

# THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

## Volume 2



**DIANE BOUSFIELD**

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“The Fight for Survival Volume 2 is a collection of poems I have written following the long and challenging journey my husband Tony and I are still experiencing 7 precious years on from his life changing brain injury in 2011 which resulted in a 5 month hospital stay and a challenging time in intensive care.

I hope as our Fight for Survival continues my poetry will offer comfort and support to survivors and their families on the critical care journey.

In my previous life I worked for 30 years full time until undergoing extensive major surgery myself in 2009. I am now Tony’s Full Time Carer and the Secretary of ICUsteps Tees where I have the unique opportunity to support others who have experienced critical illness.

I am the author of “The Fight for Survival” which is in hospitals universities and outlets throughout the region and the country raising awareness and hopefully helping others who have experienced intensive care. I continue to write and recite my poetry at conferences workshops and rehabilitation after critical illness events to raise awareness of the patient carer voice.

The excellent medical care and intervention we received and continue to receive is our reason for being alive”

*This booklet has been produced by North of England Critical Care Network  
on behalf of Diane Bousfield.*

## **Poems**

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### **70 Years of NHS**

(Dedicated to celebrate the birth of the NHS 5 July 1948)

For 70 years from the cradle to the grave  
The body of the NHS our families lives you've saved  
Staff the life blood keeping the NHS flowing  
Patients and their families coming and going  
The limbs of departments span functions too numerous to count  
Volumes of admissions every day they mount  
The heart of the system beating fast  
Progressing and moving forward from the days of the past  
From cardiology neurology high dependency and critical care  
Caring health professionals for our family have always been there  
To nurse us through the traumatic times in our life  
From emergency admissions to the surgeon's knife  
You put back the pieces when we break and fall  
A constant safety net available in the UK to all  
An incredible institution second to none  
We'd be sadly off if resources and funding had gone  
So here's to another 70 years let's hope there will be  
Still an NHS in our country serving you and me

### A Nomination in Verse

*Dedicated to Lindsay Garcia Debbie Craddock & ICU3 Team The James Cook University Hospital*

For 7 years the ICU team have always been there  
With empathy commitment compassion and exemplary care  
From Tony's admission in 2011 to ICU3  
A quality of life is now evident for all to see  
I'll never forget Trevor who nursed Tony that very first night  
He offered calm logical support answering my questions suppressing my fright  
And team leaders Debbie and Lindsay who were always there  
Offering comfort and support and excellent quality nursing care  
The way I was prepared and involved made ICU stand out from the crowd  
ICU3 you would have made Florence Nightingale very proud  
And the friendly caring team of nurses whose names I didn't know  
Who lifted my spirits when I was feeling low?  
I was totally prepared for what to expect when I entered the ICU station  
Wiring tubing artificial ventilation & induced coma with zero communication  
The unit had an aura of control and total calm  
No panic confusion or hint of alarm  
Understanding that ICU were battling with Tony's life to save  
The last human barrier between the here and now and the grave  
But reassurance from good leadership when relatives need it most  
ICU3 were definitely perfect hosts  
The delight reflecting on everyone when from coma Tony uttered his first words  
"Don't go home" he was once again back in my world  
Explanations of care were clearly given  
Relative and Patient orientated professionally driven  
I always slept easy in my bed at night  
Knowing Tony's care was constant and dignified throughout his life threatening plight  
It's the little things that remain with you over time  
A nurse telling Tony what I said on the telephone line  
Afternoon parting from his bedside it was difficult leaving  
So I rang the unit every morning and evening  
He kept telling the nurses "He loved his wife"  
But couldn't remember anything else of his life  
His delight in pulling of wires would inevitably come to a sticky end  
I knew for a solution on the nursing team I could depend  
Pillow cases on his hands were used for his own safety to keep him restrained  
All reasons for appropriate actions clearly and methodically explained  
Although out of my comfort zone I was made to feel involved in Tony's care  
Making critical decisions on his behalf we would normally share  
From flexible visiting hours to involvement in decisions  
Total wrap around care throughout Tony's admission  
ICU care continues via our local ICUsteps support group  
An intuitive innovative way of keeping patients and their families in the loop  
By offering empathy and support for the road ahead  
A lifeline to continue the journey from an ICU bed  
The opportunity to feel you're not alone  
Remaining in contact with ICU health professionals when you've come home  
A safety net to catch you when you fall  
Reassurance and confidence to make you again feel tall  
There are numerous hurdles and problems that lie ahead  
The opportunity to share and talk through your experiences removes some of the dread  
Every six weeks it's very comforting to see  
There's an opportunity to discuss things with nursing staff from ICU3  
It doesn't matter how far you are down the line  
This ICU connection is a most precious time



