

Sohodance

A Treasury of Word & Art

Writing & art by service users of St Ann's
Hospital, Haringey, BHT Trust



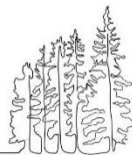
2024

A Treasury of Word & Art

Writing & art by service users of St Ann's
Hospital, Haringey, BEH Trust.

“To me recovery is about power. Power to stand up and fight...
To me recovery is about freedom. Stepping out of the darkness
and into the light”

Anonymous



Printed in 2024

This collection of writing and art by service users and ex-service users of St Ann's Hospital was gathered over 2022 and 2023.

The spark began in a group called 'My Recovery Group' but the idea spread and many others contributed to the final product. All have given permission to print and publish their work and were given three options for identifying: first name, anonymous or pseudonym.

This collection is a celebration of creativity and the role that words and art can play in giving voice to suffering, recovery and overcoming. It is a treasury of lived experience – voices from the heart. It is a gallery of inspiration and wisdom.

This is available on request to any service user or carer free of charge, online or printed. Please ask your relevant clinician.

We are grateful to Kate, ex-service user, for advising on collation and formatting of the collection.



The journey of recovery

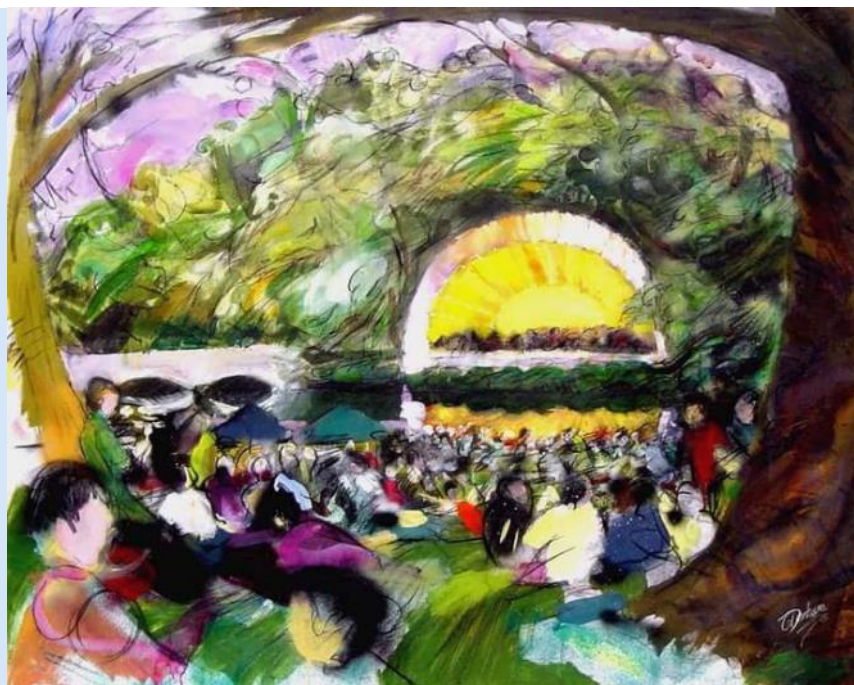
Five more minutes under the duvet
My first self-love act of the day
A moment just to be
Just to focus on me

Acceptance of myself,
A journey not a destination
Healing to become whole
Despite the impossible

Forget the horizon, now is enough
It's time to find peace among the chaos
Time to move, soon I will
Dance through the discord

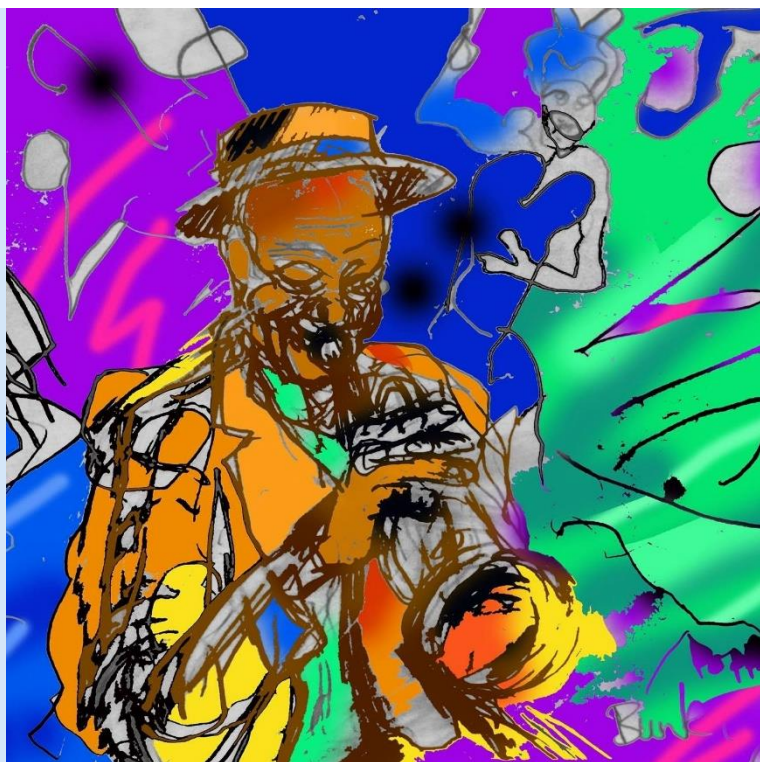
Group poem by members of the EIS creative writing group





Greg





Greg





Greg



What inspires my progress?

For me progress means healing from the trauma I experienced as a child and an adult. It is the journey of finding my true self, without the stories that I told myself about who I am the likes and dislikes and judgements towards a more accepting way of being.

On my journey I met many helpers, who listened and guided me on my recovery. I am grateful to have met these allies on my journey of recovery.

I deeply believe that healing is possible through the work of integration. Beginning anew. As a Buddhist work says, will lead us to a new understanding of life and suffering.

Joachim



The Breeze and I

The breeze and I
Whisper to one another
Though I say
She takes sorrows far.
I like it like this,
Me on my own
I will let the breeze
Sooth my sorrow
She makes the leaves
On the tree dance
This I am delighted to see
I hold joy in my heart.
She is very keen
In saying all is well
Don't be mean,
To me she tells.
A day I won't sigh,
I whisper to the breeze
This day is we nigh
I won't even breath

Shafin



Poem to an X

Don't be sad because I am mad,
Those rotten voices are glad they made me bad,
I cry for you now, what can I do?
Please be true. Is there hope to join me and you together once again?
Or is it really the end?
I won't pretend. It hurts so much. My heart is burning with flames
circling, never knowing where it is going
I don't like it when we are so far apart
You are my fiend. My mate, my buddy
The one and only
X

Anonymous



My Sib

Get out of my face
Get out of my place
You think you are so great
But I wouldn't want you as a mate
Or as a true sister
I'd rather have a smell, poisonous blister
You were not there when I was in care
What I've been through
I teel you a bit
But you don't even contemplate it
What I should do
Is get rid of you
Once and for all
As I wave goodbye
I wont even cry
Or let out a little sigh

Anonymous



Poem without title

Never knowing where I am going
Weather is snowing
Or is it the sun glowing
Should I go up
Or should I go down
Maybe in
Maybe out
So confusing,
It's not amusing

Anonymous



Our recovery group

On Thursday at noon when we meet

It's always a treat and we eat something sweet

we draw, we paint, we listen, we talk and sometimes we even go for a walk

gibberish games nourish our brains and free us from our chains

at times we are happy sometimes we're sad but no one here thinks that we're mad

we raised money for MIND which was awfully kind

a picnic for us and food for the ducks where we hear no cars or the sound of a truck

anyway, I'll see you next week

now it your time to speak

Nicholas



The Jackdaw



How I envy you, dear jackdaw
Some may think I am a fool to do so
But you I see, in your black and white dress
And I wish I could be such a carefree bird
Why must I be trapped with mankind?
So full of responsibilities, this I find hard
Yet you are so hard pressed with the affairs of this world
That you hardly notice me and how I toil

Shafin



The Dark Green Shades

The dark green shades,
of the trees under the moon,
I watch as sunlight fades,
out the window of my room.
How nice an emotion,
of the mild spring air,
and the notion,
of having no cares...
In far off lands,
so many suffer,
no money in their hands,
living life tougher.
How distant I am,
of the predicament they're in,
I fret over a small problem,
whereas they're in need.
The white gleam,
of the moon that floats,
the night fineries,
show man's broken hopes.
I reflect on these,
estranged thoughts,
how can I be free
of this guilt?

