

# **THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL**

## **Volume 3**



**DIANE BOUSFIELD**

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### **Fight for Survival 3**

The Fight for Survival Volume 3 is a collection of poems I have written continuing the long and challenging journey my husband and I are still experiencing and the lasting impacts of critical illness since Tony's life changing brain injury in 2011 resulting in a 5 month hospital stay and challenging time in ICU & Neurosurgical HDU.

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

I am the author of a trilogy of books The Invincible Journey and two collections of poetry The Fight for Survival Volume 1 and The Fight for Survival Volume 2. My books are in hospitals universities medical libraries and outlets throughout the region and country raising awareness and hopefully helping others who have experienced or are experiencing critical illness.

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

This collection of poems is dedicated with heartfelt thanks to Tony's extensive team of Health Professionals for their continuing care and support.

At

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

ICUsteps Tees supported by the North of England Critical Care Network & Health professionals from South & North Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### **Thank You All**

**N** for the numerous lives you've saved

**H** for the healthcare from cradle to grave

**S** for support in our hours of need

Thanks to you all we still have our lives to lead

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

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## Chronicle of Courage

Year one trauma strikes you're hurled into a state of shock  
For patients relatives and their families disrupted body clocks  
Survival occupies every thought in your mind  
To once again have your loved one in which to confide  
Coma brain injury multiple operations infusions and complications  
Organs tissues and blood cells under attack total decimation  
After 5 months and three hospitals you are finally home  
Lasting complications and disabilities your body creaks and groans  
Escaping from ICU Neurosurgical HDU and rehabilitation  
The impacts of critical illness begin to show their limitations  
Hallucinations and delirium disrupted sleep patterns and fatigue  
Survivors and their families are in a totally different league  
At first you wonder how you will cope  
Experience and challenges create new hope  
Visual cognitive and physical disabilities time for healing  
The volume of medical back up appointments sends you reeling  
Deficits of disability impact so true  
Some highly visible others hidden from view  
Relief and amazement from surviving the ordeal  
An experience which is totally and utterly surreal  
We must never be discouraged by the size of the task  
Strength and courage to move forward become our solid mask  
Grateful to the hands that bring support and care  
Tony's extensive medical team family and friends who are always there  
Year two we continue with rehabilitation  
Tests and follow ups adjusting medication  
Complications arise day after day  
A new life for us all and that's how it will stay  
Reality bites our lives have drastically changed  
Our daily routine completely rearranged  
Physiotherapy neuropsychology speech and language therapy pave the way  
Neurology ophthalmology ENT urology and cardiology are here to stay  
Lives become entwined with craniotomies infusions and ECG's  
Not to mention the bloodletting sessions complete with FBC's LFT's and U& E's  
My brain is filled with medical terminology and connotations  
An urgency to grasp quick and remember all the abbreviations  
So much effort now involved just to exist  
A full night's sleep was never included on the list  
I'm a carer nurse and first responder 24 hours around the clock  
It's enough to initially make all your foundations rock  
Always on call every day and night  
Immensely rewarding an incredible plight  
But we rise to the challenge and accept what will be will be  
We can't change what's happened to you or me  
Support and constant supervision are the order of the day  
Basic tasks become obstacles engulfing time along the way  
Year three we realise that you are where you are  
25% vision cognitive and memory deficits no longer able to drive a car  
Physical disabilities epileptic seizures diabetes and strokes  
The effects of critical illness throughout your body soaks  
The lives we had are past memories for me  
We are now content to be alive part of life's great tree  
Year four it's time to meet others in a similar situation  
For support empathy and mutual conversation  
Where health professional's survivors and their families have become our friends

