

In our own words

Poetry by people with a lived experience of
mental health and learning disability services



No Doubt by Jeremy Syros Troughton
HPFT Theme: Resilience

Introduction

About this book

We are very impressed with the writing in this book which has been selected by the Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) Art Panel and so we would like to share it with you.

The writers have a lived experience of mental health and learning disability services and their work is personal to their own experiences.

We have illustrated the book with images from our art collection, though the artwork is not related to the poems.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this book and hope it will inspire you too.

The HPFT Art Project

The HPFT Art Project has given people with a lived experience of mental health and learning disability services the opportunity to have their artwork (drawings, mixed media, paintings, photography, poetry and prints) displayed in our buildings.

The artwork, on themes of: Hope, Resilience, Empowerment, Choice, Memory, Unspoken, Stillness or Journey, was submitted to an Art Panel made up of representatives from service users, staff, young people, carers, and the University of Hertfordshire. The panel decided which pieces would be suitable for purchasing by HPFT. The artwork is displayed in the Trust's premises, and this book is part of our art collection.

Artwork from our collection has also been shown in exhibitions at The New Maynard Gallery in Welwyn Garden City, and the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield.

For more information about our art collection visit www.hpft.nhs.uk/get-involved/art-project/

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**The HPFT Art Panel
February 2019**

Behind the Façade

By Alyson Torns

behind the facade
lies a fractured self
imposed upon
by those who know
no difference
blighted by a lack
of sight
machines
controlling
wounded soul
needs healing
dealing with past
hurts revealing
and reliving
the trauma
to be opened
up and cleansed
takes time
bargaining
with a new
emerging self

Words Fail

By Alyson Torns

words fall
like leaves
onto the page
at what stage
do you release
the emotions
deciduous trees
have no choice
but to shed
their leaves
conifers hold on
you've clung on
for too long
to the grief
beneath
the surface
it's time to
let go



On Solid Ground by Bernadette Martin
HPFT Theme: Stillness

The Sea
By Frances Thomas

Relentless, cruel sea,
Waves pounding with such almighty power
And strength
Onto the shore.
This sea, timeless and destructive,
An ocean of merciless movement,
Yet, seductive and secretive.
Passionate, unbridled sea,
Unfettered and unbounded.
Timeless, ageless, mysterious
But without heart
This powerful sea.

Can you re-write history?
By Alyson Torns

can you re-write
your past history
where do you draw
the line between
what hurt you
who betrayed you
what destroyed you
tracing where it all began
searching the map
of your life
tracing those steps made
unaware of how lost
you were then
and now you find
yourself in
a transitionary phase
entering into a new
continent working
on self-care
and self-respect
battling with the past
voices daily
remembering
you are a survivor
today

Silence at 4am
By Frances Thomas

There is no sound
But the rhythmic ticking of the clock,
I can touch the stillness;
This peace is ethereal,
Quite mystical,
But totally without fear.
Yet, in here, is the greatest music
Known to mankind.
A music that no aria can match
Here, within the stillness of my heart.

The Crocus
By Frances Thomas

This pale pink crocus
Emerging slowly,
Naked and unprotected,
To be mutilated by life's frosts.

Undefended from the vicious pecks
Of blackbirds,
Indiscriminate in their lust
For prey.

Blackbirds, please fly south,
Frosts, proclaim your thaw,
And life, leave the sweet crocus
To beautify.

The Garden of My Heart
By Frances Thomas

Within this deep, deep peace,
I have found the garden of my heart.
A gentle place, tranquil,
That appears on the surface, quite still.
Yet underneath that freshly tilled soil
There is abundant, vibrant life
Ready to emerge,
From what
Was once,
Wilderness.

Snapshot
By Ian Yearsley

Sometimes I think my ageing Dad was right
When he looked on with sadness
At the changing world around him
And said: 'I'm OK, I'm on my way out.
It's the young I worry about.
They've got it all to come.'
And many times like him I've wished
That I was on my way out too.

And yet I should not be so keen
To wish my fleeting life away.
For other times I understand
My life is like a photograph,
A snapshot of our Earth
At one specific point in time.
And, like a camera at a wedding,
The camera of my eyes and memory
Captures and records what I encounter
In one instant -- not before, not after --
And then the instant's gone.

Will anything of true importance
Happen in my allotted years?
The advent of space travel perhaps?
The start of major global climate change?
I need to live longer than my life to know.

One thing is certain -- I am on my way out.
And it sometimes makes me sad because
There's so much more to see and understand
Than I will ever get to set my lens upon.



Nurse in a yellow dress by Peter Lauer
HPFT Theme: Resilience

An Unspoken Telephone Conversation
(A poem for two voices)
By Ian Yearsley

I [He]

My heart sings when the phone rings and it's you.
Your soft voice winds its way into my head.
I feel my lust for Life start to renew

And brush aside all thoughts of being dead.
I wonder when we talk if you suspect
You help me face my past and look ahead?

Are you aware that you have this effect
And often save me from some sad demise?
By simply speaking softly you protect

Me from myself and all those childhood lies
That even at this distance cause me grief
And bring sad tears so often to my eyes.

A happy talk with you, however brief,
Instills in me a new-found self-belief.

II [She]

My firm voice searches far inside your head
For signs of the unnatural or absurd.
Do you still harbor thoughts of being dead?

I linger over every single word.
Is there a clue in anything you say?
How far have your intentions been deferred?

By listening to what I've said today?
Our phone calls tell me more than you suspect,
Revealing things you'd rather not betray.

Are you aware that they have this effect?
Or that I need to know you feel no grief?
My vigilance, unnoticed, goes unchecked,

Providing clues about your self-belief
And moments spent with you, however brief.

III [He-She, alternating]

My heart sings when the phone rings and it's you.

My firm voice searches far inside your head.

I feel my lust for life start to renew.

I'll help you face your past and look ahead.

I wonder when we talk if you suspect?

I'd give my life to stop you being dead.

Are you aware that you have this effect?

I look for clues about your self-belief.

On some subconscious level we connect.

I cannot bear to see you in such grief.

Perhaps one day I'll say I feel this way.

I love these talks with you, however brief.

You know I'm ill...

... although I never say.

[Both]

I cannot live without you one more day.

St Peter-on-the-Wall, Bradwell
By Ian Yearsley

How many men have sought such solitude
As I seek now in this same sacred spot?
Such stillness, silence, timelessness cannot
Leave pilgrims unaffected, unimbued

With healing feelings in this special space,
So spiritual, so calm, so awe-inspiring,
As kneeling and appealing and desiring
They seek salvation in their Saviour's place.

Outside, the sea and sky merge into one,
The chapel looms up lonely from the flat,
Like Roman sentries stood here centuries back,
A silhouette against the setting sun.