Shafin



Getting out of the box



Anonymous



Getting Out the Hole

If you find yourself in the hole, you cannot breathe, it's confusing, you don't know where the negativity comes from.

They are drawing something on you. It's the pain from their past.

You need to come out the hole. You need to give yourself distance. You need to get help.

You need to get out the hole to get the answers.

Stephanie



My personal rainbow



Anonymous



(untitled)

Images can hurt, so I like to change them,

To add a bit of colour, and brightness, to make them more
balanced,

so I don't get stuck in the dark

Stephanie



Remind myself

When I come to this place, it reminds me about everyone's life struggles and problems. I try to feel positive and carry on. Don't lose hope, I say 'No' to the nay sayers. Everyone's equal.

Anonymous



My Wellbeing Plan

To develop an insight
To become self-aware
To have self-compassion
To seek the right help and support
To keep good friends and company
To accept what I can and cannot change
To involve in regular and manageable activities
To learn to bounce back and focus more on the things I enjoy
To avoid unhealthy habits
To respect others as well as myself
To listen to joyful and relaxation music
To be gentle and kind with myself and others
To acknowledge that I am mentally unwell
And take my medications regularly, if they help

*

“I am not an expert on life
I just do what I think is good for me”

Anonymous



Much troubles I bear

Much troubles I bear
In a world that's cruel
Yes to be fair
Should be my goal.

Where men dare
And find fortune
And what is there
Is not for long...

To the heaven with prayers
Whey the doom?
Take my hand
Le me immortalise you
For to have respect
And to be noble
Hs unnumerable benefits
Due to their virtues...

Shafin



Patient

Trapped and silenced.

Where can I go and who can I trust?

Waiting for professionals,

When will I be discussed??

Will I make it through

to tell the world of my struggle?

Or do I stay silent

Because I don't want to be in trouble...

How long will I be here?

Who knows I exist?!

I'll get by day by day,

Tick a "to do" off my list.

One day they listen,

And I finally feel heard.

But now I'm angry and bitter

And I shout out the words:

Don't tell me what to do!

Don't tell me to "try" —

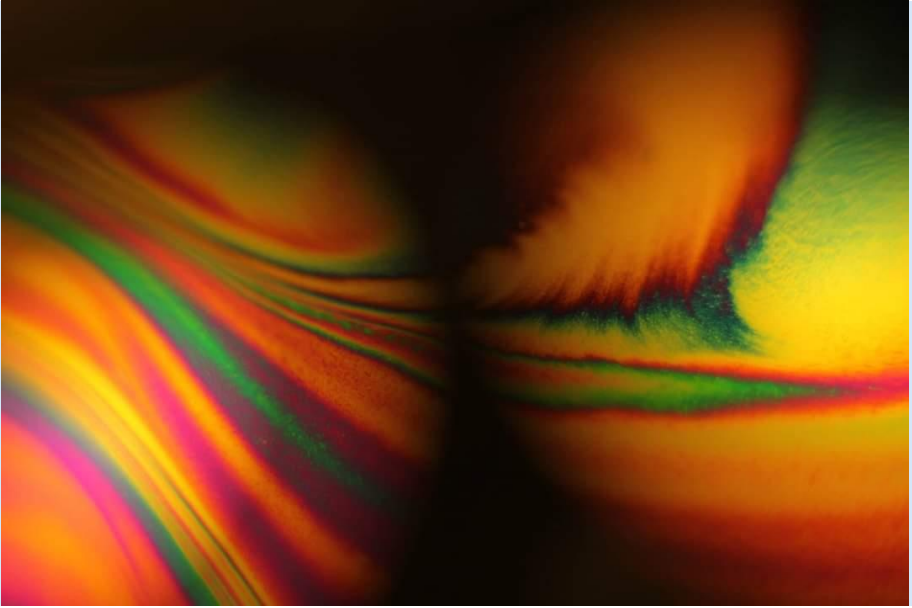
I'll find the light in the darkness,

and with that I'll get by.

Anonymous



Prism



Barbara



Ghost baby



Barbara



Prism



Barbara



Re-cover

You wake up every morning
Throw the duvet away
And choose to partake
In this thing called life

It means finding little joys
In the regular everyday
Finding pockets of sunshine
In the heavy rain

It means not every day will be great
But there will be something great in every day
It means crying sometimes
And learning how to wipe your own tears

It means being vulnerable, letting people in
And other times, finding peace from within
It means forgetting the pain
And remembering the lessons

It means dancing to a familiar song
Finding your rhythm
And signing along

Mercy



(untitled)

It means dancing to a familiar song
Finding your rhythm
And signing along

Mercy



(untitled)

I still need time to heal. Life can be difficult, but still we are fine

Anonymous



(untitled)

The warmth of the sunshine traverse out in the shape of rays forming
around a circular sun

The tree leaves rustle as a cool breeze clears all the stake old debris
away from your inner light, like the dust off a mirror

Alex



(untitled)

Walking on the moist grass as the wind is blowing softly against your face

The birds are singing to each other and the sun is warming you face
all is calm.

Nichoas



Blue today



Anonymous



Clouds



Melody



Recovery

Recovery

How are you doing?

Not bad, not good???

Recovery group happiness, hope, friendly and love

Lost struggles, will I?, wont I?

Sweet

Like sugar, like candy, like chocolate, like you

Being well

Being in health

What does 'well' mean. What is 'health'?

Who decides? You? Good

Good health

Good health you too!

And you! And you! How do you do? Can you say 'boo'?. Oh, no,
thank you. Adieu

Thank you, Recovery Group

!!!!!!???