An incredible support group on which we can always depend  
Everyone overcoming challenges and soldiering on with life  
Surviving critical illness and the surgeon's knife  
The road ahead is forever entwined  
From the briars of co-morbidities we cannot hide  
ICU steps Tees survivors and their families have all been there  
Experiencing the trauma knowing how much it hurts to care  
Living daily with the lasting impacts invisible to the outside world  
No need to justify how we feel or how our lives have unfurled  
Year five Epileptic seizures accelerate with full force  
Completely knocking our lives way off course  
Totally unpredictable each one causing further destruction  
Running wild leaving further cognitive dysfunction  
Survival of each seizure still top of our list  
Our love for each other and need to exist  
Medication adjustments put us back on track  
Medical support we certainly do not lack  
Year six Epileptic seizures continue to reign  
Hitting the speech centre like a high speed train  
Causing further disruption to the brain  
Paramedics to my rescue once again  
As the years pass by it is clear to see  
Critical illness impacting on you and me  
Multiple hospital stays become the norm  
A place to recover during and after the storm  
Year seven arrives epilepsy appears to be under control  
Severe heart failure will now become our long term goal  
With life prolonging medication another challenge lies ahead  
How far we've come since you escaped from your ICU bed  
How much we have both had to learn and endure  
In order to feel both safe and secure  
Each year that goes by full of tests and medications  
We'll rise to the challenge with total dedication  
Over 700 appointments and still going strong  
We'll tip over 1000 before too long  
Incredible support from everyone involved  
Working tirelessly our medical conditions to solve  
Year Eight arrives the impacts of severe heart failure take their toll  
Physically cognitively and emotionally on heart and soul  
Our dedicated team continually by our side  
Monitoring and ensuring we maintain our stride  
Increasing medication improving your quality of living  
Immeasurable support caring and giving  
Hours of waking appear to be depleting  
Fatigue and exhaustion slowly creeping  
Year Nine arrives heart failure moves up a notch  
You're not going anywhere yet not on my watch  
With fantastic medical support innovations and infusions  
Rising mineral deficiency reducing confusion  
Life is continually challenging care levels forever increasing  
You're in your 60<sup>th</sup> year co-morbidities are never ceasing  
Our love for each other will see us through  
Care from the medical profession family friends and our support group too  
With a raft of complexities we will continue to thrive  
Thanks to a back up team second to none you are still very much alive



## **Love holds the Power**

Look how far we've come since 2011  
Traversing the line between earth and heaven  
A tidal wave of complexities traumas of yesterday  
Focus on profound opportunities of today  
I know how many tears we've cried  
Your fight for survival and how hard we've tried  
Victorious in life but drowning in fatigue  
Pushing through the limits of the human league  
Your body crumbling with chronic pain  
Co-morbidities multiply compounding the strain  
Heart failing to support blood to organs and tissues  
Insufficient oxygen and nutrients causing major issues  
When the onslaught begins from deep within  
We'll never give up the enemy won't win  
Ignore imaginations running through our mind  
Today is a new day anxieties left behind  
Our road of life continually twists and bends  
With numerous routes leading to dead ends  
Obstacles will dissolve we'll focus on solutions  
Power of our minds will overcome life dissolutions  
The spokes of pain rotating within life's wheel  
To achieve equilibrium we need an even keel  
Every day we specialise in total impossibilities  
The demands of critical illness require endless flexibility  
A spectrum of support from health professionals family and friends  
Standing with us throughout our journey from beginning to end  
The fountain of youth energises in our hearts once more  
A bountiful cascade of nature's complete store  
Together we will tunnel through the darkest hours  
Your heart is failing but our love forever holds the power

## **"Our Unsung Heroes"**

For all the broken bodies you repair and heal  
The support and care you offer when at our lowest we feel  
For medical advances innovations and the future ahead  
Skilled health professionals and volunteers by dedication you're led  
For making the impossible incredibly real  
In our hours of darkness a rescue package deal  
So thank you all our unsung heroes who in every way  
Preserve our bodies so we can live to fight another day