Physical emotional cognitive & visual disabilities remain  
Full of complexities and challenges our lives will never be the same  
An invitation to rebuild the building bricks of our life through revisiting ICU3  
To attempt to put the pieces of the jigsaw back for Tony and me  
He still has no memory of his 5 month hospital stay  
Vivid memories and snapshots are with me everyday  
But it was lovely to be there with him by my side  
The smile on my face I just couldn't hide  
ICU is a frightening but a special place to be  
With a scrupulously clean environment for all to see  
Tony will never know how close he came to leaving this world behind  
The memories are mine forever etched within my mind  
Life's so precious you can never repay the cost  
It doesn't bear to think about what we could have lost  
The all-inclusive care we received was second to none  
And it continues today as we try to move along  
Tony survived two brain abscesses hydrocephalus and multiple operations  
Neutropenia thrombocytopenia delirium and hallucinations  
We have challenging epileptic seizures and severe heart failure has now been added to the list  
So The Fight for survival will continue as we battle morbidity with every heart beat to exist  
The critical care journey is arduous and long  
But with continuing ICU support and empathy together we are strong  
Tony's body was broken you've given us another 7 years together  
A bond so strong no man will ever sever  
Going the extra mile with support care and help along our way  
Thank you our dedicated ICU3 team with you we'll fight another day

### **NHS Angels**

**A**ngels in the NHS watching over you by day and by night  
**G**uiding caring and medicating under artificial light  
**U**nfailing unrelenting believing your loved one will survive  
**I**ntractable compelling feelings tested to the limit we'll drive  
**D**reams of a future tempting flavours of our lives ahead  
**E**mpowerment from the heart onwards and upwards alleviating dread  
**T**ipping point along our time passage of transformation and trust  
**O**rdeal supreme obstacles and challenges to overcome them we must  
**S**ubconscious mind struggles to seize a smile not a frown  
**U**ndeniable freedom from the shackles which tie us down  
**R**eality and reasoning our real story's hard to measure  
**V**aporise your emotions and relieve the pressure  
**I**ncredulous kaleidoscopic incalculable forces at play  
**V**ictory is our quest we've escaped death for today  
**I**ncontrollable world of the body full of life's passion  
**N**ature versus nurture deep fires burn with compassion  
**G**allantly we pick up the gauntlet your critical pain my emotional strain  
**I**ntensive care and dedication both a neurological and physical gain  
**C**olossal upheaval and determination for our very existence you strive  
**U**ltimate reward our survival thank you NHS Angels for saving our lives

## Nocturnal Awakenings

Master pacemaker obviously out of sync  
Uncoordinated geophysical environment no link  
Concealed time clock is hidden from view  
Biological rhythmicity in need of rescue  
Sleep architecture in total disarray  
Hibernation suspension preventing decay  
The genius gap transition between wake and deep sleep  
Transgression into the void where coma sneaks  
Central circadian pacemaker running free  
Stream of consciousness oblivious to see  
Zero communication hidden from view  
Suspension of life a statement so true  
Hypnagogic hallucinations encapsulate the brain  
A solid place to stand if you can take the strain  
Embellishment of imagery gravitates the mind  
Graphic vivid and plausible of every kind  
The lens of the world eyes temporarily hidden  
Reflection and vision uncontrollably forbidden  
Cognitive functions turn to shades of grey  
Delirium is the order of the day  
Oblivion rains down from above  
Your heart beat pounding for the one you love  
Misinterpreted stimuli disorientation illusions  
Reduced responsiveness total confusion  
Auditory visual and tactile hallucinations  
Psychedelic colour palette creative fascinations  
Abnormalities in thoughts and total perception  
Depleted awareness increased deception  
Bizarre ideas and vivid dreams  
Misperception the world is no longer what it seems  
Conflicting images and reasoning flood my thoughts  
Bitter sweet emotions of every sort  
Will Tony ever perceive what is really true?  
Or remain in a dream-like state without a clue  
My heart strings pulled forever yearning  
Wheels of the carousel forever turning