The end. Fin

Members of the My Recovery Group



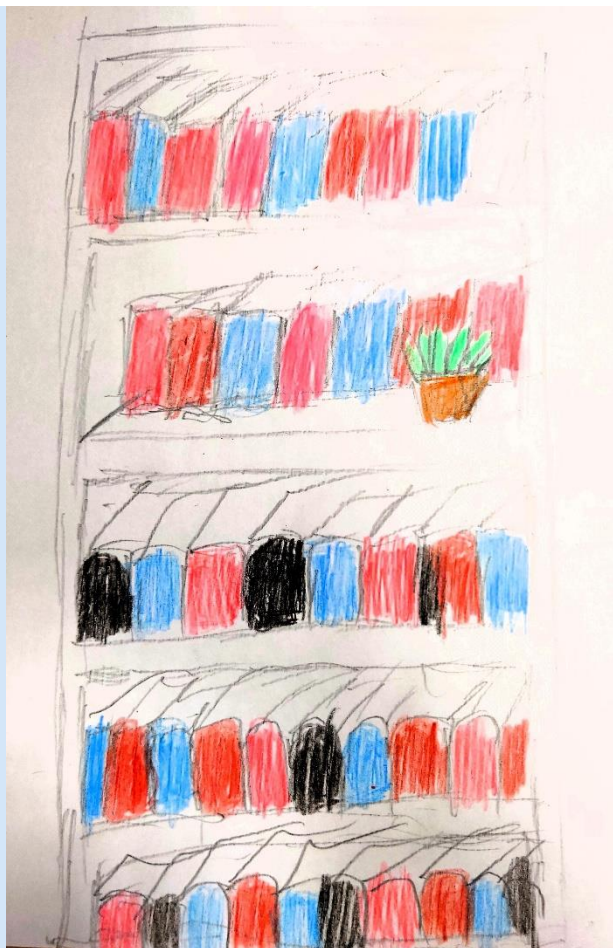
Golden butterfly



Melody



My bookcase of brightness



Anonymous



My home

My problem: I want everyone to be happy with me and to love me. If I do something that makes them “sad” I feel at fault. I feel that I am worthless and that I don't belong in that community. And I tell myself, next time I won't complain and I'll do whatever they tell me. It's hard to think where my home can be. Do I ever feel at home? Or do I always feel like a stranger? Yes I always think that I'm alone and I'm not worth it, no one would like to spend time with me. Family defect? Yes. We love others a lot but we don't express it. Do my parents have friends? No, they have not. What did I learn growing up? I've always been alone and I prayed, prayed a lot for friends, but it didn't happen. For a short time there was an illusion of something, but nothing certain. Nothing I could count on. I come from a place where family is very important so yes friends okay but always after my family. Growing up I was rejected. “No, ‘X’ can't go out with us. No ‘X’ cannot be part of our group”. How sad? Too much! Here in London... My home? For a while, yes, I felt like I did. But now I feel the world is collapsing around me. Friends? I'm trying to make other friendships that make me feel good. I feel like my heart is pounding and my muscles are in spasm. When there is a friend who loves me and speaks to me kindly and makes me understand that he cares about my company, then I feel at home. I feel relaxed, wrapped in a warm embrace. For now I have no home.

Anonymous



Park walk



Premata



Me and my mental health

I did not choose this

I did not want this

I did not make it happen

I am not faking this

I am not asking for sympathy

Please just try to understand that I am trying to do the best I can

I survived everything I go through up to this point, the best day of my life is still yet to come, there are still people I haven't met, and things I haven't experienced, places I still haven't been. I never give up just because today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today

From the outside looking in, it's hard to understand from the inside looking out. It's hard to explain.

Sometimes I just can't tell anybody how I really feel

Not because I don't trust them

Not because I don't know why.

It's because I can't find the right words to make them understand

Paulo

It's OK not to be OK

Anxiety and depression are part of my life

I am not ashamed to tell people about it

It's a thing I carry on my shoulders every day.

At times I do struggle. I manage to get on top of it. And control things but at times I break. So if you see me and I am quiet or don't speak, I'm not upset with you, or you have upset me. I also don't mean to be rude. I may just need one minute to hide my sadness in the dark and show you a bright and beautiful smile. Please if you are my friend, just bear with me, it's a hidden illness I live with. People can't see it, but I

do. People can't believe it but I do, people don't think about I but I do,
it's a difficult thing to live with....

Its ok, not to be OK

Paulo

Me, my heart, & I. My heart is my best friend

My heart lives inside me

Hope lives inside my heart

Never stop work till today

One day my heart will stop

Not because it does not like me or is

Fed up with me

I is because it is tired and needs to rest

My heart is my best friend because

My heart keeps me alive until today and until it is tired.

My heart understands everything and accepts me

The way I am without judging me

I love my heart and my heart loves me

We are always together

When we have a broken heart I have always fixed it

Paulo



Poem 1

If You don't want to understand me,
That's fine.
I'm not going to understand you,
Either.
Do you want to understand?
The truth... It's nothing but
Pointless vicious circle
We are in.
You and me.
There is nothing.
And this nothingness
Is the concept,
Which we are going to learn
To understand.

Barbara

Poem 2

It suddenly starts
Talking to me
The light
Caresses me with its warmth.
And dances in my ghostly body
Light
Likes to lie on the table
In the glow of a rainbow prisms

Or throws itself on the wall
In the eternal fight against the shadow
It whispers sometimes
A pastel vibration
On a cobweb
And it's best to see it all
On black

Barbara



Our recovery group

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we draw, we paint, we listen, we talk and sometimes we even go for a walk

gibberish games nourish our brains and free us from our chains

at times we are happy sometimes we're sad but no one here thinks that we're mad

we raised money for MIND which was awfully kind

a picnic for us and food for the ducks where we hear no cars or the sound of a truck

anyway, I'll see you next week

now it your time to speak

Nicolas



(untitled)

I'm different
But I know my worth
I'm lost in my thoughts
But I am not a fool
I can feel overwhelming anger
But I can also love just as much
I am me
Being many different people
I don't have exuberant ego
And I don't lecture others
My depressive states cause
Lack of desire to do anything
But I am not lazy

I am like a moon
Which shows it's dark and bright side
But is always in full
Always as one entity

Anonymous



A postscript to psychosis

10 years post psychosis

I met the person whose actions marked the tipping point of my crisis

I never had the courage to tell them all these years, but I decided to

10 summers later

(With the help of a lychee martini!).

He said our relationship changed pre- versus post-psychosis

But that I hadn't changed.

But I think I have.

Or maybe what's changed is that I finally like who I am -

Unchained from his judgements around my skin colour.

They say that when you're in psychosis, you're not yourself

But because of my psychosis, I finally feel myself.

Anonymous



Words for the day

“Keep striving to be your unique self, and don’t let your illness define who you are”

“Wisdom is the gift, the endowments are how to use your power”

“When we lose the gift to be different, we lose the privilege to be free...”

Shakira

Rivers of Life

A dream, some would say, being born,

Living here day by day

Life with its mysteries and tales, stories to be told to the young ones

Many an adventure for the brave-hearted

Following the path of life down-stream to some peaceful place....

Shakira

Wisdom

When you judge others you do not define them. You define yourself....

Knowledge is only an investment in the land of wisdom

Knowledge and wisdom are like links in a single chain

Go beyond your boundaries, live life fully in the now, as this is the Only you

Shakira

Black woman

See that Black Women?

Love that Black Woman?

Never put another above that Black Woman

Hold that Black Woman

Don't try to mould or sold that Black Woman

Respect that Black Woman

Always protect that Black Woman

Don't neglect that Black Woman

Or Disrespect that Black Woman

Learn to know that Black Woman

Don't be afraid to show that Black Woman

That you're willing to grow with that Black Woman

No one will ever brighten your day like a Black Woman

Shakira



(A short collection)

I still need time to heal. Life can be difficult, but still we are fine

Anonymous

The warmth of the sunshine traverse out in the shape of rays forming
around a circular sun

The tree leaves rustle as a cool breeze clears all the stake old debris
away from your inner light, like the dust off a mirror

Alex

Walking on the moist grass as the wind is blowing softly against your
face

The birds are singing to each other and the sun is warming you face
all is calm.