### **The Infusion of Life**

Snapshots of our past infiltrate my brain  
Flashbacks resounding we're in hospital once again  
The corridors echo our memories and voices  
Blending trauma co-morbidities and difficult choices  
Surviving brain abscesses seizures neutropenia and ICU  
Hydrocephalus thrombocytopenia and HDU  
Severe Left ventricular Heart failure continues to rage  
Challenges ahead as we battle the next stage  
We'll fight for every heart beat with grit and determination  
Our medical team beside us with passion and dedication  
An infusion of life awaits through an open door  
Balancing our body's deficits once more  
Slowly introducing through a cannula inserted into a vein  
Revitalising the bloodstream reducing the strain  
Each minute each droplet infusing to restore  
From the downward spiral intravenous therapy will pore  
Breathing becomes easier improving concentration  
Increasing energy levels reducing frustration  
Lowering mortality and hospital admission  
The deserts of difficulty retreat into submission  
Life blood regenerating from a crushing blow  
An internal pharmacy beneath the undertow  
New innovations and medical advances a priceless treasure  
Without them life's expectancy would be difficult to measure  
Physically and emotionally putting us firmly back in control  
Moving onwards improved quality of survival our long term goal  
Along the journey we travel so many individuals play their part  
Their commitment embedded forever on a tablet in our heart

### **Little Sparks**

With strength for today and hope for tomorrow  
A warm comfort blanket shields our pain and sorrow  
We live for the moment make peace with our past  
Weaving threads of kindness with friendships that last  
No matter how much we stumble how much we fall  
Facing our future together we will stand so tall  
The artist's palette in our mind can colour any situation  
Our paintbrush of powerful thinking remains our preservation  
Miracles do happen you are still here with me  
Celebrating your 60th year of life for all to see  
With talented and skilled health professionals and continuing care  
Family and friends with empathy and understanding at every layer  
Little sparks of kindness reignite our candle of hope  
With an incredible support network we are destined to cope  
We must never lose sight as our journey unfolds  
Along the way there is a rainbow at the end a pot of gold  
Tremendous challenges choices and opportunities plague our world  
Angels watch us from above as fallen creatures we are hurled  
We'll triumph through battle joy returning to our heart  
Patience our priceless virtue until death do we part



### **The Rear View Mirror**

When everything seems helpless and you feel so weak  
Inner strength and hope from the darkness we strive to seek  
The rear view mirror reflecting life experiences from our past  
Images so vivid scents and sounds which linger and last  
Ghosts in the machine we endeavour to remain strong  
To which dimension of life do we now belong  
A chink in the breast plate of life itself  
Wounded and battered our crumbling health  
Our days of walking the fells mountains and dales  
Through the rear view mirror they trail but not fade  
Memories so powerful they will never erase  
Climbing through the mist and the lower cloud haze  
The snapshots of our lives will serve us well  
And help to suppress the undercurrent swell  
The islands of the Hebrides and the northern lights  
The edge of wilderness remains in our sights  
Remote white beaches and blue green seas  
Wooded forests and glens full of wildlife and trees  
The Lake District how well our hearts know the valleys fells and lakes  
Where our footprints are forever embedded for old time's sake  
Black velvet skies bestowed with diamante jewels  
Life twists and turns so joyous yet so cruel  
The elements touch and rejuvenate our skin  
A breath of fresh air refreshes from deep within  
As the golden eagle spreads her wings in full flight  
To our previous life we must cling on with all our might  
In spite of everything we still have so much to give  
Through every breath and movement we make our passion to live

### **Anxious Hearts**

In the midst of struggle opportunities fill our hearts  
Replacing sorrow with richness as each new day starts  
You are still you and I am still me  
Our souls sparkling through for all to see  
We'll untangle the briers with endurance and encouragement  
Sheltered by the wings of comfort offering replenishment  
Trudging through a constant maze of co-morbidities  
A change in direction offers endless possibilities  
The intricate workings of our body so incredibly designed  
Embracing each heart beat we are two of a kind  
Miracles can happen releasing us from the ties that bind  
Our anxious hearts will break free and leave our sorrows behind



