



The Uncommonplace Book

2025

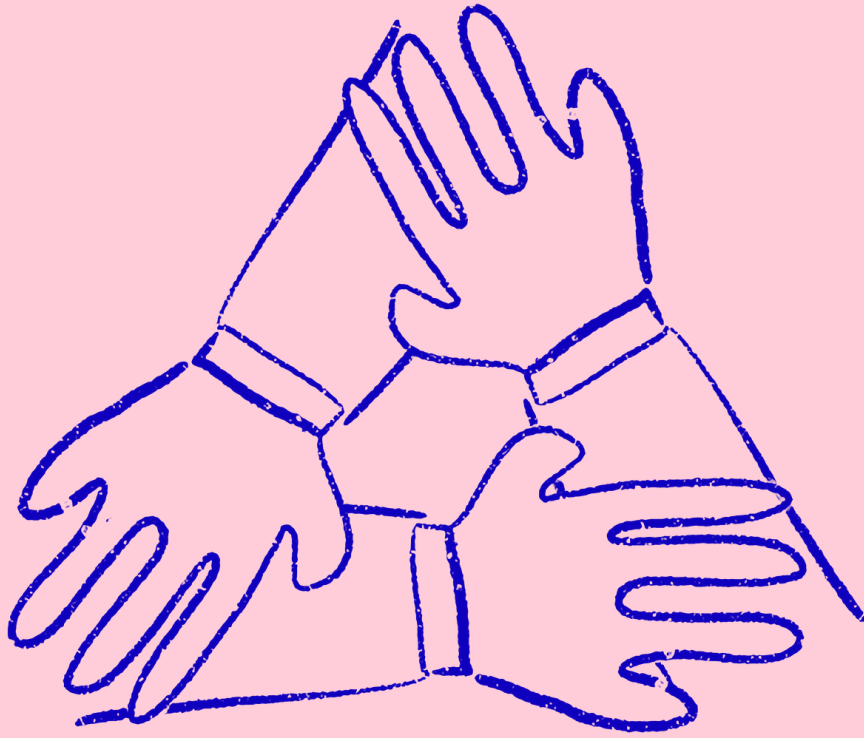


A Side by Side community collaboration

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What is an uncommonplace book?

A commonplace book is a space to collect and compile information. It contains anything from prose and poetry to recipes, proverbs, sketches, and personal observations.

To represent our diverse community, we've created the Uncommonplace book. A space to showcase members' unique experiences.

This book is made up of personal anecdotes, quotes, inspirational words, poems, and images, entirely submitted by Side by Side members.

Thank you!

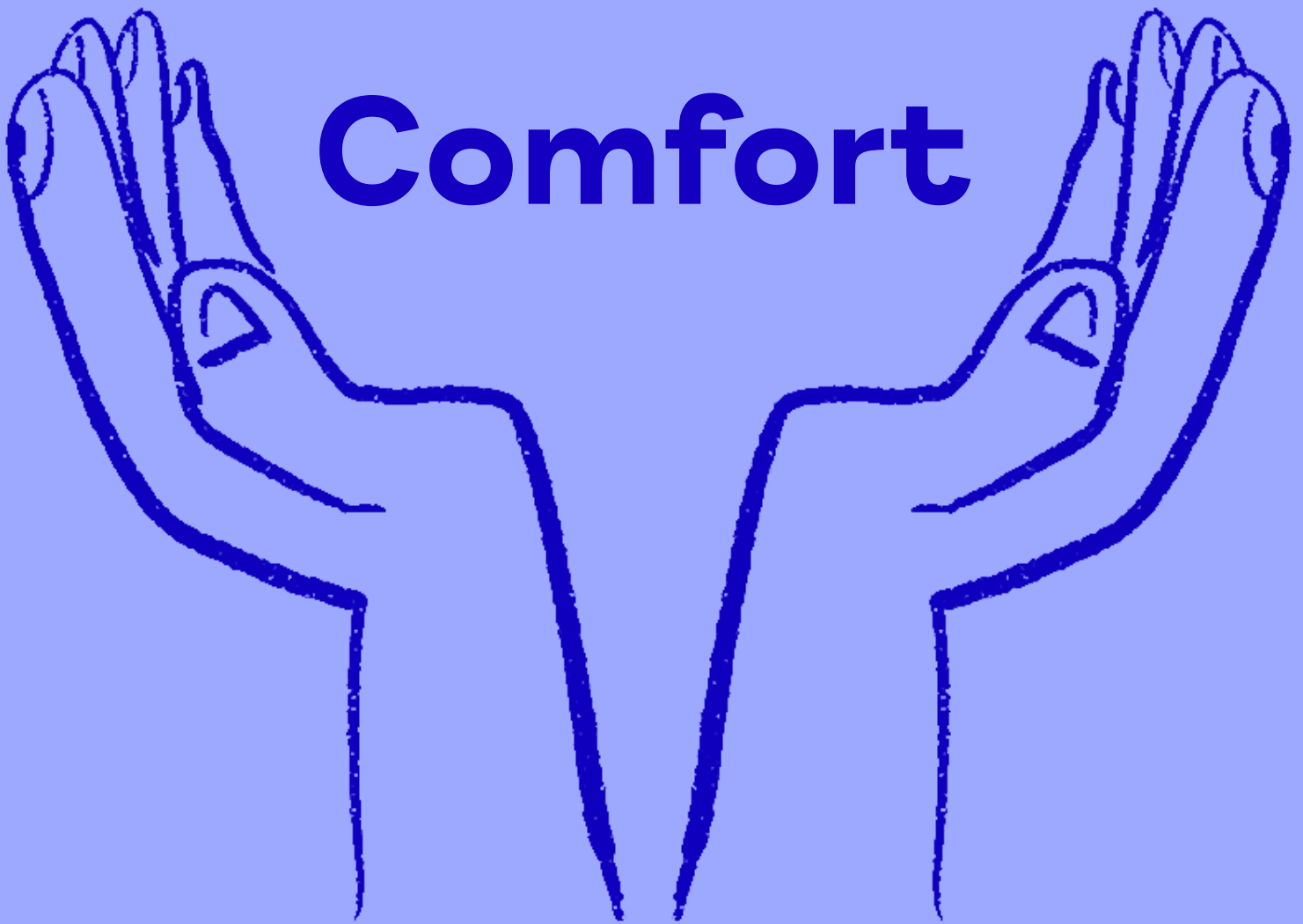
We couldn't have made this book without the beautiful submissions from the Side by Side community.