### **Locus of Internal Focus**

ICU patients and families not victims but survivors  
Using psychological resilience as internal drivers  
Confronting crisis by emotional reaction  
Managing feelings and tragedy to prevent distraction  
Our purpose of living is still very real  
Positivity influencing how we feel  
Mind set needs adjustment from fear to success  
Situation achievable from the depths of distress  
Our formula to rise above challenges with strategies to cope  
Support from our families friends faith love and hope  
The strangling weeds of circumstance will not drag us down  
Buoyancy jacket inflated no longer an option to drown  
The ability to spring back after the initial compression  
Rebounding from the impact of adversity and depression  
Flexure is the order of the day  
Flexibility and resilience the only way to stay  
The rich tapestry of our life has altered its structure  
Weakened threads strengthen and start to gain more lustre  
We still suffer grief anxiety and stress  
Locus of internal focus gives the capacity to address  
The snakes and ladders of our daily routine  
Looking forward not back to how it might have been  
We control orientation our mental reservoir to build  
Capacity to recover when fears are crushed and killed  
Catastrophic decimation will we no longer see  
Survivorship and courage our personal victory

### **The Sands of Time**

Manoeuvring the hairpin curves of a mountain pass  
Sands of time through the hourglass  
Each grain of sand symbolic of emotion  
A blazing trail of inspirational devotion  
Radical transformation foundations rocked to the core  
Building bricks of our lives together we will restore  
Our previous life in the rear-view mirror  
Reflective pools of pastel light shimmer  
Memories flickering golden jewels in the sand  
A lifetime together in the palm of your hand  
Sun sets on days of indescribable feelings  
Reunited once more life affirming new meanings  
Streams of moonlight soothe sleepless nights  
Through a chink in the curtain a silvery light  
Rainwater droplets continually merging  
Tides rolling in rising and surging  
Foaming waves crashing through nature's store  
Ripples gently lapping upon the shore  
Fresh pebbles roll out along the beach  
New beginnings and challenges yet to reach  
Storm clouds have passed and floated away  
Revealing nature's brilliance awakening a new day  
Once again the eagle soars in flight  
All embracing life ascending to dramatic heights  
An analytical balance between illness and health  
Life's victory over death our soul surviving wealth



### **The Cloak of Fear**

A dark silhouette enfolds a cloak of fear  
Water globules trickle a cascade of tears  
Veil of secrecy conceals our position  
Quotidian survival our fundamental mission  
A prism of possibility light streams from above  
Camouflaged in the darkness of a black velvet glove  
Battered and shattered emotionally drained  
Ivy creeps along our trellises devouring our pain  
North wind releases a merciless icy blast  
Turning the leaves of pages written in our past  
Internal and external pharmacies working in tandem  
Spectrum of our wavelengths no longer random  
Fearlessness is waiting in the wings  
Undaunted unflinching our triumph will sing  
Nature's rainbow of colour filtering down  
Clothing us in a reassuringly comforting gown  
Replacing the cloak of fear devastation and dread  
Violet indigo blue green yellow orange and red  
A second chance after knocking on heaven's door  
Rekindled our ailing bodies will restore  
With courage and determination we'll fight those tears  
We'll banish the darkness and conquer our fears

### **River of Recovery**

A thief crept in while you were sleeping  
Manifesting realms idealism creeping  
Dark face of the moon by earth shine  
Single momentary transgression in time  
Fluidity of life in the balance  
Equilibrium fluctuating between the valances  
Lightning bolts striking from all angles  
On the edge of a precipice your existence dangles  
Devastation isolation bliss and solitude  
Mountain passes gorges increasing altitude  
Rocky outcrops sheer screes scrambling your way  
Emotionally physically psychologically drained each day  
Impact of events gaining monumental strength  
Thirst quenching journey undulating in length  
Independency and incapacities cascading down  
A raging torrent in an effervescing gown  
River of recovery energising along  
Noise deafening silence oblivion in song  
Jaws of the valleys swallow emotions  
Strength of loved ones pure devotion  
Formidable barriers to overcome  
Awaking from slumber a rising sun  
Solar beams radiate reflecting light  
Illuminating the world banishing the night  
Amazement the thief's presence no longer imminent  
New beginnings venture to an unfamiliar continent  
Dark canopy elevates uplifting our soul  
Critical illness will not take its toll  
Breath-taking fresh air rejuvenating our health  
The richest treasure trove for all "Life itself"