## "The Illusionist of Intention"

The footprints of time will forever be mine  
Tempus Fugit "Time Flies" as we move down the line  
Life changes by the second the minute the hour  
Hidden impacts layer upon an increasing tower  
Fluctuated level of awareness and disorganised thinking  
Increased limitations on eating and drinking  
Altered state of consciousness enhances distorted perceptions  
Tony's back in the moment with no recollection  
Mountaintop experiences thoughts lucidly flow  
Context is everything for those who know  
Tony's become the grand illusionist of intention  
In his mind he's capable of everything he mentions  
Co-existing neurological and severe medical conditions  
Coupled with lost external reality an incredulous coalition  
The eyes absorb a slice of the visual world  
Integrated into coherent images straight and curved  
Reality of Tony's vision is constructed in his mind  
His beating heart struggles with activities of any kind  
Focus on breathing oxygen flowing to sustain  
Intricate anatomical workings under constant strain  
Hearts fluttering as we both embrace the unknown  
Controlling a level of pain internally grown  
Thoughts and emotions become impaired  
Executive functioning and loss of focus have not been spared  
Disturbance in the functions of the brain  
Agitation and confusion continue to stain  
Memory box of life concealed from view  
Breakthrough the smokescreen and make memories new  
As survivors life's experiences give us phenomenal courage to fight  
We'll tackle our destiny together with all our strength and might

### Acceptance

Admission to ICU was initially unforeseen  
Creating a journey we both could never have dreamed  
Colour vivid imagery stains our minds eye  
Evoking emotions until tear ducts run dry  
Perception is the way we battle to fight through  
Turning negatives into positives leaving our old lifestyles for new  
Awe and inspiration from others following our path  
Numbness but acceptance of life's severe graph  
Courage grit and determination help fight co-morbidities along our way  
Experience of survival is incredible and we'll maximise every additional day

### **Rekindled Hope**

Icy fingers of uncertainty enfold our lives  
Illness scorches and sears our wounds like knives  
Assaulting from all directions a menacing fire  
Plunging us into the depths of a murky mire  
Our old lives have ended new life begins  
With each day dawning fresh hope springs  
Light shines through the darkness apples of gold  
Life goes on still a joy to behold  
Clouds become our pillars of protection  
Replenishing empathy and comfort reducing deception  
Loneliness and fear wash over me  
As the iceberg dissolves into the sea  
Melodies in the meltwater ice packs remain  
Drifting and solidifying lasting impacts sustain  
From the shadows of despair to a gleam of hope  
Revitalising my spirit with inner strength to cope  
The fiery sun setting a ball of pure gold  
A watercolour canvas emerges as the sunset unfolds  
Gentle waves of wild apricot to burnt orange form  
Scattered veins of pink to deep maroon with touches of fawn  
A colourful sea rolling across the sky  
Dancing clouds changing formations in the heavens on high  
The colour palette merges mixes and fades  
Leaving ice blue forms and plumes of steel grey shades  
Looking onwards and upwards from the sharp edge of the knife  
A beam of rose coloured hope rekindles my life

### **Time Marches On**

Remoulded and crafted by the hands of time  
Past present and future every second is mine  
Paralysed when trauma strikes the pointers stand still  
Eroding our mechanisms whilst critically ill  
Time becomes the master of all illusions  
Equilibrium dissolved in elaborate confusion  
Accelerating and pounding becoming hectic and manic  
Engulfing our survival system in sheer panic  
Counting out each moment and experience we live  
Our beating hearts still have so very much to give  
Our biological time clock marking our lives  
An inherent timing mechanism making us thrive  
Detailing our behavioural prowess's and physiological states  
Whilst our wrist watch dictates if we're early or late  
We've spent years of our lives building our strength  
From our birth through to adolescence we go to any length  
To build a wall of health so firm and strong  
One that will hopefully stay the course and not run out before too long  
Trauma alters our body life's values and perception  
Tempus Fugit time marches on maintaining the deception  
Time is so precious whether our allocation is short or long  
We'll fight to preserve every second until the last one has gone