We hope it offers a comforting space to return to, feel inspired, and remember how valued you are.



This book is for you.

Comfort



Winter

Can you feel the temperature drop...
Obliterating last season's crop
Mornings become dark and cold
Feelings feel forlorn, feverishly foretold
Onions, potatoes and carrots
in soup
Rewarm the soul and help you
regroup
Troubles pause and dark
thoughts stop



Spring

Can you feel the warmth and light?
Old lets in the new - what a delight
Minds begin to awake from their slumber
Feelings refresh akin to the cucumber
Oh I know it's been so tough and long
Reawakening from winter's mournful song
Take in the smells and embrace the sight

Poetry by Dysmindwill
Illustrations by Cherri

Summer

Clothes begin to shed as sun brings heat
Oh for some it's a gentle hug you do greet
Mornings are filled with many melodies
Feelings become lighter like the breeze
Outside your window: a colourful scene
Reds, yellows, purples, oranges and green
Time to venture outside and with nature meet

Autumn

Changes, they do eventually come
Over to autumn summer does succumb
Making the trees shed their many leaves
Feelings change too and emotion deceives
Occurring when the clocks do change
Reality feeling uncomfortable and strange
Take a breath - look at all you've overcome



Poetry by Dysmindwill
Illustrations by Cherri



“This is a picture I took in a local cemetery when the cloud conditions were perfect to frame the comforting angel that was cut from local stone over 200 years ago.

It is still standing, providing comfort to any ancestors.”

By FA.



Cherri



Pink.



Cathyclover

“Side by Side is one of the most intensely comforting things I know. I log on several times a week, usually in the evening when I’ve had my supper, put on my pyjamas, turned on the cosy lighting in my room and settled myself on my bed, lying on my tummy and looking at my phone.

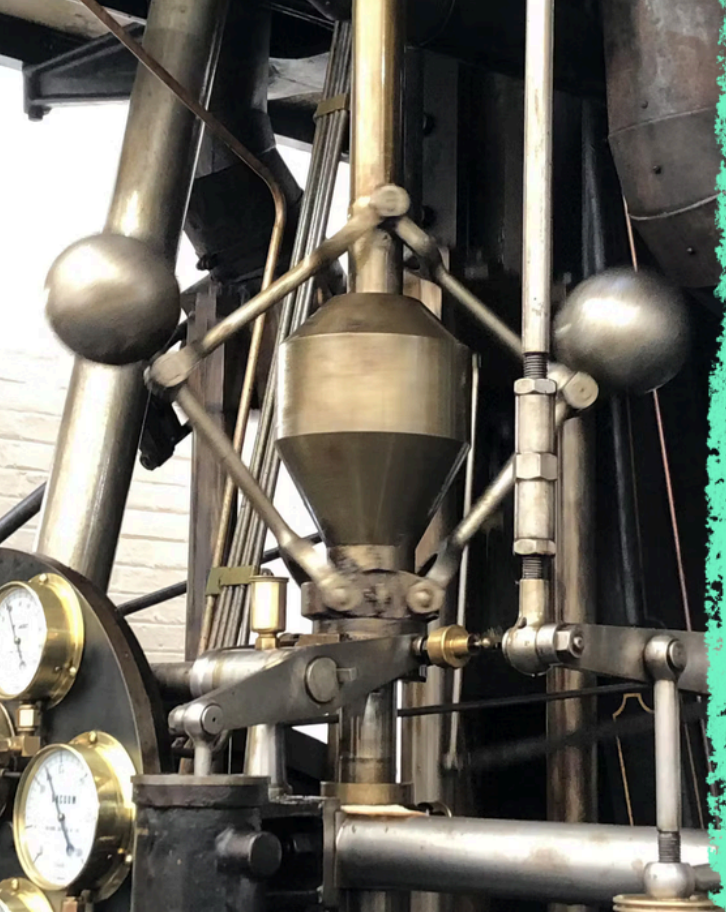
I spend most days in a state of continuous anxiety, accompanied by violent physical shaking, sweating and nausea, but when I log on to Side by Side and begin to read the messages, the extremes of anxiety usually melt away. When I’m in a particularly acute state I ask for help during the day, and it is often there waiting for me in the evening in the form of messages from people I know and also those I don’t.

The people on Side by Side are intensely kind, creative, sensitive, bright, supportive, funny, and most importantly, they all know what it is like to struggle with their mental health. That also enables them to say precisely the right thing at the right moment. The Mind moderators are also extremely supportive, a benevolent presence that increases the sense of care and security emanating from the forum.

Whenever I have spare emotional energy, I check the messages from those looking for support, and try to respond usefully. It’s difficult, but it feels important to do. And sometimes I realise that the advice or suggestions I’m making might usefully be applied to myself.

My gratitude for Side by Side knows no bounds.”

By Cherri



3.14159



FA.



MiaMushroom



“Butterflies bring me comfort. Watching them move so gently and gracefully makes the world feel softer for a moment.

They remind me that I’m not alone, and that calm, peace, and even small signs of beauty can appear each day, if we take a moment to truly look.. sometimes when we least expect it, or need it most.

Sometimes a butterfly feels like a message from a loved one who’s no longer here, letting me know they’re at peace and watching over me.

In their quiet fluttering presence, I feel a little lighter, like comfort can come in the simplest, most delicate moments.”

-Pink.

“My three dogs bring me so much comfort, everyday. They rely on me just as much as I rely on them.

They give me another reason to get up and focus. They make me wander further than I would normally go alone, in search of new horizons to enjoy. They make me laugh and give me unconditional love and licks, they comfort me each night with the most incredible snuggles.

They mean the whole world to me.”