In busy, modern lives we build a home,
But peaceful isolation's our true friend.
My search for solitude is at its end:
I've finally found a place to be alone.

The Tourist
By Ian Yearsley

The journey starts and there's much to admire
As I set out with hope upon my tour,
But as to why I came here, I'm not sure.
Perhaps it was from passion burnt like fire?

Perhaps it was a thirst for me to share
Some joy someone one day experienced then,
A yearning one, through me, could feel again,
Or am I just a sign that they were there?

I've always questioned everything I do,
But now I just experience and enjoy,
For that was what they wanted for their boy
The day they knew their dream was coming true.

Why ever I'm here, I'll never know the reason.
I just enjoy it, like the summer season.

Aspirations

By Liz King

Always having been at the top
It's an awfully long way to drop
No motivation or direction
This is hard I need dedication.

I wanted to be a great success
So always tried to do my best
This now is just not enough
God, it really is very tough.

I can do it, I must believe
This is the only way I can achieve
But piece by piece inside I hail
That yes, I will completely fail.

I try and try to aspire
Knowing that I'm jumping into the fire
A fire which could burn and scold
I feel as though I am gonna fold.

This is what I must not do
I am gonna have to push on through
To be the best I can again
Only I will know the pain.



Put Today's Fears to Rest by Ruth Clarke
HPFT Theme: Hope

Stillness
By Liz King

I love it here, so peaceful and so still
Life slows down, time to stop
Breathe, Big deep breath, Stop
Take in the silence and the stillness
Everything comes to life again
Listen, to the birds, the insects, they're all here
So am I, relax and just be.

Hope
By Liz King

Wow it's amazing

What a change in me,

I thought it wouldn't happen

Just how can this be?

Feeling as though

That big weights finally lifted

A big thank you to everyone

Of those of you so gifted.

Finally feeling

As though I am whole,

Annoyed that this illness

A few years it has stole.

It's been a hard journey

Long roads I have walked

Being listened to sometimes

And sometimes I talked.

Thank goodness I got here

My life is OK

Lets hope by tomorrow

It's really here to stay.

Having something to hold on to

Only you can do it

Put aside all those worries

Everything will work out.

Stillness

By Louisa Jane Shiels

And there it was. STILL.

The room had stopped spinning.

I had received help, and I could feel my recovery coming on.

The whirling radio? I tuned it to Classic FM.

Chips down the chippy? This would be swapped for a rainbow of vegetables, roasted in the oven.

I had found my Inner Peace.

Through volunteering, meeting friends, we would become each other's biggest cheerleaders.

Finally, I was becoming my best self.

Finally I was STILL.

Journey

By Louisa Jane Shiels

It seemed like everybody had boarded the red double decker bus.

Everybody, but literally not me.

As the bus roared away, I was alone, with nothing but my thoughts steering me on.

I discovered that this was my journey towards my independence.

It was a journey to relish and realise the only destination was me.

I had missed that bus, but, more importantly I was a diamond in this rough, rough world.

And now?

With help I could live to re-tell this story of my journey, time and time again.

Peer to Peer.



Dragonfly at rest by Vicki Wells
HPFT Theme: Stillness

Unspoken Bravery

By Louisa Shiels

Waking up. Feeling quite low. So unsure how your day will go.

Feels like everything is shifting, but your feet are stuck in the mud, You may no longer like yourself, or be able to draw comfort from a hug.

Take some time to Open your window, breathe in the fresh, dewy air. And watch your soul glow with this small task of self-care!

Bake a banana loaf, enjoy sweet smells, as the bananas and mixed spices fill your home. Lift your head from the ground - a new culinary talent has been found.

But don't pressure yourself. You may be overwhelmed by life, and who can blame you, when in your mind lives so much trouble and strife.

Trust in yourself - never give up hope. There are people who are trained to help you cope.

Be kind to yourself, life is never simple, as the REM song goes 'Everybody Hurts'. Even though your problems are tall, know, there is a lighthouse, if you seek, just waiting for your call. Until then, your Unspoken Bravery shall lead the way. #Hold On.

Never Still – Finding a way forward

By Louisa Shiels

Sitting all alone in my uni room 'the box.'

No one here, cradling myself back and forth, so scared of.....me?

I'm clock-watching. It's now past midnight. I can hear sounds of joy, laughter. Students arriving home, high on life. I'm a world away, so tearful, so fearful. Crying.

I walk around in a daze, simply not fitting in. Is this just a phase, right? More crying into the night.

Should I drop out? And leave this place?

I need hugs, and warmth, and kindness. Who shall I tell? Tears falling massively into this giant wishing well.

NEXT DAY.....

I wake very late, no bath, just on autopilot. I manage to get a comb through my matted hair. I have reached rock bottom. So scared.

I refuse to stay like this. What is life? I didn't get the memo? TIME TO GET HELP.

I refuse to stay still, not me, not anymore.

But am I strong enough, to just leave university? How to handle that? I shall be the talk of the town? People will gossip, look at me with a frown.

I take myself to the doctors, I can't live like this.

AND NOW.....

My journey from the stillness, dark to light – it is finally, truly happening! Evolving all the time, baby steps.

Some medication. Advice from my dietician, dusting off the old cobwebs as I brisk walk amongst all the different trees in the forest.

The sun is coming out, and I stop at the ice cream van, with myself selecting an orange juice lolly – super good as I will get less dehydrated from the medications, the meds that take the edge off.

I made it through the winter of my life. Just ask for help, be persistent, and you shall find the strength and courage to come out winning, and roaring like the beautiful lion you are, ready to restart your life. Take care.

Aged
By Mike Loader

When your youth has taken flight,
and your strength loses its might,
might it be time to reflect on life's journey?

The days we have had, many happy, a few sad,
but most glad, to live a life that lives,
so full of joy, and love and all it gives,

A baby cries, your heart sighs,
but the wheel that is life keeps turning,
and your soul must keep yearning,
to fulfil it's destiny, what shall it be?

Can we see our destiny, or that we could, should we see?
or just let life be and do to us what must be?

For as the seed we have sown it is said we shall reap,
for some that will bring joy for some they shall weep,

Can we foretell what will be our heaven or hell?
for these are places we dream, are they real or part of life's scheme?
to keep us from fear and to love those that are dear?

Do we start to regret and try to forget,
or give joy and start to love life anew?
What shall we do? I wish, I wish I knew.
I know, I know, what I will do, I will love.

A Birds Song (no relationship to Sebastian Faulks)
By Mike Loader

The spectrums of our emotions
and all the correlations of our relations,
to feel what we feel inside, we can't hide .