### The Vortex

A vortex of vulnerability rotates and swims  
Scars from the battlefield a whirlpool begins  
Survival from burnout the magnitude levels  
Tempestuous events eliminate those devils  
Impassioned resilient an arduous journey ahead  
Tear jerking vivid images from an ICU bed  
Visualisation which haunts and flares  
Disturbing flashbacks extraordinary nightmares  
Hidden depths lurk within dark pools  
Thunder rumbles clash until the sun breaks through  
Riches of hope continue to flourish  
The leaves of our life no longer crushed but nourished  
Dependence on the vine of medical intervention  
Cultivated and nurtured receiving dedicated attention  
Monumental success survival achieved  
Life changing situation has to be experienced to be believed  
The epitome of existence now ours to share  
Heart rendering and warming to all who've been there  
Life scales of equilibrium have returned  
Emotional and psychological trauma will always burn  
Unparalleled experiences will remain until we die  
Obstacles no longer crush us or make us cry  
Robust strength perceptual memories from our senses  
Inferential knowledge boundaries for new fences  
The wisdom from medicine and science justifying true belief  
Encapsulating evidence and trust truly eliminating grief  
Enlightenment of our intricate web pauses the clocks of time  
Memories of ICU forever in our brains vaults are yours and mine



## The Abyss

Your body is broken my spirit is crushed  
Flight of human mind no longer hushed  
Abyss a shaft of agonising emotions  
A weakened state of deflation and devotion  
Boldly I stand with intensity and grief  
Manifestation of solitude stolen by a thief  
Living on autopilot deeply touched by clinical care  
Powerful changes on life impacting on every layer  
My heart is restless our world has crumbled  
Overwhelming chasm into which we have tumbled  
Silence becomes deafening compassion never fails  
Patience trust and preparation for which the future entails  
My thought process reverberating echoes in my brain  
Radiating and illuminating our handcrafted trail  
ICU the phenomenal miracle zone  
Where burning embers rekindle no longer alone  
Perception of information reliant on every word  
Communication and decision making intuitively heard  
Attention span depleting waxing and waning  
Physical emotional and psychological trauma staining  
Struggling to formulate reasoning within the machine  
Questioning resistance of forces from within my very being  
Stream of thoughts and knowledge continually evolving  
Combining emotions and pragmatism problem solving  
Flashbulb memories fired by highly emotional events  
Escapism from our straight jacket constraints  
Raging torrents saturating my soul  
Devoured by the void consumed whole  
Grappling to absorb fluid and crystallised intelligence  
Avoidance of overload prevents psychological negligence  
Uncharted waters to the depths we plunge  
Segments of facts and reality continue to lunge  
Life's vivacity will recommence once again  
Inner strength conquers all and will sustain  
Ingredients combine as sustenance rises  
Critical illness no longer holds all the surprises  
We have fought the fight and finished the race  
To face the final journey at our own pace  
Once again into life's adventure we are hurled  
Change and final victory belong to our brave new world

### **Audacious Atoms**

Audacious atoms of anxiety avalanche around  
Body balance burned out blissfully out of bounds  
All consuming courage complete credence in critical care  
Dramatic daily script of life to all who've been there  
Engulfed in emotional overdrive my energy levels perpetually high  
Focusing on frustrating field frequencies will death we defy  
Gravity and gallantry the hero fights for survival  
Adrenaline pumping every second from my arrival  
Intruders injury bacteria and disease imagination runs wild  
Journey to the centre of your soul return to the inner child  
A shield the barrier of stomach churning events  
Crash and burn my immune system fights to prevent  
Be kind to yourself and for your destiny let logic prevail  
As into a future full of complexities and uncertainty we sail  
Life script and laws of survival no one wants to endure  
Magnetism of medical intervention a miraculous cure  
I'm neurologically challenged negative circumstances natural forces  
Overwhelming outpouring of grief and feelings from all sources  
Propel yourself forward from a paralysis of feelings  
Life is magical a passion from survival is believing  
Phenomenal patrol cells in my body prevent a deep spasm  
Questions quenching concerns and doubts too numerous to be unfathomed  
Reality bites I'm in a drama an impassioned scene  
Summon attack teams to destroy all intruders nothing is as it seems  
Trauma a true perspective time to adjust  
Unpredictable unfamiliar adapt to move forward we must  
Venturing into the unknown a key of gratitude we turn  
Wrapped within a combination of conditions and incapacities to learn  
No one rushes to audition for the roles we play  
In our ICU movie viewing new episodes every day  
Experiences and dimensions from the edge we'll relive every part  
Graphic life changing memories forever emblazoned on our hearts