-Loweezer





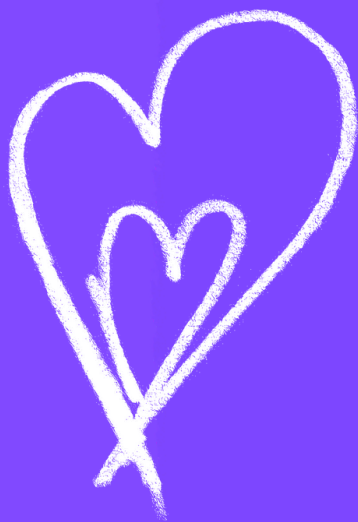
Unigirl16



Jojo03



Midnightcatstwo



FA.

Cactus2

Unigirl16





-Pearl219

“With hardship comes ease”❤️❤�

-Lizzo101

I'm walking atop a grassy hill, looking down into the valley below where I see a copse of tall, tightly-clustered trees.

Without a single step or thought, hardly before I know it, I find myself in the woods, following the river. It's a pleasant path to walk, shaded at first but soon I come to a clearing where the sun sparkles on the water and shines bright, so white that I have to shield my eyes.

Someone has left a small blue wooden boat, with a pair of oars, moored up at the bank. Instinctively I know they've left it for me and it's an invitation to take a trip downstream.

A mixture of willow, downy birch and alder adorn the banks as I row gently, care-free along the crystal clear water. A flash of blue and orange darts past to my left as a kingfisher alights on the branch of a willow. Further along the bank I see a grey heron, motionless, waiting, watching. I'm sure he saw me long before I spotted him, but today he is not bothered by my presence and barely gives me a glance as I glide past.

I look up to see a kestrel hovering over fields beyond the woods to my right, his tail quivering in the breeze, wings flapping furiously, then suddenly diving earthwards out of sight.

On the river ahead the way is narrowed, fallen willow branches trail in the stream, remnants of a recent storm. I wonder for a moment how I'll pick my way through, when without warning I am flying high, free as a bird, looking down on the river again as it emerges from the woods, a ribbon of greens and blues and sandy banks snaking through the landscape. I gaze upon an otter and watch its sleek brown back porpoising as it occasionally surfaces and dives, at ease in its fluid world.

As I soar on the wind, warm sun at my back, I am one with the kite and the kestrel, I am the air in which we fly as I am the hills and valley below.

Meditation - by 70sDigger

*Que sera, sera.
Whatever will be, will be.*

-CazzieD

Picnic at the side of a crystal clear pool.

Willow branches dip in the water.

Somewhere far off, a bird sings a soothing melody,
The sound echoes across the pool, bringing comfort to all who
hear her.

A wicker basket sits on a soft woollen blanket.
Colourful cushions scattered across bring a sense of cosiness
and comfort.

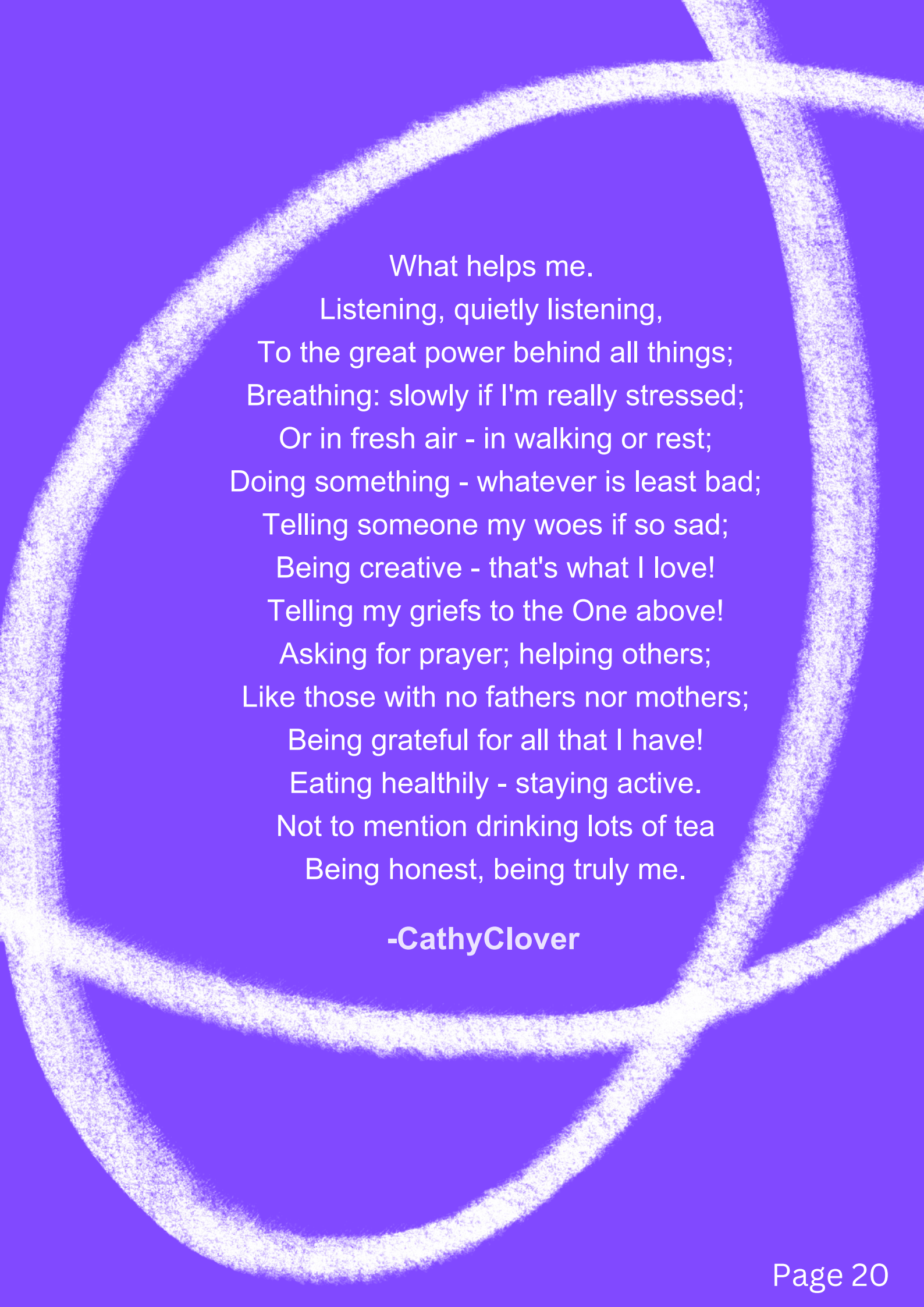
Inside the basket, a whole host of delights:
Fresh juice, jewel-like fruits, cakes and sandwiches to delight
the senses.

