

Rodney Wood: Alive

i.m. Carla Scarano D'Antonio (1962-2023)

Most people I know are alive. They are grateful
when they wake to find they're still alive
And I am grateful, too, when Frances wakes me from my dream
where I just keep falling and falling, with both my wings blown off,
falling and screaming and waving my arms
above the ground that will swallow me up

This morning I told Alexa "I'm glad I'm alive"
I spoke to my daughter, Claire, who said
"I can hear my girls upstairs, they're alive"
My son, Simon, was on a video call, he's alive
I phoned Greg and David, they were both alive
and then I checked my Facebook feed: Carrie, Peter, Nick, Maureen –
all of them still alive. My nephew posted
If a necrophiliac's on the loose, all you can do is look alive

I walked down the stairs and kicked the dog, he was alive
My brother-in-law Bob told me his sister, Janet,
was in the kitchen and is alive
My old mentor Bill spoke from the ether
"You've got to push yourself to be alive
and, remember, poems are always alive"

Sam sent me a thumbs-up to show she's alive
Until quite recently David and Grant were alive
though the other day I learned that Carla had died
Before that she was also alive

I've heard on the internet that Elvis and Tupac,
Amy, Marilyn and Princess Di are all alive
Reportedly dead, Macca, Drake and the Rock are alive
In spite of infections and a few near misses, I'm alive
and don't worry if Zombies are prowling around
They're only half-alive

When they buried Schrödinger
in his closed coffin, he had a 50/50 chance
of being either dead or alive
Even Geoffrey, the homeless guy
outside Starbucks, is alive
Through force of habit, most of us go on being alive
We do it as long as we can
and thank whichever god is listening
because gods too are alive

So why not jump and shout,
in a mad scientist sort of way, "I'm Alive! I'm Alive!"
Walk around and admire the world –
its animals, birds and people, even the lousy weather
They are all very much alive
Mountains, seas, forests –
they all walk with you and are also alive
There is love, hope and joy and, don't forget,
while we have them we are still alive

Rodney Wood worked in London and Guildford before retiring. He lives in Farnborough and is co-host of a monthly live open mic in Woking as well as one on being a Stanza Rep. He has been published in many magazines including *The High Window*, *Black Nore*, *The Lake* and *jerryjazzmusician*. He has published two pamphlets, *Dante Called You Beatrice* (2017) and *When Listening Isn't Enough* (2021).