

# **THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL**

## **Volume 4**



**DIANE BOUSFIELD**

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## **Fight for Survival Volume 4**

The Fight for Survival Volume 4 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 four books The Invincible Journey and three collections of poetry The Fight for Survival Volume 1 The Fight for Survival Volume 2 and The Fight for Survival Volume 3. 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

### **Formula for Freedom**

Poetry infuses my heart and soul  
Allowing me to feel complete and whole  
Pathways of life reconnecting and growing  
The ripples of our stream ebbing and flowing  
A life tool formula paves the way ahead  
Survival is calling overcoming fear and dread  
Freedom from poetic therapy needs to be heard  
The healing power we master from the written and spoken word

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

	<b>Poems</b>
Page Number	
4	The Aftermath
5	Sincere Thanks
6	Human Dynamo
6	Our ICUsteps Family
7	Candy Floss Skies
8	Golden Letter Day
8	Me and You
9	Harlequin Ocean
9	Blends of Voices
10	Whispers of Joy
10	Pure Gold
11	Ravages of Time
11	The Invisible Beast
12	Pillows of Comfort
12	Wings of Promise
13	Fluidity
13	Jewel in the Sky
14	Halcyon Days
14	Daisy Chain
15	Growing Pains
15	Rainbow of Companionship
16	Dance of Life
16	The Warrior Within
17	Smouldering Gun
17	Internal Picture Book
18	Oasis of Calm
18	Flick of a Switch
19	Harp Strings
19	Mirror Me
20	Thank you to ICUsteps Tees

## The Aftermath

A dark stone impacts our journey begins  
Sudden and unexpected striking from outside in  
Ripples ruffle and undulate our river of glass  
Initial impact sustains waves multiply and amass  
We never foresaw its arrival that day  
Reality for us both forever will stay  
Mental depletion so hard to describe  
When memories and moments no longer reside  
Chunks of our lives totally erased  
No instant recall completely un-phased  
A restricted capacity invisible to see  
A honeycomb of complexities for you and me  
Missing pieces of our jigsaw hidden from view  
As we try to recreate images new  
Retentions impossible loss of control  
A mind running free with both heart and soul  
Heart failure brain injury epilepsy all take their toll  
Cognitive reasoning has its own individual goals  
Reframing and restructuring a positive move  
We no longer feel we have anything to prove  
Everything's new no recollection of recent events  
Repeating actions and visitors is time well spent  
Vision severely impaired 75% of the world is not there  
Not even a black area in which to stare  
People are recognised by the tone of their voice  
Severe injury to the occipital lobe leaves no choice  
Visual signals from each eye no longer capture the world  
Visual neglect leaves visual processing in a whirl  
You see my world through a restricted lens  
Upon my arm and support you will always depend  
Nuts and bolts of biology desperate to repair and grow  
Pain intertwined with stress present a demonstrative show  
Spatial orientation body position and non-verbal communication impaired  
Inattentive visual neglect decrease in sharpness nothing is spared  
Bruises from collisions with fixtures and fittings unsteady unbalanced

Misjudgement of approaching people and vehicles dangerously enhanced  
Navigating independently is a high risk occupation  
Severe impairment from a dense lesion an untrustworthy association  
Present and past visual experiences essential for recognition  
No longer evaluated a dark curtain blanketing definition  
Reading and writing require incredible skill  
As visual flashes and restrictions ensure nothing remains still  
Colour-blindness fuels adaptation between darkness and light  
Right and left homonymous hemianopia's are a continual fight  
Exhaustion fatigue and low oxygen saturation levels continue to reign  
As your failing heart gallantly battles on to take the strain  
Memory banks continually under attack  
Visual fields missing totally black  
Cognitive awareness rapidly fading decision making a thing of the past  
Hours of wake and sleep turned upside down is our life long may it last  
Developed cognitive flexibility to change our strategies of survival  
As medical conditions continue to impact on their initial arrival  
No two days are ever the same  
A variety of epileptic seizures exhaustion and fatigue remain  
Seizures come and go as and when they please  
Their arrival sudden with both destruction and ease  
Our journey continues our incredible plight  
Fighting for survival with little or no respite  
Medication and dedication help us through our day  
Together we are incredible and it's how we'd like to stay  
Each extra heart beat each breath we take  
Reaffirms our commitment to life with the footprints we make  
So we'll savour every moment whether we laugh or cry  
Living every minute until our river of life runs dry