Our emotions, our commotions
our elations and deflations,
are they the real masters of our relations,
to this world?

Or is that just absurd?
Can it be heard?

Birdsong, unfurled in the near peaceful night?
To caress us goodnight, no fright, no tear, nor fear
of what might be to blame for our sad frailty,
or is that just our false, humility,
or our hearts real humanity?

Just to rest and to see what the morning will bring,
and listen to the birds sing and perhaps a new birds song?
I hope we are not wrong,
to believe, we can achieve, our inner peace.

After Bradford Road
Anger will fade
new goals will be made
we cannot return to the past
and let our anger last
it will only dash our dreams
of what our past really means

Rejoice in what was good
to make life what it should
to be happy in the here and now
and not bow to regret for the past
these negative feelings will pass

We will all age in our own way
who is to say what will be our way?
as we tread life's path
all we can do is hope and live and laugh?

When we laugh we forget life's stress
and we can re-address what it means to us,
to love and to live and to give.

If we didn't laugh we might cry
and life would pass us by
in distress and despair
with nothing to care
about the past or what will be
to look forward to on our life's journey.

Fear of what?
By Mike Loader

Our life and all the strife around us, which just damns us and confounds us?

To ponder what will be our destiny and what it all will mean to be?

In the shadows lurk our fears unknown,
Will they be known, before we are but bare bone?

The answers to the purpose of our life,
Our being and all our strife?

Life, the sky, be free!

Take love of our reality!



Life Renewed Restored
by Tricia Perera Freeman

An Ode To Age and Death

By Mike Loader

The more I get old the more I feel the cold,
Until I am so cold that no longer will I be old.
When I was young
When I was young, I was unafraid,
But now I'm old I fear I cannot be saved,
from all of the anxiety of our society.
Too full of greed and lust to succeed,
to be better than our peers,
or so it appears,
just highlights my fears.

And it occurred to me
And it occurred to me late one day,
that I felt my Demons had gone away.
And the pit that they had dug for me
I could no longer see.....!
I climbed in to the light that had been lost to me,
for so long, I could not see what was wrong,
or right..... or my destiny?
The dark clouds had dragged me down,
to a place where I didn't want to be,
So full of lethargy and apathy, no energy!
To blind to see the world as it should be,
So full of joy and light and beauty!
I've felt things that I didn't want to be,
I've seen things that didn't belong to me!
But now I thank life that I want to embrace it,
stare it in the face and take it!

Out of the black cloud,
that so, so sad for some becomes a shroud,
I feel the light!
But back again
And then my Demons came back,
to attack and once again to cause me pain
and put me on the rack, and yet again,
I must try to regain my whole life back.
Back to a state to feel free,
and be happy with my lot and all that I have got,
to last me through my life and all of its strife

Unspoken Understanding

By Ian Yearsley

We share unspoken words my love and I
And love unspoken, through our circumstances,
But I know when I look into her eyes
Or snatch some loving, quickly-glimpsed half-glances

That she feels how I feel and in her smile
I see my joy reflected on her face
And transmit loving thoughts to her a while
To bolster sweet remembrance of the place

Where we spent time together unobserved,
Ecstatic in our union, free as birds,
Stayed separate from a world that's too demanding

And kept our special silent bond preserved.
I do not need to speak the three key words:
We have a deep unspoken understanding.

3rd Movement, Rachmaninov 2nd Symphony

By John Smith

I just want to tell you how I felt when I heard your story.
Of course no one can really imagine how you felt
When they trashed your earlier work.
You couldn't believe in yourself any more,
Your sense of yourself was in tatters.
There was no way out of that sense of failure

And then the healing came,
The soft listening.
The other dimensions of the mind
The strong depths stirring deep within you.

And you tried again
First at the piano and then ten years later in the second symphony
And all that journey, all that questioning and self-doubt
Came pouring out.
You needed to express the deepest feelings of your heart

It wasn't literal,
But it was a landscape of the mind
That I walked in, thinking of you
And all you had been through,
And come out of,
In a melody on the violin.

Almost After Depression
By Mike Loader

MIND, so kind, to remind, me,
of the happy life that once belonged to me.
I'm sure it will be again
and I know you will help me retain,
my hope and heal my distress
and redress all that I need to progress,
to a life that lives and loves and all that that gives.
I feel depression has almost past
but I can't let all my anguish last,
to move on to a better place is what I must face,
today and tomorrow, let there be no more sorrow.
The future indeed is where our lives must lead.

Mirror
By Mike Loader

Can we step back from the mirror of our life and see
what once gave us glee?
or what has lead us to our present misery?
introspection, dissection, reflection on our past
how long will it last, to be, before we feel free?
free from the shackles of time which bind us
as they just remind us,
that we are not yet free, from our life's frailty?

It may bring tears to our eyes, to realise,
that we can be, to live in a different way,
that may, just set us free.

But we must still strive and have hope that one day
we will cope, with all of our doubt and have hope.
of past pains to be long gone, and our life not forlorn,
but our future to live and all that we can give,
to each other as sisters and brothers,
for peace to ourselves and all others,
must be, our priority.

Day to day
By Mike Loader

The Blackbird sings, it flaps its wings, life's pendulum swings, this way and that we can't stop that.

We must follow the flow or just feel so low.
We can't know which way our life will go.
Will we be happy or will we be sad?
If you try too hard to think, it will just make you mad.
Mad at the times you should have felt strong,
Mad at the times you should have felt wrong.
to ignore what was right just to be,
and just to relax and just feel happy.

Too concerned about life's woes
and trying to guess your friends from your foes
Who will help when you need it most?
Who will stand back and just let you coast,
down the road to self-destruction?

We need that precious instruction,
from in our heart, to start, to feel glad.

Not sad, but about life as it should be, to be free, loving and happy.

Drink
By Mike Loader

I know I drink too much,
It's my crutch,
To help me limp through life
and all its strife
It gives me relieve from all of the grief
that would overwhelm me
and damn me to a life with no belief that better times might come,
as they did when I was young,
Then too naive to concede that life was powered by greed,
for the rich few,
that have no care for you,
but who succeed and feed on life's greed.

Getting old
By Mike Loader

As we approach the end of our life and all of its strife,
is it driven by our lifelong stress,
that we must try to readdress,
all of our faults that we have known?
How our life may have been and grown?

So shallow, that we couldn't have seen,
to have striven above, and to love,
in peace and to release all of our fears?

Forget all of our tears and be free to be,
to embrace what should be, our true destiny?
To love our family in beautiful harmony,
is all I would wish for me.

Sad
By Mike Loader

Why can't I cope, is there no hope,
To let me be, to enjoy reality?

Where have I gone wrong,
To have to sing this sad song?
To feel so pointless?