## Wavelengths of Colour

My entry to ICU was bright and pure white  
Reflection of all visible rays of light  
Then my feelings transformed through a spectrum of colour  
An emotional association like no other  
Shades tints tones and colouration  
Would stay throughout our ICU duration  
The first colour to power through my mind was primary red  
The largest wave of the visible light spectrum filled me with dread  
Trauma danger determination love and fear  
Raged through my body as I entered a new sphere  
Orange warmly washed over me with emotional expression  
Nullifying and quantifying reducing regression  
Yellow flooded in with optimism illumination inspiration and hope  
Clarity and an intellectual mind set to cope  
Green the element of balance and healing poured through  
Pleasantly immersing alluring fresh and new  
Blue sky days followed feelings of serenity and calm  
Relaxation and peace from the initial alarm  
Indigo idealism and structure of life begin to arrive  
Time to move forward with compassion and drive  
The short spectrum waves of violet flow in hopefully to stay  
With inner calm reduced stress and a strategy to live another day  
Light tunnelling through the darkness storm clouds will pass by  
Until the pulse of life has returned and once again the sun will ride high

## Out of this World

**D**istortion disorientation disturbed functioning of the brain  
**E**ngulfing encapsulating engrossing manifestations begin to strain  
**L**ucidity fluctuating level of awareness becomes impaired  
**I**rritability apprehension agitation consolidate in layers  
**R**eality has vanished perceptual deficits take centre stage  
**I**mpacting on circadian body clocks confusion starts to rage  
**U**nimaginable hallucinations psychotic features begin to stream  
**M**anipulating the world as we know it into a chaotic dream

### Sensory Lane

I'll take a trip down sensory lane  
A feast of sights and sounds alleviate my pain  
To find a place of soul nurturing solitude and stillness  
A sheltered hideaway relief from illness  
Peace and seclusion from the dark sky night  
Tears of relief flow anxiety no longer my plight  
Jewelled stars glint from the heavens above  
Stardust shining faith hope and love  
Gentle fragrances fill the air  
Meadows of dandelions swaying without a care  
Raindrops gently cascade to the ground  
Through a lush green tree canopy a crescendo from soft to loud  
Odour of the earth from the fresh scent of rain  
Invigorating and revitalising nullifying my strain  
A spectacular canvas of nature vivid colour splashes  
Through thunder and fork lightning pounding hail lashes  
Watching the dancing ladies as the stones pummel the lake  
Darting across the water explosive ripple pools they make  
A change in my perspective I'm back in control  
Powerlessness removed I can achieve my next goal  
Watching the silhouetted formation of winged birds in flight  
Across the setting sun a wonderful sight  
Crystallised morning dew an everyday wonder  
White fluffy clouds floating leaves rustling storms and thunder  
A place of solitude nature's artwork to behold  
My sanctuary which will always be more precious than silver or gold

### Midnight Blue

Night enfolds me my spirit falls  
Silent and dark a blanket of isolation calls  
Fears torment from deep within my soul  
Prevent the thief in the night from taking its toll  
Hidden treasure beckons in an incredulous form  
In the depth of night I find myself drawn  
A chink in the curtain reveals a theatre in the sky  
Softly lighting the horizon our silvery moon sailing high  
Shrouded in mystery crafted and moulded  
Deep craters visible which time has eroded  
Illuminating my way streams of moonlight shine  
Watching over mother earth since the beginning of time  
You light my path in my darkest hours  
Amplified pain recedes and loses power  
Clouds and mist camouflage graceful levitation  
Diamante jewels sparkle in elaborate constellations  
Midnight blue comforts giving blessed relief  
A natural lighting show removing my grief  
I will rest my weary head and peacefully sleep  
Vulnerability and emptiness will no longer creep  
Through each trial we endure a beam of light shines  
Cleansing and renewing inner peace is mine  
A vast heavenly ocean in the sky above  
Looking down on me with compassion and love