### Sincere Thanks

To all Tony's clinical team in ICU  
A & E and Neurosurgical HDU  
Nurses consultants surgeons and clinicians  
Physiotherapists neuropsychologists cardiologists and dieticians  
You all played a part so vital to see  
Living proof Tony's still here with me  
Life continues to challenge us every passing day  
As through the hospital departments we make our way  
To each and every one of you involved in Tony's care  
Your teamwork is incredible at each and every layer  
Preserving life is an amazing feat impossible to measure  
Thanks to you we still have memories of his 60<sup>th</sup> year to treasure

With sincere thanks to you all we never thought he'd make it.



### **Human Dynamo**

The human body so intricately made  
A three dimensional jigsaw individually displayed  
Lungs our bellows the heart our pump  
A fuel converter to minimise the slump  
Burning for energy or recycling to build  
A waste management system on which building blocks are filled  
Central processing unit fully interactive  
Maintaining life communication systems simply fantastic  
Arteries veins lymphatic vessels and nerves  
Layers of packaging connective tissue all ready to serve  
Organs as separate entities have their individual role  
Depending on each other the human machine becomes whole  
A well-oiled engine when you're functioning well  
Until trauma strikes and creates a turbulent swell  
Immune system kicks in to save our structure  
Fight or flight strategy part of our inbuilt culture  
A minefield of destruction for those who know  
Our eyes truly open the window of our souls  
We can't eradicate trauma critical illness or negativity  
An instilled sense of wellbeing can stimulate positivity  
Health when the body is working to the best of its ability  
Versus inflammation immune deficiency organ failure and fragility  
Throughout it all we continually battle to repair and heal  
Until our life expectancy terminates and we no longer feel  
A marvellous moving machine engineered to thrive  
The Human Dynamo tailored to be very much alive

### **Our ICUsteps Family**

Our ICUsteps family full of inspiration  
Patient's relatives and health professionals with total dedication  
Challenging critical illness with help and commitment  
Looking to the future with empathy and fulfilment  
A family where membership is not elective  
Survival a criteria to join not selective  
Care support and friendship will see us through  
Sharing physical psychological impacts and experiences too  
Courageous people not weak but so strong  
Our ICUsteps family where we all belong

## Candy Floss Skies

Cognition attention higher reasoning and perception  
Memory language and learning all part of the deception  
To the outside world it's all candy floss skies  
Reality of impacts daily lows and highs  
An intertwined orchestra of feelings  
Harmonies and values form ice blue ceilings  
Mind body connection a harlequin of emotions  
Clouds of cotton wool total devotion  
Restricted cognition depleted flexibility  
Mental adaptation simultaneous complexity  
Some days the oil paints of our world are so vivid  
Others sepia prevails watercolours become insipid  
Unable to switch mental function from one task to another  
Drowning in a crimson lake information updates smother  
Diluted manipulation of past events  
Sympathetic nervous system severely suppressed  
Positive zinc yellow splashes ignite the mind  
Cross lateral movement and balancing no longer reside  
Cognitive sequelea stain my heart  
Mottles of scarlet splatter and dart  
Anxiety and agitation flood in deep vermillion  
Decision makings become a chance in a million  
Changes in neural mechanisms lack of metacognition  
Cognitive executive functions memory retrieval and acquisition  
Motivation and impulsivity become ivory black  
Disorganized memory encoding basic staples now lack  
Real life problems fraught with inefficiencies and errors  
Daily living independently an impossible endeavour  
Diminished ability to initiate activity  
Depressed planning and limited mobility  
Occipital lobe injury severe visual damage  
The past decade has been particularly savage  
Silver grey hidden secrets and epilepsy  
Clothed in invisibility to everyone but me  
Judgement and awareness are things of the past  
Totally oblivious we thought they'd always last  
Watercolours of tears cascade down  
Days of golden sunshine to ochre brown  
Laughter through dark times develops great strength  
Insatiably we battle on at any length  
There are still days of pure sky blue  
Accompanied by tints of kingfisher too  
Washes of primrose yellow and emerald green  
Crystals of light reflect and gleam  
We still have each other who could want for any other  
We'll live the rest of our days in glorious technicolour