And the relentless pressure to feel better.
But why? soon I may die and then why cry?

It will be the end of my life's experiment,
what was it meant to mean?
to educate or just to demean?

My spirits feel so low and when I must go,
to my destiny, may it be quick,
I don't want to endure a life so impure,
to keep me bound to a life so un-profound.

House of Dreams

By Mike Loader

In this house of dreams, life is not what it seems,
all our illusions and confusions,
cloud our reality, whatever that may be.
Our dreams and our lies, to this earth make our ties.

Oh to fly in the skies, clear cerulean blue,
But only a few,
Will see the beauty of our self that is true.

But we are, what we are, just to be,
and to hope and to love and to die.
To be in that clear blue sky, is just our fantasy.

My mindfulness
To be still and feel real,
to let life's fears drift away
and let our lives be in harmony
with all that we should be.

There is so much in life, to give and so much to live
we must not loose sight, of failing to a plight
of loosing our direction .

The need for reconnection and help with a new direction
will lead to our better life, no longer full of strife
but full of love, for all that is around and profound
to see the beauty that we need to succeed
and to be able to heed,
all the love in all of our hearts
and where that must lead,

Is all I think we need.

The Sky

By Mike Loader

I see the sky, I want to fly,
Like a bird in the air, free with no care,
that brings me down to the ground.
My life crashing around.
So distant, yet so near, our fear,
Will all our fears end in tears?
Or are there ways clear, to be free from our fears?

Where now?
By Mike Loader

Tension, apprehension, retention of all I should let go.
What do I know? Where do I go?

To be free, to find the real me - what will it be?
What is reality?

Is life only an illusion or just a self-delusion, full of confusion?

All reason is lost, the dice have been tossed,
my fate will await.

Adrift in the mist of time, my words only rhyme but there is no pretence of their making
sense to me.

No justification for all obfuscation, when will dear life be clear?
Or do I fear, if ever or never?

Frightened of my future, damaged by my past,
I must be in the present, here and now, and let all my terrors pass.

Costal erosion
By Mike Loader

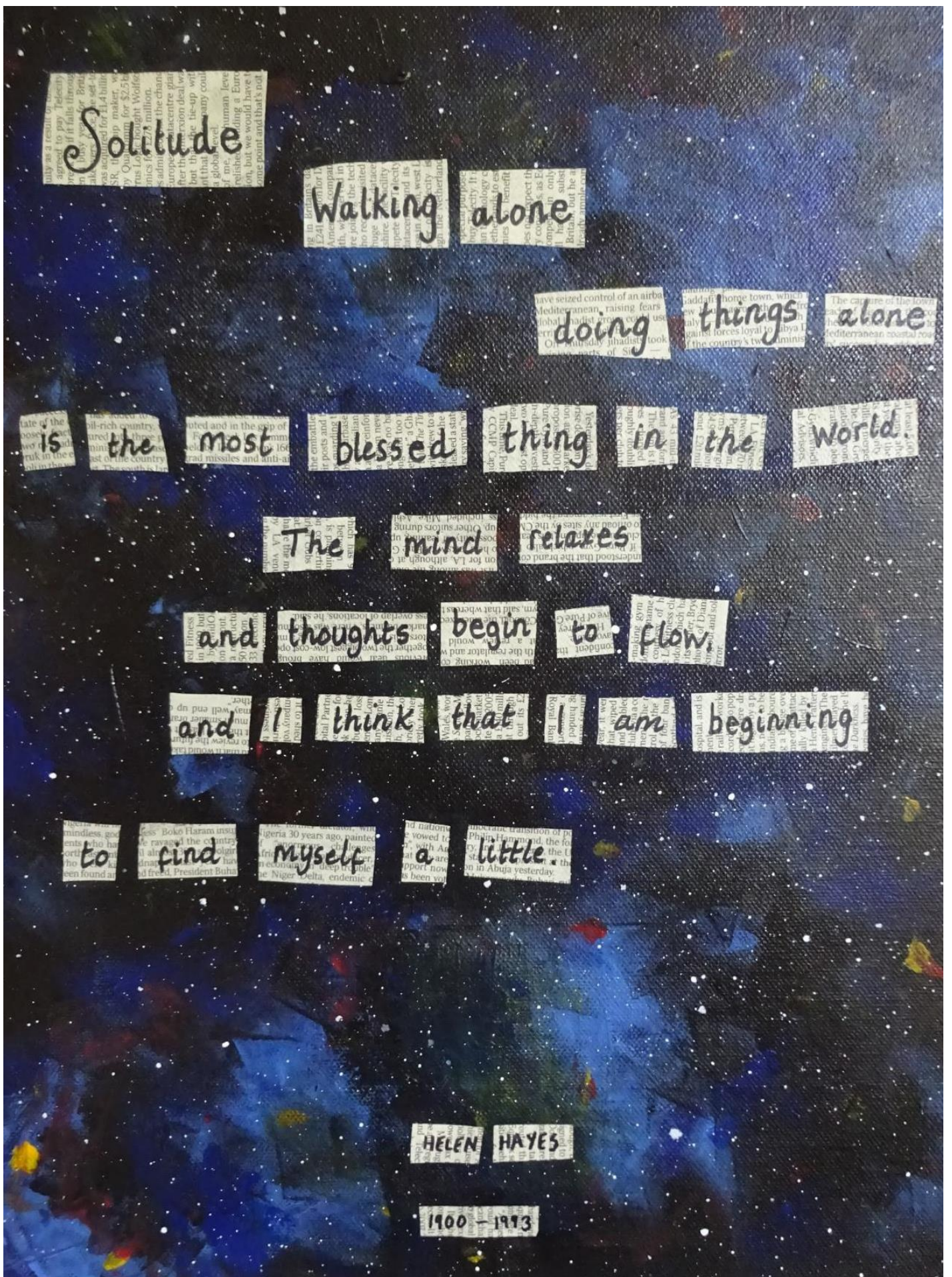
Who sees what the seas seize?

Memory
By Sydney Noah

I was dreaming of the past
Hoping that it wouldn't last
When I came upon
A shining light
Through an open door

I saw a future
For me that had
Been lost in memory
And reached out to
Hold its passing uncertainty
I had never planned ahead
Lived my life until it was dead

A distant memory of things
That used to be
Let me go now
Don't hold me back
Through that open door
To be sure for evermore
Of what was meant to be.



The Universe Speaks by Evangeline Rowe
HPFT Theme: Empowerment

Moods

By Tracey Lovell

Surprisingly I smile amidst all my woes
Happiness is short lived so I make the most

Laughing and giggling is very rare
I surprise myself when people stare

My mood takes me back to being Happy again
Trying to remember when I was happy, way back WHEN???