### **Below the Radar**

Where did you venture on your subterranean journey?  
Drowning in anxiety clustering illusion and uncertainty  
Were you dreaming reliving memory traces from the past?  
Your brains intricate workings reshaping reality in short blasts  
Having fabulous adventures or traumatic nightmares  
Viewing a series of bizarre situations layer after layer  
An altered state of consciousness technicolour or monochrome  
Profound state of euphoria or feeling isolated and alone  
Manifesting emotions memory banks failing  
Is your inner self broken and desperately ailing  
Disordered sequences to intense poetic visions  
Not so sweet dreams punctuated with perceptual incisions  
Below the radar of human consciousness in a deep flowing sleep  
A slumber of wonder where hallucinoid creativity and quality creep  
Out of the shadows hallucinations and disorientation  
Have you the same personality drive and motivation?  
Are sound waves restricted do you hear our voices  
Light receptors and radiant energy are illuminating choices  
Uncommunicative in a coma but are you completely unaware  
Radiant energy suppressed not even a fixed stare  
Does your brain receive signals which rapidly fade away?  
Oblivious of surroundings and people confusion ruling each day  
Through psychedelic windows unconsciously led  
We'll never know where you journeyed from your ICU bed

### **Complex Microscopic Odours**

Vaporised microscopic odour molecules floating in the air  
Medicinal fragrances stimulate receptors in ICU care  
Sensory cells detecting aromas of life and death  
Absorbing sterile pharmaceutical scent with every breath  
Essences of ICU flood to my olfactory nerve  
All vital ingredients in the learning curve  
Evoking vivid memories emotions and feelings  
Concealed in a veil of phenols leaving you reeling  
Potency and force a dynamic combination  
Nausea reigns a stark realisation  
Warm atmosphere elevating intermingled flavours to linger  
Antiseptic vapours rising from hand wash on my fingers  
My limbic system powerfully responding to the smell of fear  
An aromatic bedside vigil around my loved one dear

### **Symphony of Survival**

Our symphony of survival steadfast and strong  
A choral hymn enriching supporting life's song  
Rhythms flow along our musical stave  
Culminating in crescendos along each octave  
Sturdy shoes are needed for the path ahead  
Rest a time of silence must be positively lead  
From lively quick tempos in ICU  
An anthem of broken chords and moody blues  
Powerful pitches contrast a melodic line  
Harmonization will break through it's a matter of time  
Modulation contrasts meaning and emotions  
Pure molten gold full of devotion  
The human feel element begins to groove  
Overtones and harmonies punctuate each move  
Sharps flats and naturals start to play  
Along the critical care journey we traverse our way  
Laws of nature fragment our shattered lives  
Fresh limits beckon with lavender skies  
A medley of unison symphony and verse  
Grey shadows of doubt are no longer a curse  
Confidence climbing each beat a fresh start  
Reigniting the morning star in our heart

### **Ambient Harmonies of Nature**

Ambient harmonies of nature relieve my pain  
Our gift is the present gently falling rain  
Strolling down a woodland path a bench nestling in the trees  
Branches and leaves swaying in a gentle breeze  
Breath-taking peace infuses my soul with sweetness  
Light dawns through the darkness total completeness  
Tranquil birdsong from the chorus at dawn  
Blue sky days of serenity into which I'm drawn  
Healing rays of sunshine rejuvenate my inner being  
The bubbling flow of water coursing along a mountain stream  
Larks trill to a blue sky spring  
Uplifting and infusing my spirit making me sing  
Each blade of green grass perfectly crafted  
Refreshingly fragrant after rain has departed  
Foaming white waves like sea horses break on the shore  
Revealing rock pools teeming with creatures once more  
Footprints sinking below me in the wet sand  
Wild beautiful nature full of ambient sounds  
Insects humming in the setting sun  
A unique snapshot from the past and days to come  
The crackling of wood burning on an open fire  
A colourful autumn carpet of leaves accompanied by nature's choir  
The onset of winter my footsteps crunch through freshly laid snow  
Dressing the trees and hedges in an icy glow  
The wonders of nature so incredible to behold  
Nourishing my soul from my birth to the days I grow old