### Golden Letter Day

A white envelope gracefully floats to the floor  
What do the written words contained have in store?  
We've hoped and prayed for more advantageous results  
After being continually battered by ill health insults  
As I break the seal and refocus my eyes  
Good news rises before me I'm stunned with surprise  
The darkest hour is reputedly before the dawn  
Temporary freedom from shades of grey beige and fawn  
Time to celebrate share our news with family and friends  
On whom we can always rely and depend  
When expectations are low brightness emerges  
The elixir of life develops new surges  
Radiant yellow beams now light our way  
We will bask in golden sunshine at least for today

### Me and You

Wisps of mist float across my eyes  
Aboard a solitary sailboat vapours rise  
Condensing and encircling striving to deliver  
My lips start to crack dry and quiver  
Pockets of density blankets grey hues  
Impacts and consequences engulf my views  
Awareness suppressed communication impaired  
Shades of recovery competing to be spared  
Fear a pure neurological reaction  
Cultivated through learning experiences distraction  
My inner mind versus the outer world  
Irrational thoughts erode and unfurl  
Relatives of panic anxiety and horror  
Ghosts in the machine there is no dishonour  
Curling and creeping over intelligent emotions  
A spectrum of rationality plunged in deep oceans  
Incomprehensible frustrating fascinating and revealing  
Essential for our survival cultivation and healing  
Apparatus of knowledge a human flaw to fear  
Intuition runs riot until the danger becomes clear  
Confusion dissipates intelligence renews  
Danger has passed it's now just me and you



## Harlequin Ocean

Kaleidoscopic emotions continually flow  
Merging vibrantly golden highs gunmetal lows  
A variegated outflow emerges each day  
Perspective and depth wash away  
Blood rich red waves crash with courage and power  
Increasing respiration and metabolism by the hour  
Willpower passion love and rage  
Determination boiling within a captive cage  
Nostalgic feelings flood in a purple stream  
Frustration creativity and magical dreams  
Black sweeps in with fear and negativity  
Death and grief an elegant mystery  
Sensation of heat increases oxygen flow to the brain  
Stimulating mental activity restoring endurance once again  
Warmth emits strength and energy to muscles so weak  
Vibrant yellow a fresh new aspect we seek  
Downward spirals of despair to natural highs  
The tides of our harlequin ocean roll by  
Deep blue voids of knowledge power and integrity  
Slowing the human metabolism with calming stability  
Trust and confidence loyalty and tranquillity  
Enriching our future with bountiful possibility  
Healing power of rest floats on a glass green sea  
Bliss to the human eye and all it believes  
Peace to the body for complete regeneration  
Diluting anger and turmoil without complication  
Pure white snowdrops reflect the colour of perfection  
Offering life giving resolution a positive connection  
Dramatic tides of colour relentlessly pound upon our shore  
Until purposeful currents prevail and we will rise once more

## Blends of Voices

Blends of echoes tones and voices  
Pouring out thoughts feelings and choices  
Constant chatter confiding in others  
Survivors and relatives all sisters and brothers  
Sharing incredible experiences gaining perspective  
Critical illness is never selective  
Streams of sentences effervesce and flow  
Words of wisdom bubbling from those who know  
Overcoming adversity when life is so cruel  
A time to relax and mindfully refuel  
Listening interacting the true meaning of contribution  
The spoken word creatively providing vocal resolution  
Heart to heart connectivity inspiring both positivity and peace  
The art and therapeutic benefits of conversation will never cease