Nichoas



Sorry



Neema



The forever project

We are a forever working process we will never have all the answers that's the beauty of life we reach a goal a new goal has to be set to keep us going our focus is our outcome if we focus on what was we will be in the what was mindset and not experience the now or tomorrow but to experience now and tomorrow we have to learn to accept the what was part of our lives it doesn't take away its experience or the effect it had on us whether it was good or bad but it gives us courage to embark the next phase we set our minds too you see the thing with our minds they are so powerful and what we feed it is what we will experience old habits die hard but new habits are beautiful but also scary we find comfort in the known and fear in the unknown but for anything to flourish it takes courage and wisdom to want a different experience the beauty of life is the ups the downs the dreams the tears the cry's the laughs but without it all what is the point of our existence we are a forever project let's live in the now and tomorrow but never forget our what was because the good bad and ugly is what makes us who we are.

Neema

If I were...

A rock,

Life would be different I could travel the world I could be a souvenir or a weapon I could mean something or mean nothing I could be seen or not seen I could be used in a project or used to fill a space I have many purposes aswell as no purpose at all I can just be something that's never acknowledged but me as a rock I can live through generations I have no time scale which is beautiful to think I can exist forever with so many layers...

If I were...

Soil,

I can create life in beautiful flowers and trees I can feed many and house many like our little creatures I am nourishing I have so much power but appear so simple it's amazing that I can provide create an stay alive beyond a humans life span and be so powerful an full of purpose but never acknowledged for the greatness I am....

If I were...

Air,

I have no limit you can't see me but without me you can't exist to be so powerful and useful but not be physically seen is magical I also have no life span I exist with or without you but you can't exist without me....

If I were...

Water,

I could drown you feed you cleanse you you need me but I don't need you without me how would the living live...

Neema

A question that only you can answer...

But how do I answer such a question when I've been defined by labels...

Labels Labels Labels

Am I the girl from care,

Am I the victim,

Am I the survivor,

Am I the addict,

Am I the trigger,

Am I the cause,

Am I the reason,

Am I the purpose,

Am I the street girl,

Am I the child,

Am I the adult,

Am I the daughter,

Am I the mother,

Am I the sister,

Am I the partner,

Am I the voices,

Am I the carer,

Am I the Councillor,

All these labels have been the reasons behind the outcomes but in all these labels who Am I is the question I still ask myself although I have the answer I can't get to it because who Am I without all the labels...

Neema



The three of us

Hello sweet child, I love you. Is it you hiding inside me? Me, a victim and a perpetrator, hurt and hurtful, blamed and blaming, judged and judging, terrified and raging. Me, a dead man walking. Me, the one who felt a loneliness a few have. Me, the survivor. Me, a fake identity, a fragile giant of sand, as strong as a lion, and as fragile as a snowflake. Me, who was built day after day by grains of anger, shame, judgment, abandonment and neglect. Me, an empty heart, a core of fear and shame. Me, just another dead man walking; and you, with me, my sweet child.

Hello sweet child. I love you. Give me your hand. I will hold it lightly, like it was a feather and I will caress it sweetly, like it was your palpitating heart or a dry autumn leaf, like it was your own fragility, or your own vulnerability, or mine. Like it was the hand of a child, and his tenderness and his spontaneity and his joy.

Trust me, my child, because I am your new mother, and your new father. I am unconditional love. I will rejoice with your joys, cry with your sadness, hurt with your hurt, feel your shame and fear and terror. Give them to me, my child, and as one we'll walk together, alive, precious and free, cause I will be your protector, and your inner voice, and your wisdom. Cause I will be the one who will take you to God and together, the three of us will be as One.

Hello sweet child, I love you

Daniella



The woke and the Killing Joke

Every day awaking to an oppressive world, experiencing the utter contempt rulers have over the ruled. The system is not working for anyone, except the privileged few.

Nothing really shocks me anymore, divisive rhetoric dominates, who is the scapegoat for the hate week; the disability claimant, the men on boats, Trans people, divide and rule that's how it works. Look the other way, look at the bogeymen the airwaves present, stay divided, stay powerless, stay angry at your fellow oppressed human beings and not your oppressors

Why do oppressed people seem to so easily fall in line with the oppressors? Lately I hear others not in positions of privilege; they are so readily angry at "woke" ideas. Why? Why are people so willing to side with the oppressor and cheer on the erosion of human rights? Who does not want equality? It's not "woke" ideas you should be afraid of, and you are not having "woke" ideology forced upon you, your right to be a bigot hasn't been cancelled, is the only free speech you care to protect the right to other, wound and hurt?

Stay alert to social injustice, stay woke and why not go stick on some **Killing Joke**

"See the sun turn green
From my penthouse window
It's different now
Because you got no shelter
Alienation
By experimentation
Enjoy yourself
This is the new age"

Feeling so alienated, distressed and disgusted at the world right now, struggling to find anything positive or optimistic to say, together with the sad departure of Killing Joke founding member, guitarist Geordie Walker a matter of days ago (25/11/23 – Geordie Walker rest in peace), I am compelled to offer some of my reflections on Killing Joke, not least from the context of experiencing severe depression and poor mental health, the Joke often provided a most appropriate soundtrack to life like no other. Not easy listening, once likened by a fellow founding member drummer Big Paul Fergusson as “the sound of the Earth vomiting”

Geordie Walker’s guitar I can only describe as the sound of the output of an entire steel works. There is a catharsis to the vomiting Earth in the music of Killing Joke, the tribal energy conjured up by Big Paul’s drumming and of course the sheer primal rage conjured up in the lyrics and vocals of Jaz Coleman. Jaz’s stage and interview persona has long been perceived as that of a raving mad man, not least to those of who have no appreciation for the heavier and darker side of rock music. Killing Joke presented material based on Jaz’s own real mental health struggles;

“I was isolated by the way I thought and felt
They saw my mood-swings
I travelled down the longitude of opposite emotions
I Bi-Polar”

Jaz Coleman travelled a long journey from dropping out of school getting entangled in petty crime to becoming amongst other things a world respected classical music composer, speaking as a “mad person”, that’s very inspiring.

‘Age of Greed’ may have been written in 1989, it remains all too familiar to where the world is now;

“Privatize the people's lives
Be part of the company (or fade!)
Appliance of science to privatize their lives

Water is our business
Electricity is our business
Gas is our business
Lives are our business
Business is our business
Your money, my time
Your stinking industrial bathwater, my wine
Imbalance induces hate
How will you bridge the gap
Between the endless buffet
And the empty plate I have
I feel hate I feel hate!"

For those of you hating on the notion of being woke to social injustice,
to bringing about equality for all, to saving our planet from war and
environmental destruction, your hate is seriously misdirected...

Anonymous Goth



The yellow butterfly



The yellow butterfly
That fluttered past
Was summer's sign
I am witness to that
I remember the scent
Strong flowers made
How can I enter a forest?
Sometimes under the shade
I recall that in the heat
How I passed people by
How hot were my feet?
How tired was I?

But harsh shall be the weather
Cold shall be the wind
For it is now late in summer
And it is about to end

Shafin



Then

Art & poem



Before then she had been water
Quenching the first of every needing creature
She gave and she gave until she turned from sea into desert.

Yet instead of dying of all the heat and all the sadness
She took all of her pain
And from her own ashes became fire!

Then she had made broken look beautiful
And strong look invincible

She had walked with the Universe on her shoulders
And had made it look like a pair of wings.

