wearing masks and a leaden hush even on Camden High Street. People casting suspicious glances at each other and mostly attempting to make space. Or, as in the case of these two men, pushing past obstacles. I hope the policeman and the woman are ok, for all their sakes. I crossed the road instead.

A long queue outside Lidl blocks one side of the pavement, shoppers hugging the walls as far as they can. More masks and tension: this city isn't designed to allow people to spread out. More people outside Poundland: people who don't have electronic money. They use the cash they earn., which has to be spent in person. Mothers with children they can't leave safely at home.



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Finally I get to the pharmacy and take my place in my first socially-distanced queue. I take out my phone to record the experience and the man in front of me turns to see who's behind him. He grins behind the mask.

I check behind me and move a pace back to get the person behind me to move. I was already at social distance from the person in front but I can't think of another way to get them to move without a conversation at close quarters.



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Purchases complete, the journey home is a bit less stressful but it's hard to find a route. People appear from inside buildings and around corners, meaning the calculation is constant: and the road is still busy, limiting the space to move. People in this city just can't put the distance they need between themselves and others.



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