### Whispers of Joy

An opulent glow smoulders deep inside  
Intuitive insight my third eye resides  
A natural high the essence of insight  
Harmony and wisdom radiating delight  
Breathless with exhaustion anxious and weak  
Sweet source of happiness so desperate we seek  
An elusive ingredient for life satisfaction  
Cheerfulness my destiny a meaningful distraction  
Empowerment of emotion eliminates my worries  
Out of the darkness creeping shadows scurry  
Pain relief silently parachuting down  
To a blanket of comfort within a feathered gown  
Stars twinkle in my heart each day you survive  
A source of contentment impossible to describe  
Beams of light rays shine illuminating our way  
There'll be whispers of joy for the rest of our days

### Pure Gold

I woke to a vision the first light of morning  
Small blades of grass warm a new day dawning  
A ball of high intensity rising high  
Naturally energising illuminating the sky  
We've travelled an unsurmountable distance since 2011  
Traversing the thin line between earth and heaven  
Multiple operations induced coma and ICU  
Medical complications and Neurosurgical HDU  
5 months hospitalisation years of comorbidities and rehabilitation  
To stand here today with courage and determination  
The years have been challenging to say the very least  
An invincible journey fit for neither man nor beast  
Each anniversary of survival a gift to behold  
Rays of gratitude stream made of pure gold  
Flashbacks and sensory imagery overflowing with feeling  
Bitter sweet memories forever leave me reeling  
Chaos below the surface scars and stains  
Explosions like dynamite within my brain  
Solitude evolves from time to reconnect  
A stony uneven path you wouldn't voluntarily select  
Each year we celebrate an incredible achievement  
After a narrow escape from death and bereavement  
Your body's control centre was dealt a devastating blow  
To the rescue the gift of possibility from medics who know  
How to maintain stability give life one more chance  
Renew the ailing body to restore life's dance  
I watch as the setting sun prepares to sink  
Emitting a radiating glow of yellow orange and pink  
Gratitude and grace blossom the sun loves to smile  
Amazingly together we've completed the extra mile

## Ravages of Time

My eyes scan the horizon of grand illusion  
Distracted by possibilities searching for solutions  
My world view no longer through rose coloured glasses  
Through the ravages of time loss of balance crashes  
Field of vision leads through a worldly lens  
From a recess in my mind where perspectives bend  
A woven narrative embracing my assumptions of the world  
Filtered thoughts and experiences distorted confabulated and blurred  
Logical flows and cognitive biases plague my thinking  
Vivid confident memories prevent me from sinking  
Flaws and fabrication continue to grow  
Bathing me in the warmth of a rich sunset glow  
A thin line traverses where the earth meets the sky  
Dispelling sourness with sweetness from the mountain tops high  
We each have our own intricate road map to follow  
Unlocking secrets yielding strength and character for tomorrow  
Trust gives me wings of strength by sharing insight  
I'll step out of the shadows and move into the light  
From the front line of battle my fears run rife  
Worry won't add a single second more to my life  
Like the gnarled old oak tree each ring of life tells a story  
From the small acorn of growth to a canopy of full glory  
The knots on the bark so rugged and charred  
Bear witness to the fact that existence has been hard  
Roots of opportunities around its circumference spread  
Standing the test of time new branches preserve a proud head  
Like the mighty oak I continue to fight for our existence  
With faith hope love and continual persistence  
Continuing to keep ablaze the gift of life within  
The ferocity of the lion rages through each and every limb  
I refuse to be crushed by the forces that be  
And will rise above with power strength and dignity

## The Invisible Beast

A coastal wave of mist silently creeping  
Swirling vapours over limbs and muscles seeping  
Forgetfulness slurred speech and irritability  
Unable to motivate dizzy distractibility  
Pathological fatigue a permanent fixture  
Frustration reduced alertness a poisonous mixture  
No escape from limitations or alleviated by rest  
Fatigue becomes an endurance test  
Spiralling and twisting clinging to the edge  
Pain from within creating a deep wedge  
Struggling through exhaustion along our way  
Adaptation challenges us each and every day  
Striking when you suspect it least  
There's no magical cure from the invisible beast

