Engage Day Crowdsourced Poem

We’re getting used to being back together
a term that doesn’t have a name yet
now we’re almost back to normal
a lot has happened:
consistently challenging ourselves
removing firewalls
lots of coffee
to explore participatory research
with the public, with communities.

We look at the gaps
missing data
one of the hardest nuts to crack
the whole piece around impact
we’re facing huge challenges in the future.

We’re here to solve a problem:
that science is for everyone.

The first thing we have to ask ourselves is why:
and how the why informs us of what to do
a question on every grant proposal:
who needs to be involved and how?
whose voice is amplified?
who’s viewpoint is front and centre
who’s is being suppressed?
what’s gone wrong in this engagement?
who is here, and who is not here?
how can we share power?
I don’t think I’ve answered your question.

We were using a method:
people have to be involved from the beginning to the end
being in dialogue with each other
whose science is it anyway?
None of us can be an expert
as much as all of us can be an expert
looking with them
through their eyes
through their voices
helping them to tell their story
at the heart, everyone participates
the minutiae of people’s lives
how we bring those systems together
they finished the experience and they were all best friends.

Push ourselves to go to the utmost frontiers
the most extreme form of participation:
being more open to fail
it’s almost like there is no end
it’s circular
people want to join the journey
or leave the journey
at different points
no one’s going to stop you doing a good feedback loop
we are fluid as a community.

I’m going to answer your question now:
we are in some ways all performers
everyone is sitting in a circle
welcome them
encapsulate this enthusiasm:
the whole is greater than the sum of its parts
synchronise and blink with each other
you’ve got to move at the speed of trust
the magical world of storytelling
and case studies that have been peer reviewed
a whole spectrum of creative and participatory methods
far-reaching, co-owned research
process is as important as the impact
understanding the balance between talking and listening.

What will we do with it now that we’ve built it?
What is the end?
We learn from reflecting on our experience
the final question of the afternoon:
I’d like to hear from you.

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