In the distance, young deer roam between the trees, grazing on
tender young grass shoots.

A shaft of sunlight pierces between the branches, and golden
motes of sunlight sparkle and shimmer like ethereal sun drops.
There is peace here: a silence that is only broken by birdsong
and the gentle hum of life.

Dragonflies dance in between sunbeams, the iridescent colours
of their wings flash brilliantly as the sun shimmers brightly.

-ArcticFlower



What helps me.
Listening, quietly listening,
To the great power behind all things;
Breathing: slowly if I'm really stressed;
Or in fresh air - in walking or rest;
Doing something - whatever is least bad;
Telling someone my woes if so sad;
Being creative - that's what I love!
Telling my griefs to the One above!
Asking for prayer; helping others;
Like those with no fathers nor mothers;
Being grateful for all that I have!
Eating healthily - staying active.
Not to mention drinking lots of tea
Being honest, being truly me.

-CathyClover



“We may be struggling but we are bound together with kindness.”

-LucyHill

For some, it might be a downy blanket,

A warm mug of tea

A soft teddy

A pet

A comforting TV show,

A book

Nature

Connecting on side by side,

Sometimes comfort can feel out of reach

Especially on those heavy days,

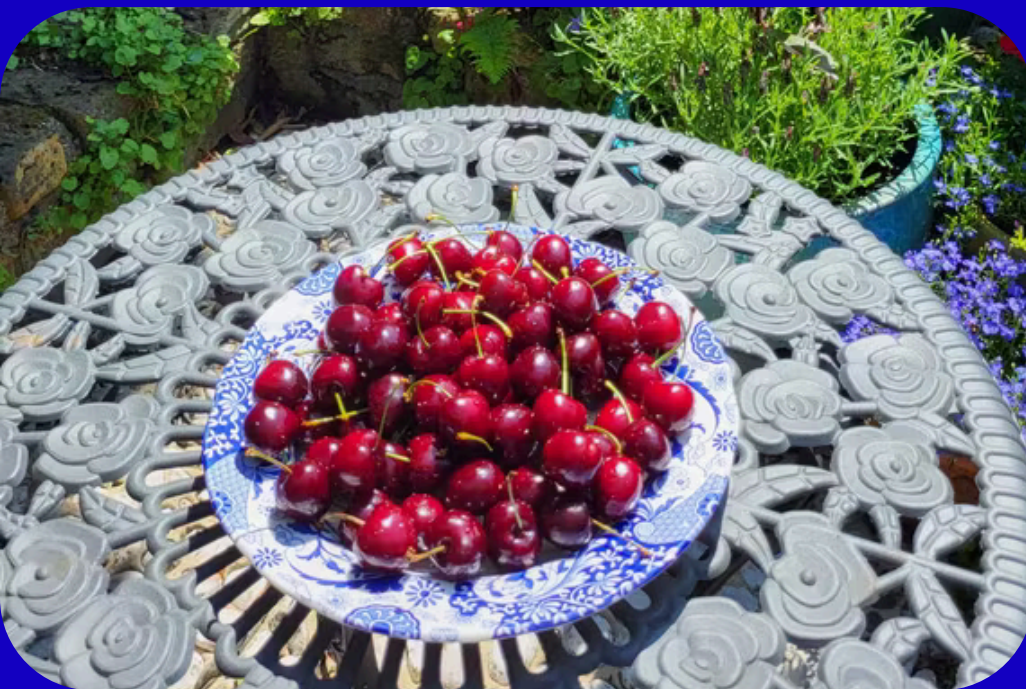
Comfort doesn't ask for perfection

Comfort creates space to just be

To give us time to rest and heal

-Anonymous





Cherri



ArcticFlower

It does not matter
what you bear,
but how you bear it.
Seneca

Cosmic



“We all share the same life and grow together as
one with all living things.

Connected to everything, attached to nothing.”

By FA.



“Transformation, Change, Resilience, Freedom, living in the moment.
Don't conform to the world. Be like the butterfly and transform.
Break free of your cocoon and give yourself the freedom to fly.
Happiness is like a butterfly which, when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.
Butterflies can't see their wings. They can't see how truly beautiful they are, but everyone else can. People are like that as well.
You do not just wake up and become a butterfly; growth is a process.
How will you know if you can fly if you never spread your wings?
There are so many wonderful people here on SBS whom I can't actually see, but I can feel you, your warmth and love, and I'm grateful to you every day.
Beauty comes from within.”



**“Sunflowers are reminder to be strong, stand tall,
and always turn towards the light.”**

-Pink.