### **The Golden Key**

Critical illness temporarily closes the door of life  
On patient relative partner family husband and wife  
Intensive care medics fight to preserve the biological clock  
Uniquely designed so the golden key can re-open the lock  
Which opens the door to a new life on the other side  
Full of hope and promise for a future a full turn of the tide  
Cognitive physical mental and visual obstacles we yearn to overcome  
Life no longer run of the mill routine or hum drum  
Instead new challenges lie await at every turn  
With grit and determination together we will learn  
Grateful for each breath together we take  
The key to a new life is now ours to make  
Not for the faint hearted but for the incredibly strong  
The undulating journey ahead is arduous and long  
A precious opportunity given with new moments to share  
Courageous and resilient families survive thanks to intensive care



### Hidden Depths

Slow floating mass of psychological and emotional fear  
Perception of recovery you're not what you appear  
Released from intensive care by survival floating free  
On a stream of open water for all to see  
A small tip of the iceberg remains on view  
Beneath the surface hidden depths people haven't a clue  
Accumulation and compaction of traumatic events  
Psychological sequela we struggle to prevent  
Subterranean impacts invisible to the human eye  
Delusions and psychological morbidity we question why  
Melting anxiety hard core will always remain  
Through the bursting bubbles we will sustain  
Cast afloat with a wave of new challenges in life's great ocean  
The whole family continually dealing with grief and devotion  
Forcefully fighting to move forward we must  
Adapting to disabilities hidden and visible we all have to adjust  
A quality of life is still ours for the taking  
Future prognosis in our hands for the making  
We're told from outward appearances we're all doing well  
No one really can perceive the undercurrent swell  
From the plunging fathoms of the deep  
To the relentless nights we go without sleep  
Our secret weapon a resilience so hard to describe  
Developed from survival and incredible drive  
To the outsider we'll continue this incredible deception  
Invisible to the naked eye and human perception  
To keep precious life and family near  
Together we'll rise above trauma and emotional fear

### ICU The Journey

If I could bottle my ICU experience and send it out to sea  
No matter how strong the waves it would still be part of me  
You're firefighting emotionally and physically every day  
Memories from severe trauma to real kindness always stay  
Your attitude to life changes you value every minute every hour  
Don't be afraid of what you see climb up the moral fibre tower  
Stay positive and put your trust in ICU care  
Don't bottle up emotions talk and share  
The golden rule of survival never give up hope  
ICUsteps Tees support group is here to help you cope  
We've passed through the firewall and come into the light  
Survivors and their families sharing courage friendship and true fight  
So when you're feeling ready why not come along  
We're not victims but survivors and together we are strong

## ICU The Learning Curve

Be prepared for human limitations to be broken  
Explore possibilities don't drown in emotion  
ICU is a critical learning curve  
Narrow escapes round every corner to swerve  
Visualise to minimise impact of initial shock  
Onwards the pointers are turning on the ICU clock  
Lessons in life don't come much harder  
Venture forward with courage from the medicinal larder  
Evolving restoring backbone for the challenges ahead  
Dare to imagine a future beyond an ICU bed

## The Fight for Survival Goes on

Some days we don't know how we'll carry on  
The pain is so intense the feelings so strong  
Just when we thought we'd started to win  
Another life threatening condition develops and pierces us from within  
Tony's severe heart failure is irreversible our futures uncertain  
A storm cloud descends over us as a large black curtain  
And so the fight for survival goes on  
We need to focus remain positive and try to be strong  
Value and cherish the moments we have together  
Each precious second we never say never  
We've faced death through life threatening critical illness we know the score  
Having had the life changing and enhancing experiences of being there before  
Tony survived 2 brain abscesses hydrocephalus and neutropenia  
A series of generalised tonic clonic seizures and thrombocytopenia  
Successfully we've adapted to physical visual and cognitive impairments  
Amaurosis fugax stroke gynaecomastia and residual fluid in the bladder developments  
Tony's heart muscle is now under tremendous pressures  
Time to increase medication and adopt specialist measures  
Left ventricle of heart chamber is in deep trouble  
Pumping blood throughout the body now an incredible struggle  
It's not just a physical burden but a mental one too  
The heart has an irreplaceably vital job to do  
Cognitive function is declining and standing hard work  
Tremendous stamina required no time to shirk  
Sleep patterns disrupted for Tony and me  
Fatigue and anxiety all too plain to see  
Energy levels depleting daily snoozing increasing  
It's a vicious circle quality of life decreasing