## Pillows of Comfort

I rest my weary head upon my pillow  
Drifting beneath haze a weeping willow  
Softness of cotton comforts my skin  
Sleep will heal me from deep within  
Eyelids heavy desperate to sleep  
Exhaustion and fatigue eventually sweep  
Comfortably numb from the outside world  
Safe and secure not a sound to be heard  
Reality bites stirring from slumber  
To administer medication by type and number  
I had travelled back to days of old  
Climbing highlands and fells under a sun of pure gold  
Action and adventure we were always on the move  
A time and a place in a different life groove  
Waking is now part of my nightly routine  
Disrupted sleep patterns punctuate my dreams  
Caring for a loved one day and night  
In radiant sun and artificial light  
Dreams form escape my own time machine  
Fragments of our lives continually stream  
Angels from my family guide my vision  
Imagination fuelling my everyday mission  
The silence so still as the world slows down  
Pockets of refreshment energise my failing crown  
My eyelids open the dawn chorus alarm arrives  
A natural phenomena spreading promise to thrive  
A chameleon by nature my ability to survive  
Embracing challenge and change progression to revive  
Life's a continuum we're all players in the plan  
Pillows of comfort enfold my dreams for as long as they can

## Wings of Promise

Shooting stars darting through my brain  
Intense bursts of activity ice blue imagery remains  
Our complex puzzle so deceptive to control  
Refining our existence to the depths of my soul  
Detours have catapulted life's plans off course  
Daily living depletes every human resource  
Menacing corridors imagination runs rife  
Releasing a logical flow colouring my life  
Warmth of light radiates from the shadows  
Intricacy of our masquerade fades and narrows  
Beauty nestles at the centre of our tangled maze  
Wings of promise sweep away the engulfing haze  
Chamber of isolation no longer wedges  
Rainbows through tears cushions hard edges  
Snowdrops of promise bathed in sunlight  
Peace blinds the darkness and restores our sight

## **Fluidity**

Our water course of life smoothly flowing  
A deep plunging ribbon swelling and growing  
From the depths we untangle a committed routine  
Refreshment tumbles a freshwater stream  
One small pebble causes the ripple effect  
Creating patterns of fluidity time to reflect  
Willow branch silhouettes hover in the shadows  
Our future evolving radical changes tomorrow  
Tides are rising simmering and cascading  
Energising dark undercurrents masquerading  
Turbulence breaks hitting the rocks once more  
Stumbling blocks a human flaw  
The Anchor is broken all is not lost  
Streams in the desert a crushing cost  
Torrents increase whirlpools form  
Revolving within the vortex becomes our norm  
Exposed to the bracing elements once more  
Rapidly rotating from our roots to our core  
Surging and thundering frothing and foaming  
Swamped but flourishing spiralling and roaming  
The dissolving sun radiates our existence  
Shining and glistening mirroring our resilience  
Our thirst for survival ebbing and flowing  
Choreographed dance of nature continually growing  
The facets of life combine a cruel combination  
But we'll overcome challenges with true determination  
Amongst the agitation fresh life teams  
We'll keep tumbling along and fulfilling our dreams

## **Jewel in the Sky**

A second chance at life too precious to measure  
A priceless opportunity every day we treasure  
Richer than gold an incredible wealth  
Extra years together with a quality of health  
Thankful for friendships forged along our way  
Through turbulence and trauma we'll greet another day  
Our lives have changed beyond comprehension  
Fighting for survival a complex dimension  
A road combined with miracles and trials  
A relentless journey stretching for miles  
A labyrinth of dead ends and reasons to give in  
The challenges of our journey never ceasing to begin  
Twists and turns continue to detour our lives  
Until one day we turn the corner the ultimate prize  
One step at a time another path is forming  
Our jewel in the sky signals a new day dawning  
Journeying through our new future nothing is quite as it seems  
We still have opportunities together to follow our dreams