Memories arise to life changing moments
Giving birth to my children and I forgot about my ailments

So with my illness however short it be
I try so hard to laugh a little and remember wonderful memories

Paranoia Re born
By Tracey Lovell

Re born

I wish sometimes I was never born
Lifetime of pain and misery all bleeding and torn

I search for happy memories ALL DAY LONG
Through the thick of the forest, the SEA and SPACE BEYOND

My heart is there somewhere as I begin my search
Thorns pricking my fingers as I grapple from the earth

I spot a glimpse of red ploughing through the undergrowth
But each time I move forward I am dragged by my arm then realise its both.

I cry and scream but no one hears
Why am I alive and born into these fears???

When all memories are spoilt with negativity
My heart is caught in captivity

Think really hard to get to my heart
There it is I can see the memory that WILL it apart

Right from an early age I realised I was born not to be loved
Not by a partner but from my daughters who were sent from Heaven and above

No one can break that or take it away
My love broke through and I am receiving theirs every day

So when things get Dark and the trees close in
My love with my daughters will let me see my heart and I CAN WIN!!!!

Paranoia
By Tracey Lovely

I decided to let go of all my fears

And go out of my comfort zone to a party, I haven't done for years.

My paranoia kept with me and I couldn't shake.

All dressed up and lovely but thoughts I couldn't break

I arrived at the Party and thoughts were bad

"I was the laugh of the Neighbour Hood" everyone hated me and my thoughts made me sad!!!

You see when you have paranoia about a place or person

The thoughts are real and never change, so you end up cursing

True or not they are real and exist

Very had to let go and live in Bliss

So I tried to block them out and enjoy the night

But in my head I was having a fight

It seems so silly reading this back, but your paranoia dosent let you stop

Once its there, there is no where it can erase from your brain to be forgot

So the party experience was good and Mad

But the paranoia got the better of me and that made me sad

Unknown Angels
By Tracey Lovely

I worked so hard over the past years
To be strong, free of negativity and no more tears

With help from my family, I came out of the blues
They all gave me strength to work with Elvis and his blue suede shoes.

Every day a challenge, every day a worry
Stressing about everything, including Money!!!

I became suicidal and thoughts “ Was this ever going to end???”
It was a choice of Hospital or CMHT for I was going round the bend!!!!

I chose the latter to support me and help me be free
And with their care and professions my thoughts were turning to GLEE

That was real life help and support
I also believe in affirmations that I have been taught
I offer my speech to the UNKNOWN ANGELS to give me their care

I ask for peace, happiness, wellbeing and all negativity laid bare

One day I will be better and manage daily life
And I hope I can say thankyou to the angels in the afterlife.

Here I Stand
By Vicki Wells

From my first shoot and leaf I have looked upon this land,
I have seen the bright blue of the summer skies,
and watched the wispy white clouds drifting slowly by.
I have felt the refreshing rain as it falls gently, hardly making a sound.

I have survived the fierce winds pulling at my leaves,
and sheltered birds and creatures from the cold night air.
In autumn my leaves turn golden as they wither and fall,
and I have stood naked, yet valiant against the darkening sky.

I have seen people passing, first on foot or horseback,
then in carriages and carts both big and small.
Next the railway appeared with its trains hurrying along,
before by the roar of the motor cars became a familiar part of everyday.

I have watched on a misty morning as the sun begins to rise,
and seen the glisten of the dew on the grass around me.
I know the feeling of release as my new leaves to begin to grow,
seeing them unfurl; a fresh bright green that almost appears to glow.

Many cows, sheep and deer have grazed in the fields around me,
rabbits, foxes and badgers have burrowed beneath my roots.
Owls, pigeons and robins have nested in my branches,
and I have marvelled at the new life that surrounds me.

I have watched the fields being ploughed, then sown with seed,
and seen first new shoots as they spring out of the dark earth.
I have basked in the warmth of the dazzling summer sun,
witnessing the fields turn from a lush green into a sea of glistening gold.

People have climbed me or sat beneath me on hot summer days,
and they have sheltered under me away from the driving rain.
Some people pass me by without a look or a word,
others smile and point, trying to guess how old I am or wonder at my size.

Here I stand, still strong and tall, with my branches reaching to the sky.
I have watched the years and seasons pass,
enjoying the good times and surviving the hard.
I have memories from many a year and will have many more before I am done.

The Sea

By Vicki Wells

I can feel the cool water soft against my skin
and the warmth of the summer sun shining high above.
I can hear the sound of my breathing
and the distant haunting calls of the humpback whales.
Here I am free, in the deep blue sea.

Below me is the reef, a maze of different corals,
from wide spreading fans to large rotund mounds,
some are smooth but many are textured with distinct patterns,
the coral is many colours and shades; greens, blues and browns.
Here I can be still, in the deep blue sea.

All around me there are wonders to see,
the flash of silver as a shoal races quickly by,
brightly coloured fish swimming in undulating paths,
the courtly dance of the manta rays, so graceful and majestic.
Here I can watch, in the deep blue sea.

I am surrounded by life in many shapes and sizes;
a large turtles glides peacefully by, its shell strong and firm,
there are jellyfish, drifting, pulsing and pearlescent,
as I breathe bubbles appear, I watch them drifting up towards the light.
Here I am weightless, in the deep blue sea.

Can you see the clams and urchins, nestled between the rocks,
or the flatfish and rays disguised in the fine white sand?
Then there are the sea anemones, gently swaying in the current,
their small companion fish finding shelter in their arms.
Here I am safe, in the deep blue sea.

The more I look around me, the more I see...
There are soldierly crabs marching purposefully on their way,
blue starfish and black sea slugs clinging to the rocks,
and splashes of green where sea ferns have found a niche.
Here I am calm, in the deep blue sea.

There are more fish than I can count, some large, others very small,
their marking are so distinctive, with spots and stripes galore,
their iridescent colours so vibrant and beautiful,
creating an ever-changing world, rich in life and movement.
Here I am happy, in the deep blue sea.



British Countryside by Hollis Dixon
HPFT Theme: Resilience

In the Walled Garden
By Vicki Wells

On this bright summers day as I sit in the warmth of the sun,
I can hear the sound of talking and children having fun,
The bumble bees a-buzzing as they roam amongst the flowers,
And the ripple of the stream which I could listen to for hours.

The perfumed scent of a thousand roses is heavy in the air,
Their blooms so full and luxurious and all equally fair,
Their petals as smooth as silk and their leaves a rich green,
Coming in reds, whites and pinks and many shades in-between.

Country cottage favourites are dotted here and there,
Spires of foxgloves and delphiniums waving in the air,
Sweet Williams, lavender and peonies all rich in scent,
Reflect the title of *Garden of England* that is given to Kent.