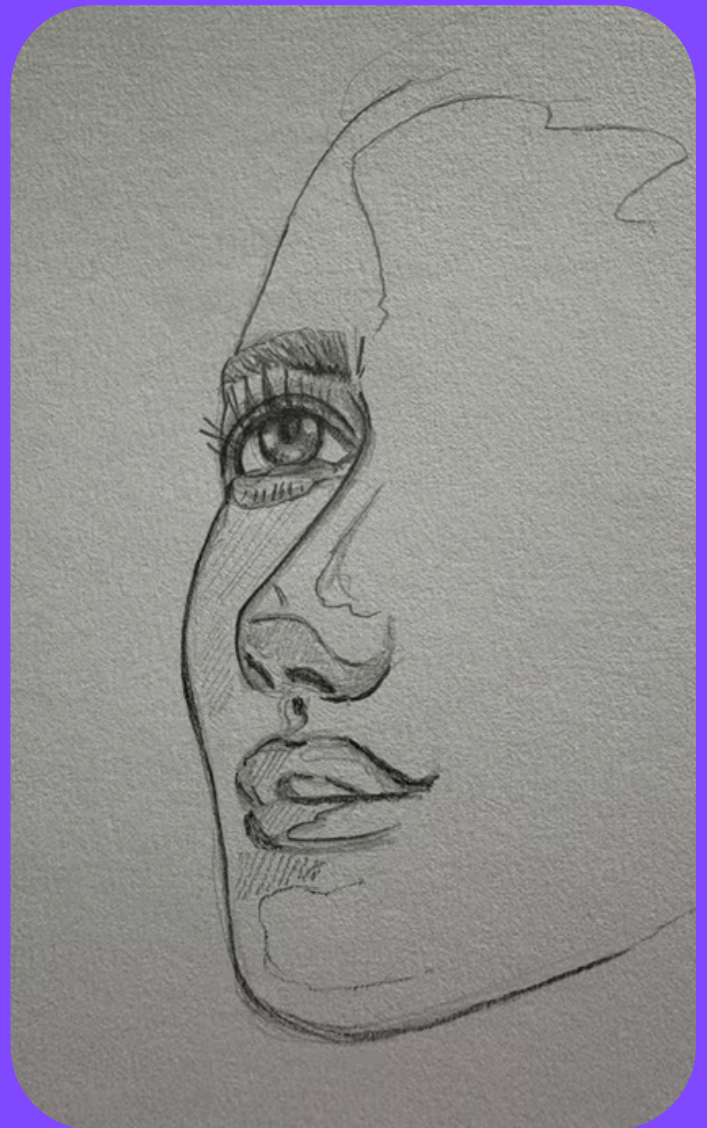
“From little acorns
mighty oak trees grow.”

-CazzieD

“I feel that since finding SBS
and becoming a part of this
lovely community, it’s helped
me to grow in so many ways.
I’ve found and rekindled my
passion for art and crafts,
and by sharing art here, it’s
given it more depth and
meaning.

Also, by interacting and
getting to know so many
lovely people on SBS, it’s
helped me with my
confidence and self-worth.”

-Loweezer



“A flower grows not because the world is easy,
But because it chooses to open.
Softness works the same way.
It takes courage to remain open,
to love deeply after being hurt,
to see beauty after the storm.
Softness is not weakness.
It’s resilience in bloom.”

-Pink.

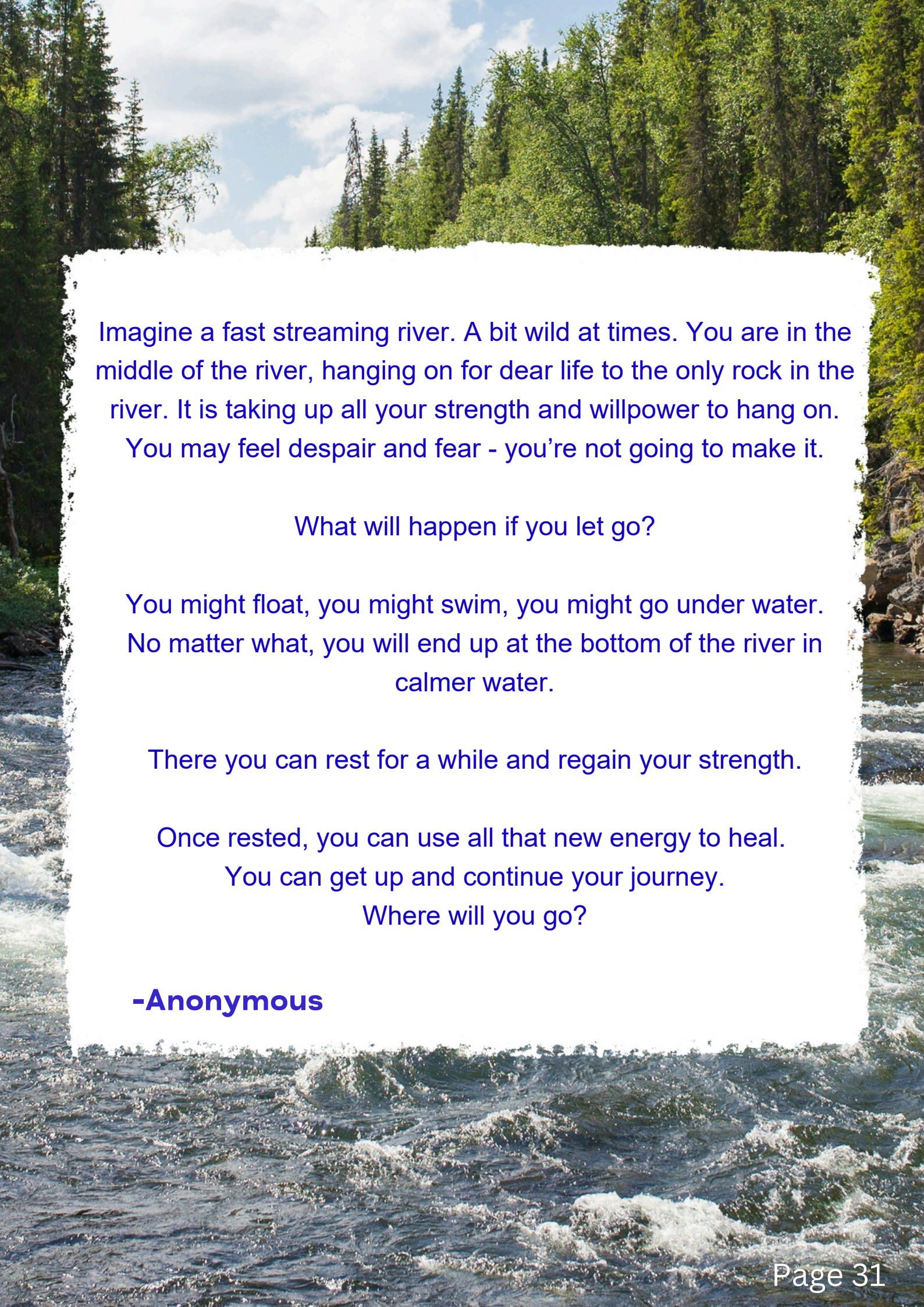


“When life seems just a dreary grind
And things seem fated to annoy
Say something nice to someone else
And watch the world light up with joy.”