### **Healing Arrows**

Poison arrows fire blood sweat and tears  
Tipped with pain trauma anxiety and elevated fears  
Healing arrows descend to gradually ease the cruel blow  
From devastation the wonders of human life's foundation grow  
Our worlds turned upside down in the blink of an eye  
Angels watching and guiding from way up high  
Keep moving away from fear to open new doors  
Encircled by strength the fullness of my heart pours  
A gradual accumulation of vaporised pressure  
Sculptured by experiences so difficult to measure  
Unfathomable dark shadows force constant reflection  
Words of comfort and compassion enlighten dejection  
Arrows of medication dedication and love  
Enfolded in the wings of a circling white dove  
Confronting life's challenges we'll find level ground  
Inner peace and tranquillity with no visible sound  
Testing the labyrinths and unexplored recesses in my mind  
With health so impoverished hidden depths I will find  
Breathing spaces from hurt chaos and confusion  
Courage strength rest and refreshment become my solution  
We now have new priorities and goals to achieve  
Precious lives to live and a rich harvest to yield

### **A Cacophony of Sound**

A cacophony of sound fills the air  
An unmelodious amalgamation I can't help but stare  
High intensity alerts with rhythmical tones  
Pulsating decibels beating in musical zones  
Sound rich environment influencing my perception  
Complex acoustics of sound resisting deception  
Communicating messages to the ICU team  
Peak sound levels from equipment alarms stream  
My sensory system absorbing circulating waves  
Frequencies oscillating as lives are saved  
Orchestrating a musical masterpiece of its very own  
Automatic consistently repetitive unchanging monotone  
Pitches influence depth raw noise and conversation  
IV pumps heart monitors and mechanical ventilation  
Achieving desired results through intense levels of sound  
Connecting objects people and events from all around  
My inner ears sampling and transferring high frequency vibrations from the air  
While my brain creates a unique soundscape individually tailored to ICU care

### **Your Pain is my Pain**

Endorphins pumping through my brain  
Physically measurable your pain is my pain  
A lexicon of empathetic heartache and distress  
Watching you suffer feelings of total helplessness  
Questions of life's meanings and fear of survival  
Existing memories and emotions become competitive rivals  
Blood pressure rising heart beat racing  
Human pain system largely self-regulating  
Body alert warning to potential damage  
Physiological and psychological experiences ravage  
Even the weakest rays of sun are powerfully uplifting  
Stimulating the mind-set re-focus from drifting  
Sensory flashbacks to snapshots back in time  
Golden days forever are yours and mine  
Never underestimating our inner strength in hope of a cure  
An undulating flow of pain we'll continue to endure

### **Tactile Connectivity**

A suite of rational and emotional biases and needs  
Sensory information highly processed on which I feed  
My perception of life support under continual construction  
The ability to touch absolute certainty with no reduction  
Tactile signals channelling and strengthening our relationship connection  
Comforting and cushioning my emotional dimensions  
The language of touch vocalising the extra mile  
Vital sense of connectivity to alleviate the trial  
A bond enfolding me in a cotton wool cloud  
Reducing pressure and stress from beneath the shroud  
Cellular mechanisms receptors perceiving tension temperature and pain  
Enhancing and humanizing reducing the strain  
Pressure receptors conveying an incredible force  
Muscles tendons and joints harmonising messages at source  
The sculpture of tactile sensitivity reducing isolation maximising inner strength  
Forming a silent voice of communication on a mutual wavelength  
Touch a basic human instinct reassuringly so simple not grand  
Our connection so powerful by the touch of your hand