Nicola



Waves



Anonymous



To alcohol

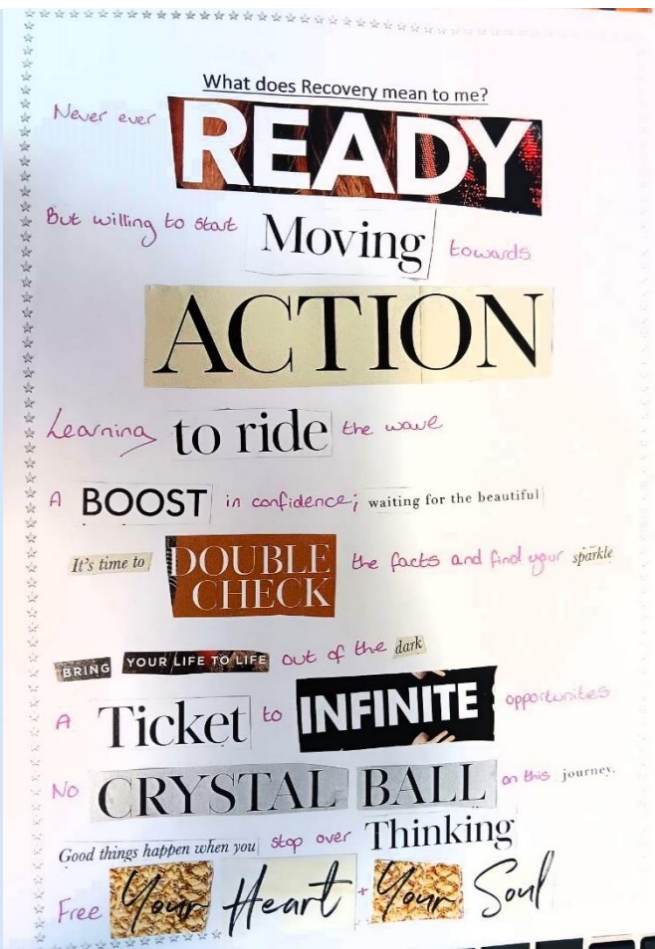


Why do you try to love me when it's all a lie?
You take away my....
My power
My soul,
My zest for life
My beauty
My light
My mental health
I need my peace
O wanna be free from you
So leave me be

Kelly



What does Recovery mean to me?



Gemma

What does Recovery mean to me?

To me recovery is messy. It means facing fear. facing the reality that I no longer know who I am. I have no more self belief about what I was like before the illness as I have become submissive.

To me recovery is tough. It means letting go of strict rules. Learning to override critical thoughts + instead check for facts. It requires constant effort + is tiring.

To me recovery is overwhelming. As you reduce + stop bad coping behaviours the urges + thoughts only get stronger, louder + more demanding. Standing up to the bullying voice only makes it fight harder + this can tempt you back in as you cling onto a false sense of safety + control.

To me recovery is scary. My life has been on hold + my mind tortured. To complain about not changing feels pathetic as it has to come from within. But what if hope + effort are not enough? Freedom from overthinking feels so out of reach that it's hard to believe it can be achieved.

To me recovery is power. Power to stand up + fight. Courage to accept yourself + trust in the help of others. Recovery cannot happen without change. Change cannot happen without action. Action takes real inner strength.

To me recovery is freedom. Stepping out of the darkness + into the light. Appreciating the small steps that one day will lead to a shift in perspective + a better relationship with food. Recovery is messy but it can become beautiful if it lets you get back the happiness of spontaneous living.

Gemma



What does Recovery mean to me?

Recovery is a pretty broad spectrum. I don't know where I want to get to yet, but I do know I want to find somewhere within it.

My eating disorder has stolen so much from me, so much time and enjoyment. I don't want to miss anymore, from missing out on my sister's birthday, to not being able to munch on birthday cake, these are moments I want back.

I dream of my old self, easy-go lucky, chilled and happy girl who had dreams and goals. I want that old girl back, I want to start working on my career, setting those goals, achieving things and make something of myself. I am planning on going to university next year. I am determined to get there and get my diploma.

There are so many relationships I want to heal during my recovery, they have been so tainted from my ED. I want everything to go back to the way it was but in a new way. Most importantly I want my mum back, I want her to laugh with me again, to squeeze me tight and to spend time with her. She is my rock and hero. She has fought for me and it's my time to fight for her.

My sister is my inspiration truly, she has her life sorted, she at university, has a boyfriend, has a car, has friends and has a amazing relationship with food. She is everything I want to be. I want to go to the cinema with her and share a bag of minstreels, eat her own cooked food, chill on the sofa with her, only I can change myself to do this.

I love food, all kinds of food, I want to enjoy it again, eat it without thinking, have no guilt, no over calculating, just have joy from it. I want to be able to cook food to nourish my body, to look after myself.

Hannah



Writing... Penning... Composing... Creating...

Together we gather.

Honouring each other.

Engaging our journals.

Writing out our assigned themes.

Relishing each other's upcoming expressions.

Immersed in our inner world.

Thoughts tumbling from our pens.

Igniting conversations through varied responses.

Never 'hopefully' judging these interpretations.

Greeting these unheard unique perspectives.

Gathering each month.

Receiving new themes.

Onward. Progressing. Confidently.

Understanding personalities better.

whereby

Positive Affirmations are formed!

Anonymous



Too Shallow Too Deep

Art & poem



Whilst he strolled ahead she walked behind
For this she was deemed too slow and without her own mind
In Truth alone as he seldom aside
Yet she leading in front he hated her pride.
Her advice was doubted and her guidance mocked
Branded too proud to loud too content too silent too sad
Showing little ambition they said it was bad
Yet in following her dreams they said “She’s Mad!”

He pretended to listen and closed his ears
As well as teased and laughed at her fears
For twenty and more years she listened to it all
And tried to be that Woman she felt she should
To be as he told her best she could.
Yet one day she asked what is best for herself
Instead of trying to please everyone else
So she walked to the woods and stood with the trees
She heard the wind whisper and danced with the leaves.
She sang to the Palm the Fern and the Pine
And shared what was felt time after time
That she was never enough that she did too little
And was always too much!
Too noisy too quiet too fierce or too weak
Too clever too foolish too bold or too meek.
At last she found space in a small clearing.
Very tired! Finally she simply, just stopped.
Diligently she listened to the sounds from the trees
And sat there for hours not wishing to return nor wanting to leave
Because the forest said nothing.
It just let her breathe.

Nicola



Knowing direction from reflection

Art & poem



It's now time for kindred spirits to eagerly equip themselves
Keen to embark,
Keeping in mind, that all kind has kudos and value,
Finding it and knowing it, that's the trick!

Kept safely perhaps from the beginning from within,
Thinking back, rekindling memories to find the key.

Keeping on track,
Steering through the kerfuffle,
Hiccups and kinks,
Knowledge and resilience,
Absorbing the knocks, kaleidoscopic vision.

Nicola



Magical conscious dance

Art & poem



When we move
Feel shake and dance freely
We can transform our pain into strength
And our wounds into power

When we dance
Shake and move we gain enough compassion
The change the mistreatment of others into honour
And the tantrums of our wounded inner children into discipline

When we dance
Feel let go and heal
We can turn generational trauma into a blessing
And become cycle breakers

When we dance
Freely we honour the truth
Our hearts sing and our life becomes as a dance
If we deny our Truth we won't know our own song
Nor believe there's any time to dance