-Anonymous



-Cherri



Imagine a fast streaming river. A bit wild at times. You are in the middle of the river, hanging on for dear life to the only rock in the river. It is taking up all your strength and willpower to hang on. You may feel despair and fear - you're not going to make it.

What will happen if you let go?

You might float, you might swim, you might go under water. No matter what, you will end up at the bottom of the river in calmer water.

There you can rest for a while and regain your strength.

Once rested, you can use all that new energy to heal.

You can get up and continue your journey.

Where will you go?

-Anonymous



You are enough

It's difficult not to believe what our minds tell us sometimes.
They try to feed us all kinds of lies that we're not good enough,
that we can't do anything right,
that everything is falling apart and will never get better.
But our thoughts aren't always facts,
and we don't have to believe everything we think.
Even when your mind might try to convince you otherwise,
remember you have the power to choose what you believe.
Embrace the truth that you are enough,
just as you are,
and that you can overcome the obstacles along the way.
Keep holding onto hope and remember
there is always the possibility of a brighter tomorrow.

-Pink.



“Growing on same bush, but at different stages of life. Just as we all are at various stages of our struggles with mental health.”



Limitless

There is nothing, I hold, in the way of work
That a human being may not achieve
If he does not falter, or shrink or shirk,
And more than all, if he will believe.

Believe in himself and the power behind
That stands like an aid on a dual ground,
With hope for the spirit and oil for the wound,
Ready to strengthen the arm or mind.

When the motive is right and the will is strong
There are no limits to human power;
For that great force back of us moves along
And takes us with it, in trial's hour.

And whatever the height you yearn to climb,
Tho' it never was trod by the foot of man,
And no matter how steep - I say you can,
If you will be patient - and use your time.

-Ella Wheeler Wilcox, 1850-1919



“The beach, the sea, the sky.
I feel and find my calm with these. It's where I find my inner
peace.
I can breathe. I can stop.
I can just be.
They help me to reset a little. Step back. Find my inner
strength.
Then I'm ready to try and grow and keep going.”

-Pixx



“Things we usually view as negative can be wonderful if we're open to seeing them in a different way. A puddle reflecting this evening's chilly sunset was so beautiful!”

-Cherri

“Growth cannot be forced, it comes from an accumulation of our choices and hardships. Sometimes it is not as obvious to us until we reflect. It takes time and comes from a place of learning. Growth also develops in many forms, it is ever changing, it is a steady stream flowing within us.”

-Silver_x



-Lost Angel

-SammiJayne3



-Anonymous



GROWTH TAKES TIME

Growth takes time,
It isn't always straightforward,
There can be ups and downs,
It can be painful, difficult, topsy-turvy
But it all comes round
Through the struggles, the darkness
The light cascades through
Understanding, being heard,
being supported in places like side by side.
It's not about the big wins,
it's all the small moments you keep getting through,
Until it becomes a little bit easier

-Anonymous



“I’ve had three breakdowns; each time, I have been sustained by the idea of Breakdown offering the opportunity for Breakthrough. It’s a bit like a chick emerging from an egg: one has to peck a little hole to start things off, then gradually shed the pieces of shell to emerge bedraggled but wiser. It’s a profoundly uncomfortable process, but incredibly valuable and sometimes I almost feel grateful for the opportunities that breakdowns provide.

I wouldn’t be so bullish, though, without the help of medication and expert care, and above all, this time, without Side by Side. SBS has made quite an incredible difference to my life; I’ve learned so much from the many truly wonderful people on here, and words cannot begin to express my gratitude to the Mind Team and to YOU ALL.”

“The people who post here on Mind
Have something in common, we find:

In deed and in word
Whether loud or unheard
They're all so incredibly kind!”

-Cherri





“From kitten to cat, loved at every stage.”

-Pink.





“You are enough

It’s difficult not to believe what our minds tell us sometimes.

They try to feed us all kinds of lies that we’re not good
enough, that we can’t do anything right,
that everything is falling apart and will never get better.

But our thoughts aren’t always facts,
and we don’t have to believe everything we think.

Even when your mind might try to convince you otherwise,
remember you have the power to choose what you believe.

Embrace the truth that you are enough,
just as you are,

and that you can overcome the obstacles along the way.

Keep holding onto hope and remember
there is always the possibility of a brighter tomorrow.”

-Pink.

I am on my own
But not by choice
No one wants
To hear my voice
I am the one
Who gets left out
And made fun of
No doubt
Being part of a gang
Is not my end
But simply to have
A good friend
A friend to rely on
Would be great
But it seems to me
I will have to wait
I am on my own
But not by choice
No one wants
To hear my voice

-Smash



INSPIRATION



Rock Balances at Sunrise.

“It’s about balance,
harmony, and focus on
the present moment and
the inspiration that
seemingly difficult tasks
can be achieved through
determination and
perseverance.”

-FA.

“One poem that inspires me is "Leisure", by W H Davies. Ever since I first came across it some twenty years ago, I have taken these words into my heart, and this poem has, in a way, guided me in the way I am and how I want to live my life.

It's a bit like the phrase "stop and smell the roses".

As I walk along the rivers near my home, no matter what else may be happening in life, I find my peace in taking the time to stand and stare:

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?—
No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.”

-70sDigger

“Since being part of Side by Side and Mind, I have felt a sense of growth and inspiration from ALL of the people within this community. Thank you for being incredibly beautiful and unique, poignant, clever and enlightening!”

-Loweezer



“A little reminder of how small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

Kindness Travels

A smile, a word, a hand held tight,
Small sparks that light the darkest night.
A quiet gesture, gentle, unseen,
Can heal much more than what has been.
The kindness you share travels far and true,
And always finds its way back to you.”