Within these four garden walls I feel safe and at ease,
No cares or worries to trouble me, no one else to please.
Nature is allowed to rule as clematis and sweet peas intertwine,
Their climbing stems creating towers of their own unique design.

The flower heads are nodding and leaves rustling in the trees
And I feel the gentle touch of the cool summer breeze.
There are birds all around me, flitting here and there,
The tuneful songs of blackbirds and robins filling the air.

To the beauty of an English country garden nothing can compare,
I feel as if I could stay here forever at peace and without a care.
The uplifting joy of being with nature and watching things grow,
Memories of this enchanting place will be carried with me when I go.

A Visit to the Abbey
By Vicki Wells

As I walk amongst these lofty arches I think of times gone past,
I can almost hear the sounds and sights as the monks amassed,
Their voices raised in chants and song resounding around these walls,
Who could tell countless stories of the lives lived within these halls.

Though the abbey may only be a shadow of what it used to be,
With the changing of laws and religion by the desire of royalty,
Now its doors are gone, roof removed and floor covered in grass,
No longer are its windows filled with bright and colourful cut glass,

As I walk and look around, traces of former glory can still be seen,
Mosaic floors and painted tiles retain their colour and sheen,
Towering arches, columns and friezes all carefully carved from stone,
Signs and drawings bring to life the abbey monks once called home.

Learning about their stories and the history of this majestic place,
Teaches us to about lives lived at a very different pace,
By taking the time to sit, look and listen, I feel a sense of calm,
The Abbey still provides a place for reflection to create a healing balm.

Deep in the Forest
By Wendy Strohm 2012

Deep in the forest where the trees are dense
There is something here, some other sense
Of a world long hidden from our view
Here in the silence - can you feel it too?

The light is filtered and shifts in chunks
Wending its way through the many trunks
A breeze in the canopy high aloft
As we walk the ground seems springy soft

The birds are quiet there is no sound
Nor animal tracks to be found
I can hear your breath and you hear mine
And what is that shape so tall and fine?

Rustling leaves above up there
Or is that actually long curling hair?
The bark untwists and starts to turn
Suddenly there's movement amongst the ferns

The dryads are here biding their time
For a dusk that is quiet with weather fine
Then they reveal their slender length
And relax those limbs of solid strength

From each tree they move with grace
Almond eyes and such a serious face
And time itself slows right down
Floating away with each sheer gown

And so we stand lost in our trance
Watching the dryads' elegant dance
There seem to be many and then just a few
It's all so confusing, you see it too

The dancing ends as day fades away
They go back to the trees to wait and stay
Till the weather is right and silence sensed
Deep in the forest where the trees are dense.

Drawing Fairies

By Wendy Strohm 2013

Down by the pond I sat in the shade
I took my sketchpad with drawings I've made
I sat under the tree just out of the sun
Till the book I read was over and done

I flicked through my pictures one by one
Each filled with joy and a sense of fun
Pictures of flowers and animals too
And fantastical creatures you never knew

I took up my pencil and began to draw
A dragon fly with wings numbering four
And would you believe - a shimmering blue
Came over the water – just one, then two!

Playful I felt and continued my art
Drawing the grass and reeds that part
And there I drew her - timid and shy
With her own set of wings with which to fly

I spied her then near the water's edge
Peering through the irises and the sedge
A lovely day and I thought she'd be glad
But it seemed to me she was rather sad

I pondered long on what to do
Fairies you see are so rare and few
And this is not how my story can end
So I decided then to draw her a friend!

Nettle Fairies
(because you asked for another...)
By Wendy Strohm 2012

Remember when we were here before?
We were hopeful then but now we are sure.
If we hush and are quiet and as still as can be -
Perhaps they will stir and again we shall see.
This time we've settled near the nettle-bed
Where I'm certain they'll show their pretty heads.

We watch the breeze rustle through each stem
And I think I catch a glimpse of them.
Here they come – peeking and peering round -
Tiptoeing and skipping across the ground.
They are singing together in one sweet voice
And swirling and dancing of their own free choice.

We are honoured again to see their fun
And their delicate wings shimmering in the sun.
I know you have seen them as I hear you gasp too -
They are busy it seems in all that they do.
They are flitting about and tidying up,
Dusting the daisies and each buttercup.

They all have fair hair and dresses of green -
And are clearly having a good spring clean.
These are the nettle fairies as shy as can be
And we are lucky they appeared to you and me.
But the sun is setting and soon we must leave
I am so glad that you truly believe.

Toadstool Fairies
(For Matilda on her 4th birthday with much love)
By Wendy Strohm

There are some tiny fairies that are not often seen
They are lost in the daisies and the grasses green
They are very pretty with dresses so bright
But they hide in the day and stay out of sight
They live in a toadstool with a tiny door
Each with a bedroom on a different floor
They dance and sing and often have tea
But we cannot hear them – they're as quiet as can be
They like to play games and have lots of fun
But I don't know if they've been seen by anyone
The best thing about them – above all things
Is their tiny glittery transparent wings
They flutter and flit right up to the sky
Visiting blossoming flowers like a butterfly
But they are simply silent being so very small
And you have to watch carefully to see them at all

Wall Fairies
(inspired by Charlie's new wallpaper)
By Wendy Strohm 2012

I've seen all the fairies adorning your wall
Pretty and dainty - each of them, all
When you're not there I'm sure they flitter
With wings come to life with sparkle and glitter

Down from the walls they fly to the floor
But only when there is a closed door
It is fun to explore while you are away
Your masses of toys with which they can play

They just fit in to your dolls house there
But fight over the beds for they cannot share
They use the little brushes to comb out their tresses
And nose in your wardrobe to look at your dresses

They like to bounce upon your bunk beds
And jump so high that they bump their heads
They climb the walls and swing from the lamp
And laugh so much they make their eyes damp

But ever they are careful - listen out and look
For people - in case by surprise they are took
They hear someone coming and must be quick
To fly back to the wall where they will stick



British Summertime by Jackie Cairns
HPFT Theme: Resilience

I Remember
(for Daniel on his birthday)
By Wendy Strohm 2016

The pictures remind me of the times that we had.
I smile at the happy and cry at the sad.
I see how you looked some years ago -
And I remember the sun, the sea and the snow.
I remember the laughing and all of the fun -
The times we were two before I was one.
I think of the things that you used to say,
In support, in comfort, in jest and in play.
I think of your smile and blue eyes above.
I remember it all, especially your love.
A whole year my darling almost to the day -
I'm still here without you although with dismay.
I'm carrying on as the time passes by
And every day I continue to try.