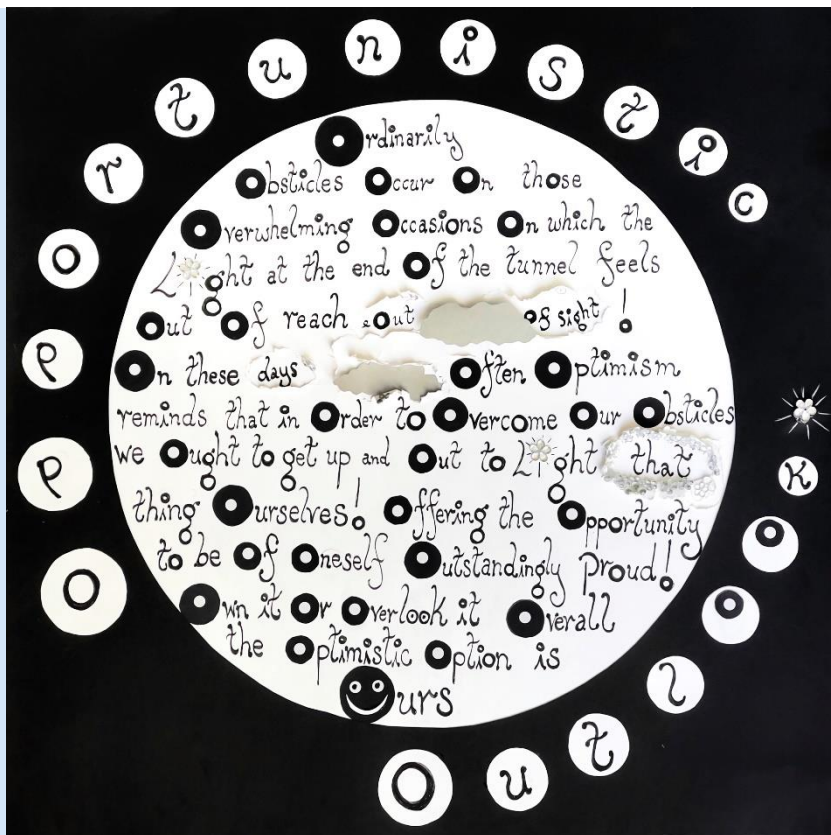
Let's dance

Nicola



Taking the time to be in awe

Art & poem



Optimistic Option Observed

Ordinarily obstacles occur,

On those overwhelming occasions when the light at the end of the tunnel feels Out of reach and out of sight.

On these days,

Often, Optimism reminds, that in order to overcome our obstacles, we
Ought to get up and out to light that thing ourselves!

Offering the opportunity to be of oneself, outstandingly proud!

Own it

Or overlook it?

Overall, the optimistic option is ours.

Obstacles don't block the path,

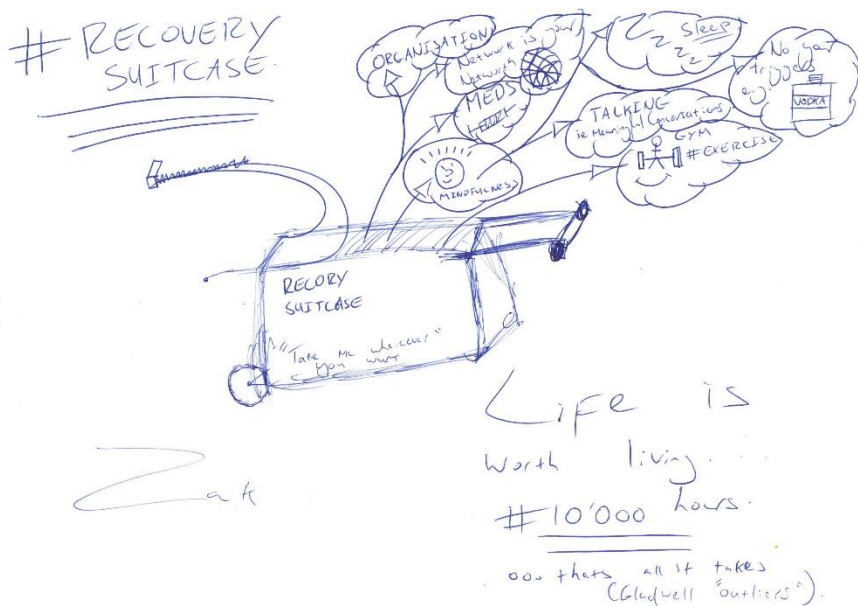
They are the path!

An outcome inevitably observed.

Nicola



The suitcase



Zak



Mask

Mask I've changed my behaviours
I've silenced my storm.
I hope nobody can see there's a mask being worn.
No matter the effort, It's never enough...
So instead, I break down, and will call my own bluff.
I'm asked "what's happened?"
"But why have you changed?"
There's meltdowns and nonsense, ... I must be deranged?
I followed your rules, I did everything right, But it's not helping me
much so I gave up the fight.
You forgot to listen.
And you forgot to ask: "What's wrong with the system?"
"Why wear a mask

Anonymous



A trip of the District Line to Bow
Community Jam in Earl Ferrers pub, Streatham
Late night bustling in Ely's Yard, E1
David Lynch's assistant



Alex

Excerpts- my experience so far

I think we need a Surrealist renaissance in our current times to escape an increasingly sterilised culture where the world has been designed to prioritise constant vigilance, data collection, and economic growth. There is very little room made for the hidden, ephemeral and inexplicable magic that goes on in our unconscious. We don't listen to it enough.

Being psychotic means you have delusions and lose touch with 'reality' but it doesn't mean that you are violent and insensitive to people. There is still a huge stigma about psychosis and nobody wants to be called a 'psycho' – but I think there is a deep misunderstanding about what it is and it can be incredibly isolating for those suffering it. It's painful to know that many may not understand what it's like and how deeply traumatic it is for the sufferer. In fact, psychosis affects 1 in 100 people in the UK so it is more common than you think.

To all those with psychosis, remember you shouldn't be ashamed – there were external circumstances and pressures that would have led you to your episode that a lot of the time are out of your control. But remember that your brain has great capacity for imagining new worlds and that is something you can hold on to. A lot of the time reality can be very painful and tedious so it's completely understandable that we look for alternative realities.

Alex



(A collection)

Respect

There is a no right or wrong way
There is always a way for everyone
There are no questions
And there are no answers
Just feelings
They can be misconstrued
By some others
Love and respect for others
And for ourselves
And more important than what we believe
We are all human
But we are made differently
Each one of us is unique and very special
It takes a healthy mind to save a life
And an unhealthy mind to take a life
Life is precious; love it and respect it

Anonymous

My road to recovery

Recovery today
Recovery tomorrow
Recovery yesterday
I will do what I can today
Only because I can
I will prepare for tomorrow
Only if I can

I will cherish and be thankful for yesterday
Only as much as I can
All for the sake of well-being...

Anonymous

Mindfulness

Be mindful of whatever you do or say
Be mindful of nature
Your environment and surroundings
It will help to achieve your goals in life
Life is beautiful
Enjoy it moment by moment
If you can

Anonymous

(untitled)

I am not an expert on life
I just do what I think is good for me

Anonymous



My depression

I feel completely alone in my thoughts which are all pervasive and intrusive, they threaten my very existence and I just want to empty out my mind and start sorting through the never-ending and ceaseless dialogue of my mind my thoughts race, hard to let me go and quieten my mind and give me peace. Therefore my scattered thoughts need to be thrown up in the air like playing cards as they land, as I try and aimlessly grab hold of them to order this never-ending chaos.

I try to cling on to positive thoughts, but they almost always dwindle and dissipate and die in an almost tangible manner!

I can't afford to feel anything as it adds to my paralysis of my mind as it gets overwhelmed in turmoil and pain!

The pain I feel is a mental pressure echoed in a physical pain and culminating in a tension of muscles and concluding in a sharp pain.

I need some kind of relief, some peace of mind somewhere, somehow!

Caroline

Empty

Emptiness is how I feel, empty like a shell, a hollow space that needs to be filled, a desolate and solitary place only I can feel.

An empty void longing to be with, not without! A tangible nothingness, something lacking without purpose, a void that has to be filled to achieve a purpose.