-Pink.

Meditation

“Here is a poem about meditation.
I’m on platform two of Peckham Rye Station
And anxious as fuck, so with improvisation
I’m hoping for calm through the act of creation.
I’m fearing the worst, and my prognostication
Is that my mad fear will cause disintegration
And I will dissolve, in a neat demonstration
Of negative thought causing derealisation.
Think of nice things! Use prioritisation:
Sunlit sea, chocolate biscuits, smiles, jollification!
But I’m only left with the realisation
That my brainpower requires reorganisation.
So I sit and I breathe, and my quiet respiration
Brings gradual peace, and the welcome sensation
That I need not believe in the dramatisation
Of my own over-vivid, wild, imagination.
How could I function without meditation?
It helps me delay instant gratification,
It shows me the benefits of contemplation,
And helps me ignore my brain’s manipulation.”

-Cherri



-CazzieD

“There's an old saying (possibly Chinese, but I may not be right about that), "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

I love this as it reminds me that, however difficult the road ahead may seem, and however large a task that lies ahead of me, all I can do and all I need to do is take one single step. It can sound like a cliché at times, saying to somebody that all they can do is take one step at a time, because that's all any of us can do. But this old saying inspires me and helps me to realise that if I can take that single step, I can achieve anything.”

-70sDiger

“My friend, you've been so brave and resilient to overcome that war you had inside you. Even when it happened the second time, and they didn't give you any chance....Remember, when I was with you, and I would take your place, because you are the one who wants to stay...You cried, and then you started fighting. And you were alone, because you have pride to ask for help...and I didn't know how to help you at that time, but I believe you, when your world is collapsing, especially when it seems better, you want to be alone and understand...what to do and how you can continue, and understand you...Because you have the passion and the driven energy to go beyond and live...the best of your life. YOU did it...You have achieved your goal, to fight the light when you couldn't see it at the beginning. Thank you for your lesson...I'm honoured to be part of it.”

-Aha1234

Come, colour! Let my cup
Brim with glow and shimmer,
Hues sparkling, and dimmer,
Soft-glowing, fill me up!

Sunrise clouds, rose and white,
Far distant, green-black trees,
Pale jade-shaded seas,
Sky azure, blinding bright.

Glassy waves, shining green,
Dancing lines of lemon light,
Hot vermilion of a kite
Soars through aquamarine.

Red buses, bright. Brown skin.
Stained glass. Butterfly wings.
Pink bougainvillea sings;
Sharp acid lime in gin.

Long swathe of shining grass,
Hot magenta petals,
Spears of emerald nettles,
Lake green as polished glass.

Garnet copper beeches,
Deep turquoise lustrous silk,
White surface-tensioned milk,
Blushing furry peaches.

Ruby-ripening berries,
Pink lily-sprinkled pond,
High-arched viridian frond,
Darkly gleaming cherries.

Sudden bright surprise!
Colour clash and complement,
Hues from pale to opulent,
Come, enchant my eyes!

-Cherri



New Start

Scared, unsure, no confidence,
trying to change—
Not knowing how

losing sight of the road.
No light remain should I walk the dark road alone?

But then, a light-soft, warm, calling me home.
And I know, tomorrow
is a new start.

The light is softer now, not blazing, but steady
-a quiet promise. A chance of a future.
Things can change

I breathe it in, the chill, the calm, the weight of yesterday
melting from my skin.

Each step feels fragile, but real.
The road is still there, waiting,
and this time I will run onto it holding out for chance

-Anonymous





Hope

a small word that holds oceans.

It whispers,

"maybe,"
when everything else says "no."

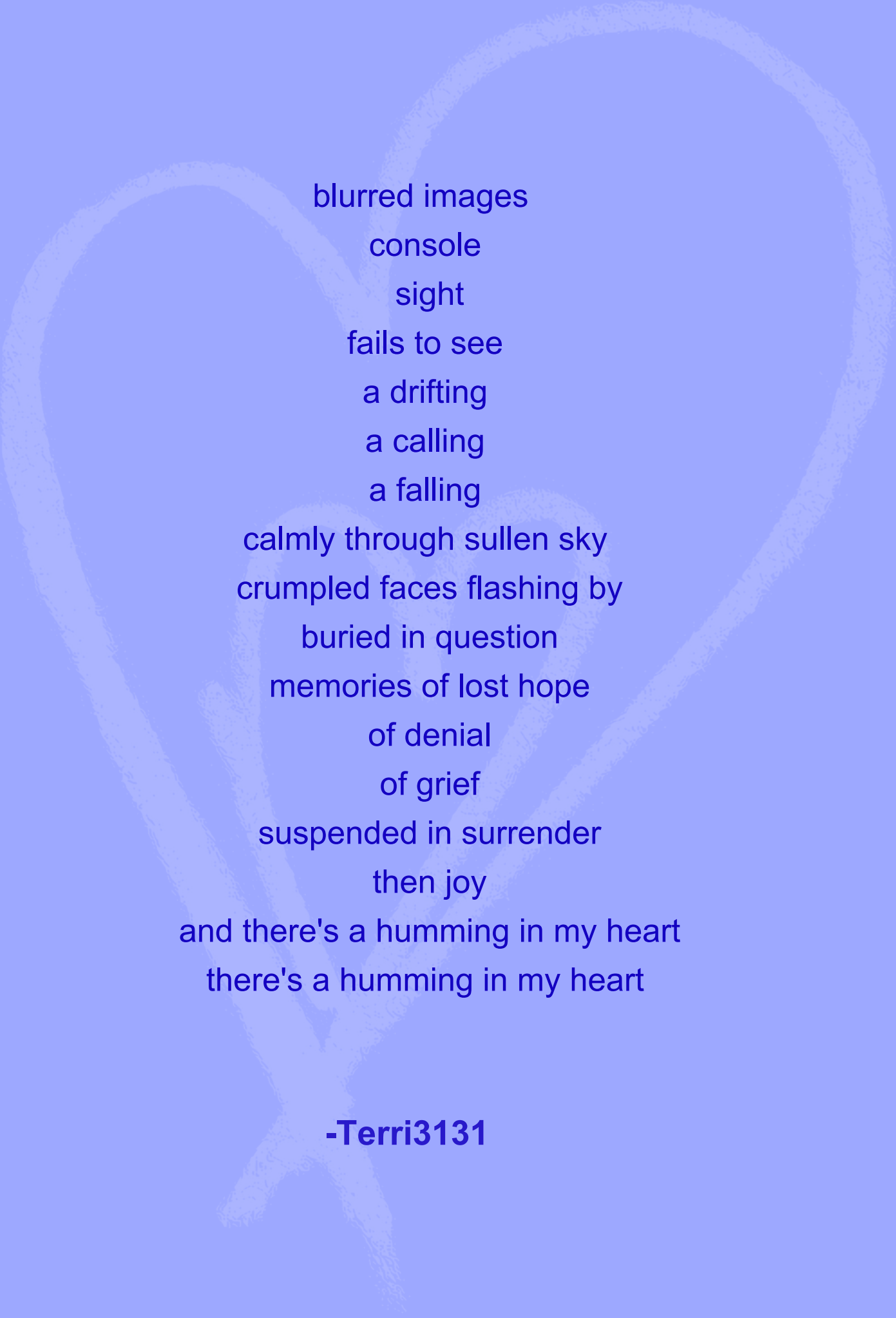
It keeps you breathing, even when it hurts to try.