Walk with me
By Wendy Strohm 2012

Walk with me now towards the farm
And hold my hand in case of harm.
I'll lift you here over this stile
And in this field we'll stay a while.
The cowslips nod their heavy heads,
Waving within their weedy beds -
And if you look closely here is more
Look over there down by the floor.

Can you see them sitting there?
All in a circle with a feast to share.
The fairies are here ready to learn
And waiting patiently for their turn.
Each will stand with their story to tell
A tale as enchanting as if in a spell.
A story of the home where they live -
And all that it has to offer and give.

They listen in wonder and with awe
And laugh and clap and stamp for more.
Proud they are and should be too
Dressed in colours of every hue -
White for thistle and sometimes pink
Buttercup is yellow - do you think?
Green for nettle and for grass
And rosehip red, not least but last.

The fairies there – no bigger than my thumb -
Have feasted well to the very last crumb!
Eaten every nut and each juicy berry -
And drunk the nectar and oh so merry!
We'll leave them now before we're seen
And walk on where we have not yet been.
Let's leave the fairies in all their charm -
Walk with me now towards the farm.

Governor, Governess
By Hollis Dixon

I walk and I am not master of myself..

Action reactions are of something that is bigger than man..

The sky tells a story the wind a song..

The creatures of the earth are but signs that guide you on.

The peace the oneness with what once was me..

Is me again..

LIFE

The spoken word
By Hollis Dixon

Just a thought, the spoken word whether English or other...

The word is a stimulant. Which promotes good or bad or indifferent feelings and emotion within the human body, happiness sadness anger love. These emotions can cause reactions which are not right if you apply this theory. So thought and communication as we know it, is something which as I see it, hinders the progress of life. This is because the word explains, and as far as I know, no one knows the meaning of life. So Then any explanation through the spoken word is just confusing the issue.

Live and love life...

Destiny
By Hollis Dixon

What you see you are supposed to see,
What you hear you are supposed to hear,
All your experiences are yours alone,
Try and avoid them,
You will think them anyway.
Your reaction to them is down to you.

Sad but true
By Hollis Dixon

Just like a farmer can see from when a seedling is young
Whether it will be a good crop or not and act accordingly.
So can a person can see whether another will be beneficial to them.
And do the same

Way it is
By Hollis Dixon

They hear the first voice,
And see the first vision,
They get all their guilds,
From the television.
On hearing that first voice,
All are filled with fear
The family alerted,
They just stand and stare.
There's no explanation,
No reason or clue,
Why my dad, bother or son,
Is totally subdued.
The Doctor is called,
And their given a label,
We all look for the answer,
In the health book on the table.
Thing is, what it says,
Does not explain,
What my dad, bother or son,
Has done to his brain.
His attitude is cold,
His action is manic
Is this his life now?
A paranoid sycophantic.
There is communication,
We are all in despair,
He just sits in his room,
Like he doesn't care.
Medication is working,
Its making him sleep,
Situation is hurting,
We can hardly speak.
Could we have done something?
Should we have noticed?
That my dad, bother or son,
Was going through a crisis.

Tell them what they want to know

By Hollis Dixon

Well the end product is death, whether it's in mind, spirit or body it is the outcome.

Maybe I'm paranoid but things wrongly or right can be seen in this way.

One could think when people meet on any level, whether as partner or friends or even just on street for first time. There is an element of what can this person do for me. Possible that it's a natural thing which is built in to humans or because of the dog eat dog concept where is survival of the fittest, or due to the way society has made it. The question I pose to myself is how far would one go to get whatever it is that person has that you want.

I speak of myself because I am the only person I know, I may speculate on others but take them as non-fact.

I find myself sometimes asking for something without asking.

In that I mean I could be in situation where I know that someone has something, whether it be money, a tool, the means to get somewhere or just information that I would like to have. I would lead the conversation into a topic where the item can be mentioned. With that depending on the person normally, that item is offered to me.

This is not intentional. And I do think that I have to refuse it because. The same situation has happen with me on the receiving end. The word sucker comes to mind.

Some time it not as easy as that, and gentle persuasion is use. Like keep mentioning the item or what you need it for. Or just giving the person time to think by not talking.

That is a simple example.

But on the other hand it is possible to gain the upper hand if you're the person with the item.

If realized that want you have is important to the other person, doing the right thing or wrong thing depending how you see it.

Can gain you control to a certain extent of that person. This can be good if your intention is good; if they are not it can be fatal for that person involved. Even more so if you have no intention to give that the item at all.

With this control the sky the limit, in what you can get that person to do. All depends on how important the item is to them.

This can be seen to be used by person from years 0 to death.

In both these examples it is possible to do enormous amount of good, but also can cause a hell of a lot of damage.

This I see as a way of life for most people of today, old and young.

The only two ways of dealing with this is one, when you leave the house in the morning expect a battle of wit at every corner, arm yourself with knowledge so you can defend yourself, and a wall round around you that even you find hard to get over.

And two solitude.

In time these battles will take their toll on a person and three things spring to mind that may happen. That person may give

in and withdraw himself from society therefore dying in a body sense. Because he is no longer a part of it, so he doesn't excise.

That person lets battles he frights go in the other persons favor.

So his sprit has died.

Or those people fight and win all the time. But in doing that he is a slave to himself, and cannot use his mind for anything else, so death of mind.

How to combine the three and survive as a whole, no conclusion as yet.

There are other ways to gain control but them I can't put to paper.

I try not to practice any of these theories.

Conclusion to tell what they want to know By Hollis Dixon

I think the key is in self-worth and self-belief.

In respect to fighting battles. What does it matter whether do leave a situation with the other person thinking they have won. It's what you think is what matters. You have to live with you they don't. So as long as you're reasoning satisfying to your mind then you win.

Armed with this you can face any situation.

You don't have to exclude myself.

Due to the fact that you don't fright to the death in every situation you maintain a strong sprit. And is controlled by you and your mind, not influences and inputs.

But you have to be careful in what you believe in within yourself.



Robin by Mary-Ann Stevens
HPFT Theme: Resilience

Few days in solitary
By Hollis Dixon

Although I have not been here, this title is just a feeling...
I could call this the beginning of the end, but it would
not be timed right as the beginning started without me
knowing....

Take most of my writing in consideration, a few days in
side closed doors, with only thoughts and stimulants from
outside curtained windows and prompts which I mention
before. You can't help and I mean can't help but enter
into whatever is put into or in front of you...

A reality with feeling... vision... substance. Which you
cannot deny but only question...

I have said once that believing is seeing, not seeing is
believing... A few days in this situation can confirm this
not only seeing but feeling and living...