I want to feel a purpose in life, something or someone with substance,
not scattered and all over the place without direction, like a rudderless
dingy, empty going headfirst into the doldrums!

Caroline



This Deserted Town (song)

Drawn-out faces, derelict places – the crows look down from the telephone wire /

The writing on the wall spells out in graffiti, a youth wasted in a darkened squat /

A corpse-like figure in a tattered raincoat, searches the ground for cigarette butts /

A lifeless street with vacant windows is the story of the world where the bottom fell out!

There's time in his gaze – the end this malaise /

Counting on the days – only fortune favours the brave... But, it goes on... it goes on! (x2)

Destitute, curb-crawling, hungry – the needle pricks mark her blood-filled veins /

A tattooed man stands by a lamppost with a big issue and a coin in his hand /

Chewing gum covers every paving stone; pigeons lying rotting over gutter drains /

Yes, an empty road with burnt out cars tells the tale of a town with its soul plucked out!

When the wrecking ball comes down – the walls will tumble to the ground /

Thunder and lightning will sound – all around this deserted town... it's a long time gone... yeah, a long time gone! (x2)

Peddle to the metal, a life lived mean – is there any way out of this dead-end hole /

Kicked in bus stops and boarded up doorways – slates falling down and the rain pouring in /

There's a church up on the hill with over grown tomb stones but God
left this place a thousand years ago /

Tin pan alleys with whiskey bottles – the night turns black when the
lights go out!

For whom the bell tolls - nobody knows /

But the scars are there to show – we took the final blows... the pain
never ends... no, it never ends! (x2 to END)

Greg

A Man Ain't No Man Without His Trousers

A man without his trousers is like a fish without a bicycle /

A junior without a high school /

A man without his trousers is man in need (indeed) !

A man without his trousers is like ants without any pants /

A Guildenstern without his Rosencrantz /

A termite without a mound /

A market without a town /

A mole without a mountain /

A theatre without a curtain /

A baboon without a red raw bum ; a ghetto without a slum ; or,
algebra without a sum !

A man without his trousers is like a rat without a drainpipe /

A qwertyuiop keyboard without any type /

A flower without its wall /

Jericho without its fall /

A trawler without its trawl /

A pig without its suckling's, mud, or a trough /
A Pink Floyd concert with the lights turned off /
Peas outside their pods /
Life without a law of the sods /
Sardines cramped into their tins /
Yellow or blue tuna without their fins /
A horse without a saddle, rowing the wrong way up Shit Creek without
a paddle !

A man without his trousers ... means a ferret is not to be seen, yet, at
least ones conscious remains clean /

A man without his trousers is like a man up a fuzzy tree /

Elvis without a quiff, a toilet, or cheeseburgers /

A Royal without a We (or a family) /

A needle without a vein /

A track without a train /

The Blues without a Freddie, an Albert, or a BB King !

Greg

Bell-Bottom-Dollar Blues (Song)

Well, there's heat in the city – chill in the 'frigerated, carcass-storing
'partment block /

Car radiator steam scatters light thru the heavy Cuppa-soup smog /

Smoke stench in his fetid, ashtray-strewn room – he dreams of screen
saving idle moments through the nightmare-ish gloom /

The creep in the basement level filmic dusk – God knows it's a hellfire
drudge /

So, let's make a break for the border – sling a right hook /

Take the noose out of your pocket – join the posse to hunt down the crooks /

There's no time like the present to pay back what you ain't got – so, why not turn your back around and down just one more shot !

Yeah, playin' your dues - using what you have to use – singin' out those blues – waiting for tomorrow's tragic headline news ! (x2)

They're running for the A-Train, making their way to platform B – why is it that when the smoke clears, still we cannot see ? /

The curve of her hips was built to break a thousand camels backs – and a thousand heads will turn every time she opens her lips /

The levee is collapsing under the weight of all we lack – and, there's a storm in the eye of the needle, but, easy living is just for those who make it their own evil /

Our pipe dreams are not what they seem and fast disappear – when you're near to the brink things are not what you think and no longer seem so clear !

Yeah, playin' your dues - losin' what you got to use ; singing dem' blues – waiting for the next day's sad old front page news ! (x2)

Is this just the way life is, or, is this really what we choose...?

Greg



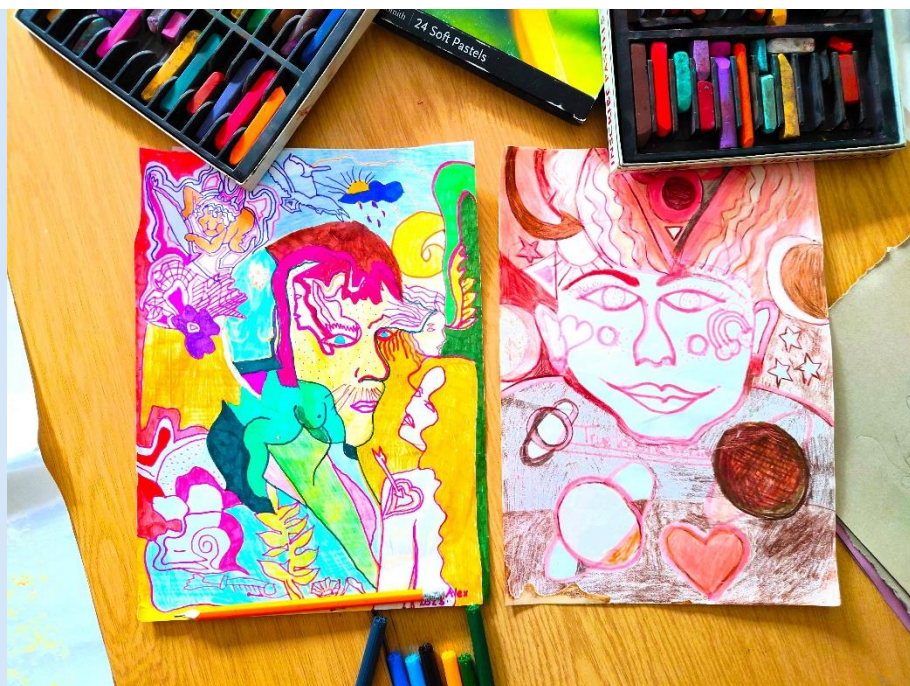
(untitled sketch)



Sharon



Faces and materials



A/



(Group poem)

Black is the colour of my true love's hair
White the colour snow nice and cold
Green is the colour of calm
And red is the colour of blood and anger!!!
Colours mean different things to different people
Absolutely! We are all relative, not absolute!
Purple rain, purple rain

*

I need to write something that rhymes
Smiles from miles away
Remind me of the passage of time and the good old days
Being is time and time is being and being on time helps!
Smile on a face
Living in a rat-race
A never ending case

Group



Homeless on the Street

Homeless on the street, no-where to sleep, and nothing to eat
Lost & forgotten with spirits downtrodden

Don't despair STREETLINK is there with a listening ear and a helping
hand leading the homeless to a better land

From every soul they rescue a new story can begin- because being
homeless is not a sin

In the midst of the city's noise, STREETLINK shines like a star

A beacon of hope & joy to those who've gone too far

So let us give thanks for this charity so wise, & may we remember that
love can heal all cries