The cardiology team are with us every step of the way  
Monitoring closely only a phone call away  
On Life prolonging medication we have to place our trust  
Quality of life improvement a potential must  
Reducing tachycardia breathlessness and fluid retention improving control  
Relieving the over activity of Tony's heart uplifting the soul  
Tony's heart now bears the scars of the ravages of time  
Who knows what awaits a week down the line



A new phase of life with value and purpose  
Courage needed in abundance nothing is surplus  
We need to be diligent and watchful for the thief in the night  
Prepared for all circumstances we'll still put up a fight  
Darkness lurks everywhere filling us with sorrow  
We seek understanding and knowledge illumination and hope for tomorrow  
The gravity of our situation is rewarded with thankful living  
A golden rule as innocent suffering keeps giving  
The spirit is dampened but refuses to go down  
There's still hope faith and love which will not let us drown  
We'll fight for victory because life goes on  
The blue sky days with sunshine and bird song  
We're on a mind bending journey we'll make everything count  
Moving confidently forward and scaling the mount  
The one constant through this traumatic ride  
Our dedicated NHS continually supporting us by our side  
And our incredible support from our inspirational friends at ICUsteps Tees  
All battling on refusing to be engulfed by stormy seas  
Never failing commitment from close family and friends  
And health professionals on which we can always depend  
With tremendous courage what will be will be  
We'll stand together for our future with strength compassion and dignity

### **The Fear Factor**

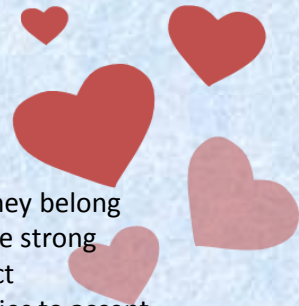
The time clock of the heart is rhythmically ticking  
We're out of control the feeling is sickening  
Health under siege once more radical action needed  
Removal of the umbrella of anxiety and apprehension that's been seeded  
Recondition our minds and look to the future  
Eradicate irrational fear by inserting a suture  
We'll focus on the good things and remove the mask of fear  
It's a case of perception keeping loved ones dear  
We must cultivate confidence and believe there's still time  
To control the inevitable we still have a life line  
As light reflects off mirrors and bends from one medium to another  
Our passion for life undulates and strengthens we still have each other  
Let's process our thoughts away from the influence of the outside world  
And tap into the unique version of our lives as they continue to be unfurled  
We're motivated and inspired responding to stimuli surrounding our situation  
With expectation of future threats to body and life filled with anticipation  
We'll push past the fear factor with resilience and drive  
Every minute and hour of every day it's such a privilege to be alive

### **The Battle Scars of Critical Illness**

Our battle scars and multi-faceted co-morbidities are here to stay  
We'll energise our courage and fight to face another day  
Lives of our precious loved ones would have been lost  
Without our incredible NHS who maintain our medical and care costs  
Costs of care are not just in monetary terms  
Emotionally physically and mentally into our daily lives they worm  
Eroding and shaping our lifestyles to a different way of life  
For survivor caregiver partner family husband and wife  
Functional ability impaired accompanied by muscle weakness and fatigue  
A related burden you have to experience to fully believe  
Cognitively thinking for your loved one 24/7 can make you drown  
Mental focus and positivity prevents the skittles from falling down  
We refuse to succumb to critical illness together we will strive  
To battle depression and cognitive deficit with determination and drive  
Chronic diseases and impairments cause a catalytic chameleon  
Nightmares and flashbacks full blown delirium  
ICU steps support groups provide a positive hub  
Surviving life threatening critical illness is not a selective club  
By engaging and connecting with survivors and their families we form a united pack  
Support and empathy for recovery along a positive track  
We share feelings experiences and strategies to help us cope  
Motivating and reassuring us with compassion inspiration and hope  
Prolonged illness and disabilities are here to stay  
Together we'll adapt unite and inspire to gain strength to face another day