### Halcyon Days

Floods of emerald juniper and cedar green  
Illusions misperceptions are not what they seem  
Reflections of the past experiences and stories to tell  
Challenges and pain of existence we know them so well  
Embrace the silence of life's natural pauses  
A lullaby of inspiration invitation with no clauses  
Dazzling light deep thoughts we thrive on information  
Variability in perception an individual interpretation  
Halcyon days of joyful memories and good health  
A sound night's sleep an incredible wealth  
Icy water streams fresh exhilarating mountain air  
Thrills of adventure discovery we once could share  
The call of the hills courses turbulently through our blood  
Jagged edges rolling screes purple heather volumes of mud  
Intensity creativity we're still living the dream  
Through clusters of twinkling stars the galaxy gleams  
Waves of sea horses pound the helm of our boat  
Coursing over the rising ocean keeping us afloat  
Tapping power of visual perception from life altering thoughts  
Refocusing the inner human within our own time warp  
Conversation constant chatter wind rustling through trees  
Snapshots of our own mortality whispering in the breeze  
Peacefully in tune with life's thriving delusions  
Human resilience remains our grand illusion

### Daisy Chain

Spring green stems of daisies link our chain  
Symbolising survival struggle challenge and strain  
Our past our present elation and dread  
Hope for our future which lies ahead  
Pure white petals symmetrically designed  
Disguising fragility strength strategically aligned  
With every passing year our chain grows longer  
Gaining momentum and resilience increasingly stronger  
Within the golden centre our energy glows  
Joy from life's obstacle course radiates and grows  
Ray florets of petals fall into place  
Love absorbing pain a cascading grace  
Fields of feelings covering mind body and spirit  
The power of my heart has no upper limit  
A shield of friendship forms a protective connection  
Miracles of life brim with dazzling reflection  
However harsh the reality our gratitude's so strong  
It's still a magical life to which we still belong

## Growing Pains

Fading energy like colourful shades of autumn leaves  
A flamboyant display of death on first view we're deceived  
No single moment defines the mystery to solve  
As leaves die trees live as from critical illness we evolve  
New life emerges from the dust of construction  
Growing pains rebuilding from total destruction  
Spectacular survival the body slowly revitalises  
Encircled by strength invigorating sunlight energises  
Weight from powerful experiences release my pressure  
Developing through sadness impossible to measure  
Trees shed their leaves ships lower their sails  
We must resist the damage as a strong wind prevails  
The tempest is here the old swept away  
Sun beams stream through the branches to start a new day  
Undercurrents from the underworld will always be present  
Shards of ice form through a crystal clear crescent  
From total immersion and fear you'll drown  
Darkness turns to light a smile replaces a frown  
We'll blossom in shades of joy once more  
Strobes of light projecting from our very core  
Inner beauty radiates my body is no longer cold  
While my manuscript of life will continue to unfold

## Rainbow of Companionship

It's only human to feel like you've just had enough  
When conditions impact and life seems so rough  
Connecting with people who've suffered life's trials  
Friendship replaces judgement tears become smiles  
We're all individuals with our own idiosyncrasies  
Authors of our unique life story and eccentricities  
Heart-warming memories in our own personal treasure chest  
Because life goes on we'll complete our endurance test  
Precious hours melt into days then years  
Listen to your inner voice the future will unfurl  
Our energies no longer wasted over times long gone  
Living for today and the dawn chorus song  
When our vantage point becomes clouded with tragedy and pain  
We wonder if we'll ever feel human again  
Walking our journey with others replenishes our soul  
Inspiring and encouraging us to achieve long term goals  
It's the gift of little things that alter our path  
Time to talk exchange stories and time to laugh  
When life feels overwhelming there's your circle of friends  
A sense of belonging on which you can always depend  
Where empathy flows in abundance such a precious commodity  
Accompanied with harmony understanding strength and unity  
So here's to all the special friendships we've made along our way  
Together we'll form a rainbow of companionship to face another day