### The Human Touch

The emotional spectrum of co-morbidities reign  
Outside the realms of normal well-being we remain  
A personal time warp with multiple disorders  
Physical and psychological no respect for boundaries or borders  
A wheel of emotions continually spinning  
From fear to optimism we're failing or winning  
Apprehension which haunts your every move  
Vulnerability and fragility we strive to improve  
Psychosis fabrication of thoughts and emotions  
Isolation from external reality plunges deep in the oceans  
Delusions founded on unshakeable belief  
The Human touch offers support care compassion and relief  
From panic paranoia flashbacks and acute stress  
Disrupted sleep concentration and powerlessness  
Polar opposites of the spectrum allow our rhythm of life to still beat  
Empowering us with acceptance and positivity no room for defeat  
With incredible medical support and advances we refuse to go under  
Life's immense challenge still burns with both amazement and wonder

### The Hidden Mask

Below the hidden mask of visibility  
The aftermath swells with waves of disability  
Battling difficulties and healing our brokenness  
A vast wilderness lurks unbalancing our openness  
The outside world oblivious without a clue  
On the trail ahead emblazoned on me and you  
A shadowed life of sickness and grief  
How we long to radiate in sunlight relief  
Initial anger quickly flares and dies  
Forever burning our inner flame continually guides  
Strength reveals itself from total darkness  
Growth develops engulfing the starkness  
We take comfort in the smallest of steps  
Mundane becomes beauty secrets eternally kept  
Subtle shades splatter our tainted lives  
Colour balances our gradient of drive  
Emotionally exhausted nervous system accelerating  
Detoxifying sedating stabilising and stimulating  
With confidence and support we'll rebuild our identity  
The mystery of survival elevates to a new entity  
Through intuition and perception our universal energy starts to burn  
With medical advances and care from the brink of life we will return

## "Figment of the Imagination"

Hallucinations override perceptions of the real world  
Altered figments of the imagination begin to unfurl  
Life's dynamics have completely changed  
Level of human perspective totally rearranged  
Unreal images thoughts memories visualisations of every kind  
Cohering deception reconstructing the mind  
Imbalance of neuro transmitters concealing effects  
Novelty of vision vivid colourisation and objects  
Anomalies elaborations characters and voices  
Thinking fluctuating between memorable choices  
Interpretations and illusions create footprints in time  
Overwhelmingly convincing deception's a continual line  
Never-ending humanistic scenarios all home grown  
Sensory deprived brain projecting reality all of its very own

## Confusion Reigns

You left the house without a word  
The silence was deadly not a decibel heard  
It took a few minutes to realise you'd gone  
As to your whereabouts clues left were absolutely none  
Realisation so hard to accept and believe  
Questioning my mind the ways we deceive  
Call on reinforcements send in the troops  
The bigger the search party the more in the loop  
Pounding the pavements it's cold and dark  
Driving aimlessly round the area woods and park  
Still can't believe you'd do this to me  
But this is our life now so plain to see  
After the longest hour of my life  
Emotions stabbing my heart like the blade of a knife  
A hazy figure dazed in the car lights  
Clinging onto my neighbour I couldn't hide my delight  
I know you didn't recognise the car or me  
Adventure for the night over safely home under lock and key



### Diamonds of Hope



It's a medical miracle you're still here with me  
The flame of light burning bright for all to see  
Diamonds of hope glisten in the snow  
Reflections of light a spectacular show  
New memories form as each snow flake falls  
From the knife edge of life together we've crawled  
An immeasurable gift so incredible to behold  
This Christmas we'll embrace every moment as each hour unfolds

### Friendship at ICUsteps Tees

Thank you to all our friends at ICUsteps Tees  
Where whatever we endure we feel at ease  
Friendship with critical care survivors makes us strong  
Alleviating isolation when our journey is long  
With empathy support and courage to move on  
A heartfelt thank you to everyone

### 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