### **The Burning Embers of our Hearts**

The Embers of our hearts are forever burning  
A passion for living fills our soul with yearning  
We'll banish negative thoughts to the dark room where they belong  
And gravitate to the light where we can still shine and be strong  
The passages of time allow us the luxury to reflect  
Survival from critical illness leave hidden and visible disabilities to accept  
Caring for your loved one can feel emotionally draining and physically exhausting  
Yet their daily survival makes it all immensely rewarding  
Courage is a quality we've perfected over the years  
Along our ICU journey with blood sweat and tears  
So we'll keep the flame of resilience ignited for each day we'll fight  
The embers of our hearts will continue burning together with all our strength and might





### **Never Say Never**

No matter how bleak the situation may appear  
Where there's life there's hope for your loved one dear  
Staying upbeat and positive will help you through  
The challenges trauma and fear factor too  
There will be days when you've had enough  
When you're tired in pain and feeling rough  
The everyday routine grinds you down  
Then count your blessings and remove your frown  
Where the will is strong but the body still weak  
Along the road of recovery we continue to seek  
At the end of the rainbow a pot of gold  
Our never ending journey starting to unfold  
Ordinary people with extraordinary lives  
Stability and balance will one day arrive  
Back into our lives which were once retrospectively mundane  
Our futures still out there with lots of living to gain  
We now live for today that fact is so true  
Our philosophy of never say never will infinitely see us through

### **Unconquerable Spirit**

Just when we thought we were actually winning  
It was only an illusion we're back to the beginning  
What the future holds who can tell  
What lurks in the depths of the undercurrent swell  
We'll rise and resurface from the hidden deep  
Clinging on to the cliff face of life no matter how steep  
We will not be phased by fear or fright  
But rise to the challenge with confidence and fight  
Each breath we take so precious to behold  
Every day a bonus onto which we hold  
Minor irritations in our lives no longer run riot  
A rich sense of purpose becomes our automatic pilot  
We'll eradicate the trivia and focus on survival  
With medical intervention and positivity we'll conquer our rivals  
There will be days when we're comfortably numb  
No matter how the darkness looms we mustn't succumb  
Days full of mixed emotions coupled with pain  
Through it all our unconquerable spirit will undoubtedly remain  
Invincible is how we'll strive to stay  
Conquering our demons to face another day  
Life's flame still flickering we still have time  
The love we have for the life we have is forever yours and mine

### **Every Step of the Way**

*(Dedicated to all our friends and colleagues at ICUsteps Tees as a personal thank you who are always there for us through good times and bad Thank you all Diane & Tony Bousfield)*

A place for positive friendship reinforcement and hope  
ICUsteps Tees our incredible support group is there to help us cope  
A place to share experiences and personal feelings  
Common concerns uncertainty and life's new meanings  
A place to build up confidence and trust  
To make new friends it's an absolute must  
Group dynamics allow the opportunity to share  
Experiences of fellow patients and their families after critical care  
Seven years of challenges and the journey moves on  
Adjusting to disabilities and complications caring responsibilities the road is long  
Improving self-esteem by reducing isolation  
Building acceptance of circumstances by realisation  
Medical staff are on hand to help us proceed  
Offering support for our psychological physical and emotional needs  
Every ray of light gives us resilience and hope  
Generating inner strength for survival to help us cope  
Sharing the turbulent roller coaster with colleagues and good friends  
Builds confidence and relationships on which you can always depend  
Negativity is forced to the back of your mind  
ICU survivors and their families are two of a kind  
Offering support to live for the present each hour each day  
Thank you everyone at ICUsteps Tees for being there for us every step of the way





**ICU a Festive Heart felt Thank you**

Every Christmas is a bonus we thought we'd never see  
Family and friends celebrating festivities around the Christmas tree  
As the days draw nearer and the nights close in  
There's a warmth in our hearts and souls glowing from deep within  
There's one less angel in the heavens tonight  
Survivors battling back from the brink with all their strength and might  
The critical care team persevered to protect our greatest wealth  
Our most precious gifts of all our life and our health  
Along this unenviable journey we all had a part to play  
Not for the fainthearted or those who want to hide away  
But for caring courageous people with a passion so deep and so strong  
A heart felt festive Thank you ICU for reuniting loved ones back where they belong

### **Thank you to ICUsteps Tees**

The Fight for Survival continues for patients and relatives after discharge from hospital my thanks warmly extend to ICUsteps Tees supported by The North of England Critical Care Network and Health professionals from South and North Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trusts for their empathy friendship and understanding to help rebuild lives and regain the confidence of patients and their families affected by critical illness. The production of this booklet would not have been possible without you.

Thank You  
Diane Bousfield