## Dance of Life

Critical illness has struck its final blow  
You no longer have energy for life's great show  
Stone cold dark coals lie in life's grate  
Layered with dead timbers awaiting their fate  
Revival from the brink surviving a narrow escape  
New beginnings rebirth on life a new take  
One small spark ignites a golden glow  
Awakening the flames of hope from the depths below  
Golden orange and reddish hues flicker and dance  
Creating colourful pattern forms in a hypnotic trance  
Crackling and sizzling hisses from burning timbers  
Flames leap higher and start to limber  
Red hot intensity luminosity and incandescence  
Smoke screen curls and twists spiralling a unique essence  
Searing passion and zeal projecting warmth and sensation  
All blazing and consuming total brilliance in illumination  
A hot glowing body growing and shining  
Rekindling life flourishing not dying  
Igniting the dance of life once more  
Flames captivating consuming from outline to core  
A rich aroma as wood grains and coals burn  
Harnessing a magical power at every turn  
Radiating flames roaring a mesmerizing story  
Eventually fading glowing embers will bask in their glory

## The Warrior Within

Rocky Mountain highs blue ocean deep lows  
New horizons as each new moon glows  
Daily uncertainty unbalancing life's building bricks  
Forever changed in a momentary mix  
A whirlpool of conversations engulf my brain  
Past reflected present and future under strain  
Recovery an undulating rocky terrain  
Bathe life with new purpose build resilience again  
Moonbeams shining the first rays of positivity  
Banishing the dark shades of doubt and negativity  
Core values decimated goals washed away  
Refocus on peripheral vision as survival for the day  
Reserved to the side-lines step back feel at ease  
Balance downfall with simplicity a refreshing breeze  
Ice crystals refract the light of the moon  
A metallic halo of hope vanquishes gloom  
Hints of bronze gold platinum a silvery light  
A night lamp of possibility shining bright  
We'll capture the moment embrace the warrior within  
Our authentic self still remains let healing begin  
Bloodied but undaunted we'll keep moving along  
Maintaining our place in time and space till our days are gone



## **Smouldering Gun**

Depression and anxiety unique and individual to all  
Biochemistry life experiences illness trauma genetics and more  
A smouldering gun waiting to descend  
Drained energy gloom and darkness with no end  
Mist the invisible blanket encompassing our lives  
Piercing our very existence individually tailored knives  
There's no magic formula to a road of recovery  
Root causes remain a journey of discovery  
Critical illness life changes all play their part  
Physical emotional psychological lie close to the heart  
Lability rapid changes in emotional state  
Easily provoked laughing crying anger disproportionate  
Changes in self-concept through neurological disability  
Complex and confusing outside the realms of possibility  
Limitations follow immense frustration  
A bewildering distressing sense of isolation  
Perceptual and spatial disorders create anxiety  
Pockets of depression confusion and uncertainty  
Impacts on ability to fulfil aspirations  
Acceptance of reality can be total devastation  
An invisible smoke screen will never fade away  
We learn to live with the smouldering gun everyday

## **Internal Picture Book**

Flashbulb memories flood my brain  
Lightening imbalances scar and stain  
Critically accurate impossible to forget  
Personal emotional reactive mind-set  
Sudden unexpected traumatic event  
Distorted confabulated totally heartfelt  
Distinctive images replay indiscriminate illumination  
Profound and complex thoughts offer little consolation  
Vivid intensity of each individual moment  
Reinforcement captures each personal torment  
Experiences filtered through my senses and emotions  
Snapshots of survival dedication and devotion  
Trials clear shadows weights become wings  
Breath of life through my heart still sings  
Complexity has profound beauty of its own  
Rooted in reality original and home grown  
Our own woven narrative memories become history  
Amazing things happen when we reveal the mystery  
An internal picture book so precious to see  
Embedded traumatic memories will forever live in me