But hope can wound, too
when it leaves.

And it feels like nothing can fill that void of anxiety and sadness

Hang onto the small things stay with hope

-Anonymous



blurred images
console
sight
fails to see
a drifting
a calling
a falling
calmly through sullen sky
crumpled faces flashing by
buried in question
memories of lost hope
of denial
of grief
suspended in surrender
then joy
and there's a humming in my heart
there's a humming in my heart

-Terri3131

Lonely Moon
still night
a precious, lonely moon
tries to speak
words whirl, echoing,
seeing
a life without struggle
is no life at all
joys intertwined,
embraced
in love-brimmed mosaics
of pain and comfort,
delight and dismay,
anguish and bliss
balanced
love draws life,
into light
silken rivers
blend
spilling to chasms
finding their way

we do have a choice,
whispered the kindly moon...



-Terri3131

life;
that tyrant, life
stripped,
laid my soul bare
left me marooned
neither stitch
nor neurone left
oh, let me
slip
under quiet cover
close
weary eyes
slide
into day's night
sleep
this longing
from an aching heart

-Terri3131



“My inspiration is Swampy.
Even with his one eye and that eye
being damaged, he never let
anything get him down.

He’s no longer with us.


I take my inspiration from him. He
was and is my hero.”

-Midnightcatstwo



“Other people inspire me.”

-Teapot1975



untroubled
in quiet contemplation
free from fear or concern
at peace
with the self
and
what is
the self dissolves
merges
into this 'what is'
becomes
nothing in particular,
yet particular to everything
a belonging
a homecoming with
no 'alien presence'
neither border nor antagonism

neither fear,
nor resistance
or resentment
no need for fear
glimpsing a world,
waiting,
in nature;
a world of balance,
of acceptance; profound, true
living within
a perfect, natural coalescence
beyond substantial selfhood
yet fully true to the self.
So rare,
but not impossible...

-Terri3131

A quote spoken to me by my very supportive
younger brother:

“Whether you think you can or whether you think
you can’t, you’re right.”

It gave me the insight and courage to believe in
myself for the good.

-Anonymous

“At first you don't succeed, then try and try again is my
favourite quote, which helps me get through each day.”

-Avitar-Anime1989

“It's good to remember that even in our darkest moments,
there is always light within us - the ability to joke, the heart
full of love. The part of us that is still joyful is still in there
somewhere.”

-RoseAlpaca

'From my rotting body, flowers shall grow and I am in them and that is eternity.' - Edvard Munch

I think about this quote a lot, especially at my lowest points. It made the end sound like something poetic and beautiful. It's not really, though; the true beauty is from continuing and growing to become a person who can look back and see that with each step forward, we have been planting the seeds to one day enjoy all the flowers. I hope this low mood I'm currently in will fade and become the beginning of another chapter. All the stress and negative thoughts you feel now will dissipate, but it is still valid, as it will be another flower in the garden.

I'm really trying to be positive even though it's very hard.

-Shazza4sparra_hawk

“Go to life, it won't come to you.”

-Destination

“ I find inspiration from doing repetitive and rhythmic activities,
such as walking, running or knitting.

I think the rhythm of it is very grounding and calming. It helps me
focus my mind and forget about my worries and anxieties.”

-Ann_K



“I got inspiration from seeing rock balance pictures online and
attempting it myself.

Patience, focus, and mindfulness are all required skills. This is
one I built.”

-FA.

"It will all be right in the end, if it's not right, it's not the end."

-Bagpuss66

All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king.

-wenchism

"I decided to play the cards I was dealt".

-PlanetGuy

'If you think you can do a thing, and you think you
can't do a thing, you're right.' - Henry Ford

-Cherri



“I find inspiration from nature, from others with lived experience like me, sharing their experience and instilling hope. Whether that be on side by side, through a book, film or in person, it inspires me to be a little bit more open, to feel a little less alone.”

“This was inspired by the crescent moon I saw yesterday, glowing in the dark sky and a quote I find inspiring 'Even on the darkest days, I will find the light.'”

-Anonymous



Lyn Idwal, Snowdonia.
“A cold November day, in the splendour of the wilds.”

-OcarinaLink





“My inspiration is my dog Scooter. He helped me through the toughest time in my life when my mental health was bad. Unfortunately, he's no longer with us. I love and miss you every day, my baby boy, until we meet again.”

-CrypticWhisper

A message from the Mind team

**From the entire Mind team, we're sending each of
you light and warmth.**

**Side by Side exists because of its members and
the peer support you share with one another.**

**The site thrives because of the kindness,
compassion, and care that each of you give.**

**Wishing you a peaceful festive period and
bright New Year!**

Contact us: sidebysideonline@mind.org.uk