Also within this time, buildup of feelings of frustration,
which breeds anger, reasoning and clarity, courses
moments of unexplained vents of energy which make
perfect sense within the frame of mind that the situation
creates? But to the reality of most worlds, be section
worthy I think... But that's only due to what is known as
the norm...

Mysteries of the mind, don't underestimate them. You'd
be fool to!

All they do
By Hollis Dixon

Your aim is to build on life
But you do much more
Instilling confidants, self-wreath and reason for life
Making light of the problem, turmoil's and strife's
I owe you more than you know
In life I will make best
As you have taught me so

Healthy bank or mental health
By Hollis Dixon

Just a thought,
It seems that people will restrict their life when it comes to money
and look after their bank balance at all costs.
But at the same time risk their mental health in nearly every
situation in relationships and contact with people.
A person is in financial problems at a stage in his or her life. Advice
given to this person is next time to count the pennies, do not borrow,
and live within your means. All these are to protect that healthy bank
balance.
A person has two or three bad relationships, either as friends,
partner or even family.
Advice given to this person is get back on the bandwagon, there is
Mr. or Mrs. Right out there so keep looking, go and play the field.
Just enjoy yourself. Don't give up it will happen.
Money is a physical thing, you can hold it. You can put it away. It
has no mind of its own so poses no threat to you as a person at all,
unless you let it. So why protect it with your life.
But relationships on other hand pose a massive threat to all.
The other person within these situations has the means to destroy
a person's mental health in a few swift blows, if they have the
knowhow.
So why be so flippant in the approach to relationships, in that I
mean just meeting someone on the street is risky.

Nature
By Hollis Dixon

I must confess I am a disbeliever in most that is man.
Man is a part of nature but choses to separate himself
and create a world where he thinks he is superior.
In nature there is no race, there is no culture, there is no
religion, there is no government. So there is no problem.

The elements
By Hollis Dixon

Thoughts, action, reaction are just parts of the master
plan. Living life knowing this, as the elements make a
fool out of my intelligence, as they create my life, leading
me to an end I can not comprehend.

Night shift
By Hollis Dixon

Today was a strange day....can't sleep...have not slept at
all really...
Good day saying that but still not the norm as late...funny
time night. Peacefully yet eerily...just sounds of bubbles
from tanks breaking silence..
Mind wonders on this and that. Courses fear,
reassurance, comfort and indifferent emotions...
Town not yet alive but I know there is life out here... alone
but yet
The TV screen is but distraction from the eerily calm that
surrounds you...
Sights of movement and audio sounds, which keeps you
alert and awake...
Question is why I am awake....

Silent world

By Hollis Dixon

Solitude, silent, is that a personal want or a reaction. Not without the lack of trying to communicate and take part in the social pass time of community. But find yourself met with the preconceptions and judgement by many. Which dismisses your voice and words before you say them. Attitudes that with ignorant understanding and knowledge crush the very being of a person. This forcing one to relay on the small and simple actions to make or break their day. A smile from a stranger, and door being opened. A phone call which show that you have not been forgotten. Someone moves closer and not away shows that your vibe is not repelling. These all from those who know not you have been label with a diagnosed heading from those you name something which they don't understand. To some from professional to man on the street, when you have been given that label you personally is dead, and you become a textbook case with no rational voice. Identity remove, your life continues. Relying on what it say in the explains the personality you have. No longer knowing whether you are right or wrong in your thoughts, you plod alone in the system from that day on.

The haystack
By Hollis Dixon

Sitting in a field, drinking a nice claret. I ask myself where I go from here. Home you might say. Where is it, home I mean.

I feel more comfortable out here, I smile when there is nothing to smile about, my mind is much clearer out here. I feel like me. So which one is home. What would you say? Home should have all those things. But it doesn't. Does that make this home..?

The green fields, the sun, the sounds which even when loud and alarming are still having a sense of comfort in them.

This haystack which I visit from time to time somehow is more comfortable than the sofa. To me I can't seem to get my head round where am I supposed to be, or is it just a case of transporting mentally between the two. Transition is difficult at best of times.

The bottle has run out of its contents, and the pedal home is going to be tricky. But it is worth it. A short time out here is a life time really.
Until then.....

Broaden the mind
By Hollis Dixon

Do what is not appealing,
Study something which is not interesting,
Scare yourself with reality,
Because you don't like it doesn't mean it's not real.

Tree seasons
By Hollis Dixon

As I look out my window at a tree top which towers over the houses beneath.

I series of branches and twigs, which only a lover of nature would see as beautiful.

Strong and elegant in its stance, enduring the bitter cold breeze of the winter months.

The view changes slightly

The branches and twigs start to grow green, and the next generation of fruit.

The plain silhouette changes it forms as life begin again.

Life which is all but genius as its life that sustains ours.

The leaves and blossom have done their part.

As seen by most as beauty.

The silhouette is full and lush hiding many other living things within.

All that have benefited are now on their own journey to a warmer place

The cold bitter winds return, the lush green canopy turns into a ray of colours that decorate the floor around its trunk. Giving way to the plain silhouette of branches and twigs I first saw.

Strong and elegant in its stance.

No explanation **By Hollis Dixon**

I must confess that all my reasoning, explanations and thoughts that is put into the progress or decline of my life is nothing but justification of situations past. The only way to say what happens within my life is that it is my destiny.

It takes all sorts to make a world **By Hollis Dixon**

The Dr who knows enough about the body to heal. The homeless person who knows how to keep warm on a winter's night and can advise those in same situation. The person who tends the land to produce elements of a roast we have on Sunday afternoon. The addict who knows the pit falls of substance abuse. The person who has had so many traumas in their lives and got through it. That could be a councillor without training. The disabled person who's heightening senses has made them an expert in care of the restricted. The person with a disorder who brings joy to others with their creative talents. Or the blind person who's view of world inspires others. It takes all sorts to make a world.

Love is **By Hollis Dixon**

Love is as I see it, when a person takes into consideration all that is pleasant and unpleasant with another person, and accepting it without judgement. And will do their utmost to ensure that the person's happiness, wellbeing and contentment are achieved. Also enjoy doing so.

My question is can it truly be achieved knowing the personalities, attitudes and personal aims of a human being.

Last words
By Hollis Dixon

If I have hurt, upset or caused any discomfort in your life
I am sorry
If I have helped, encouraged or made your life better.
It was my pleasure
Just because you can't see me, doesn't mean that I am not there.
You can feel me and think me.
If you need help or my advice. I have already told you.
You just have to remember.
Live and love life.

It will continue
By Hollis Dixon

With all the love, happiness, sadness,
suffering and distraction of life. The natural
world will continue. As the natural world
just is, its not a world man has created.



Star Flower by Wendy Strohm
HPFT Theme: Choice