### Oasis of Calm

Through a dappled canopy in the trees  
Whispers a warm gentle breeze  
Soothing stillness an oasis of calm  
Gentle fragrances slowly embalm  
Drenched in challenges uncertainty and fears  
Wisdom has blossomed blanketing trials and tears  
Our parachute of hope cushions the fall  
A bounty of shelter to which we crawl  
Danger and death are never far away  
Sun kissed moments pass each day  
Undercurrents ripple flowing under our skin  
Predators attack from deep within  
Nature's melodic choir overflows our senses  
Our wings outstretched flying above our defences  
Golden light reflecting from a woven web  
Infused strength from delicate silken thread  
From the darkest forests moonflowers nourish  
Dancing through midnight hours with luminous flourish  
Against all odds we're airborne once more  
To continue our human journey and its beautiful store

### Flick of a Switch

Simple everyday tasks become military operations  
Minor accomplishments cause for great celebration  
There are insufficient hours minutes in the day  
For the obstacle course which scatters our way  
Nocturnal awakenings have a life of their own  
Forever in motion wandering round our home  
No such thing as a day or night shift  
Just a continuous merge into which I drift  
As carer of a survivor your work never stops  
Until your body calls time and you eventually drop  
Only to spring back to the next call of alarm  
To prevent a crisis and instil calm  
Adaptation is the key there are no set rules  
Patience compassion and understanding are the three main tools  
A no panic strategy develops as time goes by  
Gone are the days when you question why  
Care doesn't turn off with the flick of a switch  
It weathers your frame like a permanent itch  
Oh what you would give for a good night's sleep  
As throughout the night you constantly creep  
To the outside world we have time on our hands  
In reality we're battling to stay in this land  
The jewel in the crown together we're still a team  
Hurdles of our daily race a constant stream  
For every year that passes I love you more not less  
To still have you in my life I'm so well and truly blessed

### Harp Strings

Balance of life so finely tuned  
A break in routine you feel marooned  
Loss of identity and sense of control  
Security blanket plucked away takes its toll  
Total disharmony a whole new world  
Climbing onwards and upwards feels so absurd  
Immensely overstretched and out of tune  
Breaking down way too soon  
Practice makes perfect we'll rise not crumble  
Un-phased by challenges of life's rough and tumble  
A voyage of opportunity lies in wait  
Locate the key and open the gate  
Take a deep breath let the oxygen pour  
Harp strings in harmony will play once more  
Release from the body pressure and pain  
Escape to calm waters and refreshing rain  
Harmonious feelings sooth and override  
Negative thoughts no longer justified  
Clear the mind and start from scratch  
Move forward with new plans to hatch  
Days grow brighter we grow stronger  
No place for tears any longer  
Value and treasure every precious season  
A natural step forward to progression and reason  
Finely tuned we will once again thrive  
With passion and determination it's so good to be alive

### Mirror Me

I look in the mirror my eyes strain to see  
A reverse image of how I used to be  
Time has eroded my heart and soul  
Both opportunities and turbulence have taken their toll  
Through the looking glass life severed into two distinct halves  
Before and after critical illness completely different paths  
Further reflections shimmer what lies ahead  
Expressions and feelings tranquil sky blue to burning red  
Vivid images of my past stream through my brain  
So powerful and enlightening destined to remain  
Image fuelled emotions recall my past  
Visual imagination so vibrantly cast  
Positive and negative segments flow into view  
My inbuilt camera recording events reinforced glue  
Two parallel lives running side by side  
Nostalgia and intrigue impact and collide  
Colours and sounds names and faces  
Linked by association to various places  
My mirror me version tantalisingly shines through  
Surviving volatility and trauma embracing pastures new  
I wouldn't wish to erase memories and experiences along my way  
As they have moulded and shaped me into who I am today

**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  
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Without you.

Thank you

Diane Bousfield

**NoECCN Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by Diane Bousfield**

NoECCN formed in July 2009

Originating from a merger when networks entwined

Events conferences training groups forums and practice improvement

Covering an area of approximately 3 million people give and take some movement

Clinical services working in unison a supportive network team

NoECCN Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary let the celebrations stream