Nicolas



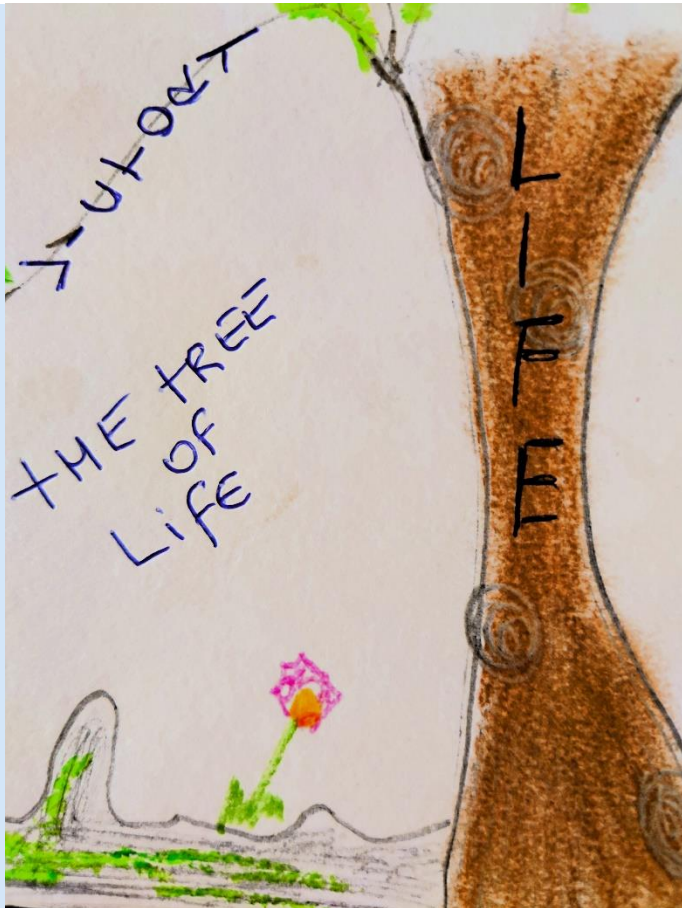
Hope



Anonymous



Life tree



Paulo



Loss

Where did it go and why is it so easy to forget.

I am still here.

Judgement, confusion, Hurt and grief, but it's only a thing.

Tears, shouting, screaming, sleeping - fuelling the train of bereavement on it's journey.

Practicality, organisation, routine brings back the order.

Courage, discipline and appreciation, puts the train on another track.

Determination of the spirit is always what lives on.

Donna



Love



Anonymous



Pattern



Anonymous



Patterns



Anonymous



Hope

This journey that I find myself on, is not one that I could ever have imagined being on.

But now that I'm here and on it, I have to be accepting, allowing myself to feel those emotions and be this new me with each passing day.

Taking small steps each and every day, looking for some small amount of hope with each sunrise that I see, I'm holding and carrying that hope with each sunset that follows.

There are those fleeting moments of pure joy, laughter, happiness, pleasure which being hopeful and having hope, will bring those moments more often and lasting longer I pray.

I carry you with me every day, no matter where that may be; hoping that you can see it is now you who carry me, on this new journey that I call HOPE.

Launa

(untitled)

My healing is ongoing, though I will never fully be healed. I'm learning to be accepting of that, to have self love, compassion, and grace for this new being that is me.

I have this wound that is just there, gaping, raw with this pain that is always radiating out of it. I feared that it would forever be like this. Keeping me paralysed, unable to function, be, and do.

With some help, support, love shown & given by others, some kindness
I give to myself, my wound is not so gaping anymore.

I know that it will never fully close or stop causing me pain, but I want
to have hope that I will in time be strong enough to not be so fearful or
paralysed by this pain.

I can see some small glimmer of light where there was only darkness, for
this is now a new being, but it is still me.

Launa



Shorts

What is recovery? Something to hold onto
Its gives me assurance

*

If someone gets in the way of your recovery....
Show them the middle finger!

*

I don't have a destination
But I like to be amongst people who make me feel safe

Anonymous



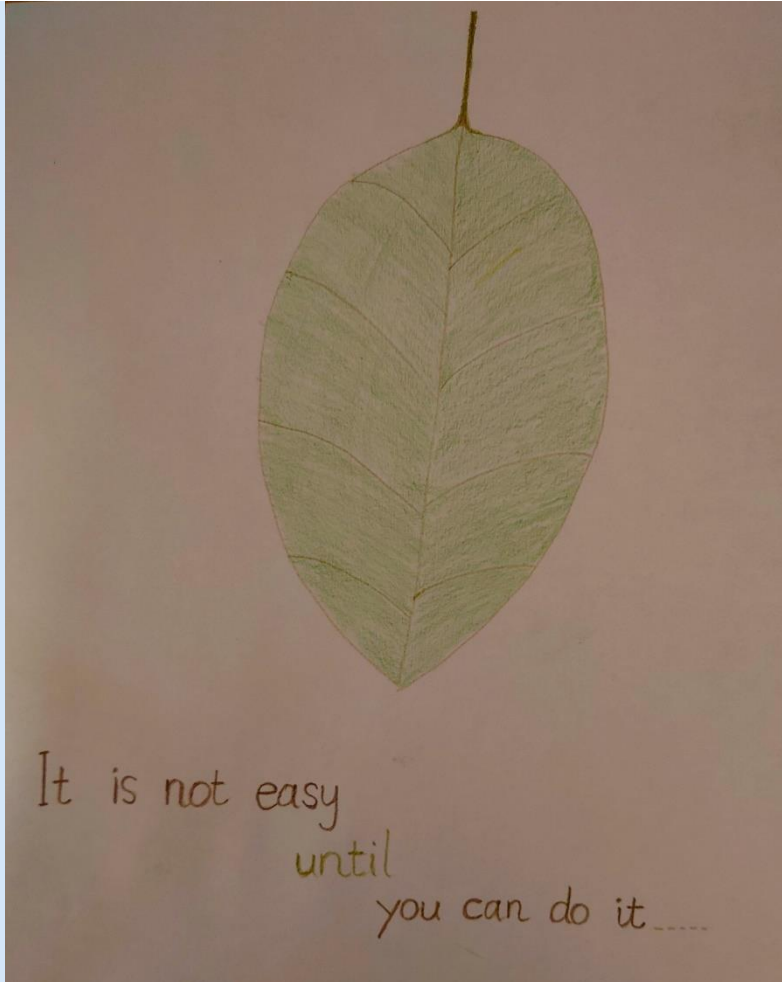
Respect

There is no right or wrong way
There is always a way for everyone
There are no questions
And there are no answers
Just feelings
They can be misconstrued
By some others
Love and respect for others
And for ourselves
Are more important
Than what we believe
We are all human
But we are made differently
Each one of us is unique and very special
It takes a healthy mind to save a life
Life is precious: love and respect it

Anonymous



Leaf



Anonymous



The tree



Premlata



Thank you for reading

We hope you enjoy this treasury of words and art. Heart-felt ‘thank you’ to each and every contributor.

If you would like a copy or further information, please contact:

Martin.weegman@nhs.net

(Please note, Martin retires from the NHS end of September 2024 and this email account will not work after this time)

After this time, please contact:

Anne.whelan1@nhs.net





A Treasury of Word & Art

This collection of writing and art by service users and ex-service users of St Ann's Hospital was gathered over 2022 and 2023.

The spark began in a group called 'My Recovery Group' but the idea spread and many others contributed to the final product. All have given permission to print and publish their work and were given three options for identifying: first name, anonymous or pseudonym

This collection is a celebration of creativity and the role that words and art can play in giving voice to suffering, recovery and overcoming. It is a treasury of lived experience – voices from the heart. It is a gallery of inspiration and wisdom

This is available on request to any service user or carer free of charge, online or printed. Please ask your relevant clinician.

We are grateful to Kate, ex-service user, for advising on collation and formatting of the collection.