

Live Now Patients Poems

To note Byw Nawr Week, we are proud to publish poems by people who are receiving support from Ceredigion Palliative Care Team. Recently the poet Mererid Hopwood took part in a poetry residency with the team as part of our Literature and Wellbeing project, with support from Byw Nawr (Live Now). The poems below were written by people as a form of therapy as they live with serious illness.

Ivory Tower

I'm not on my own but I feel alone,
Hidden in my ivory tower, away from the sympathy shower
Don't want to go out, or make a call, scared to stumble or fall
To be in control, to be sane; there's nothing wrong with my brain,
Choice or chance, what a dance
To make decisions just for me, to have control over my destiny
Step outside, breathe in the air, another step to look and see
What life beyond the tower holds for me
Decide, make a choice; Take a path, explore, find out more
A pleasure trip, a day out; in the town or on the beach
All within my reach
My choices, guiding me to where I want to be
Journeys to the unknown, take me to a different zone
New people, new friends, new ideas, new medication
Each is like a mini vacation
To find out more, I must explore
Through choice not chance, I can lead the dance
Out of the tower and into the light
To smile easily, relax and enjoy the sight
Of a world waiting for me, beyond the tower
A happy place where I can be I, myself and me
Free from fear, and happy just to be

P.H 2017

Thankful

We all like to moan about the slightest thing:
"I've got no money" or "I want that ring!"
But when you stop and wonder how life would really be
If you were told one day... "I'm sorry but it's the Big C!"

Your life stops like in a standstill;
You step into another zone
You're on the escalator
But all you want is to be home
With things as they used to be
Life just plodding on
But in a blink of an eye
That can all be gone!

Be thankful, be grateful for good health
As life is nothing if you are suddenly faced with death
Be thankful, be grateful
Think twice before you moan
As suddenly one day you could wake up all alone.

Life is suddenly full of appointments, & meds
You're tired, your body aches & you're so full of dread.
You find the strength to get through it
As you don't want to end up dead!

People say, "you're brave & stay positive & strong"
That is a front we put on - so they are oh so wrong!
No One really fully understands until they are faced with that same news
So be thankful & think carefully before you speak your own views!

Reflections

In my canoe, alone, far away from home,
Why a canoe? Maybe there's only room for me;
A part of me craves isolation, yet I tell others of my situation,

I am angry, angry this disease is sly, unforgiving, cruel
No symptoms, month after month, what a fool
Don't worry, be happy, stay sane,
Stay stable, keep calm, keep able,

Days of tiredness, just hours of feeling okay,
Not full of energy but enough to get up and about

To smile and see the good around me
Why alone, I think I need to be just me
It's my control key

P.H 2017

HOME TO DIE

The road leads only one way
Without escape
Or possibility of return
It's a new road
Never travelled before
By me
I walk it, not with dread,
Only with
Sadness
At leaving loved ones
And for all that's left undone
That might have been done

A.H 2018

The Anxiety Express

Woken once more with unresolved fear,
the anxiety express is already here.
No passengers save me and my imagination,
a train on a mission pulling wagons of pain.
The weight of its dread aches in my brain,
but it cannot be stopped, a runaway train.

Driven by stealth and hopelessness,
on past embankments planted with stress.
A nuclear waste train with a half life of years,
secretly, deadly, it pervades all my fears.
A ghost train, a woe train, always on time,
but it cannot be stopped, a runaway train.

This train, this train causing so much damage,
recklessly hurtles through its own made carnage.
Runs on rails laid cunningly straight,
past signals and stations left in it's wake.
The train crash expected, no emergency brake,
but it cannot be stopped, a runaway train.

First train, last train, this is the cursed train,
a trail of misery a cargo of dread,
relentlessly onwards tortures my head.
Upline, downline, makes no difference,
whatever direction is just more pain,
but it cannot be stopped, a runaway train.

A bad train, a mad train, fuelled by obsession,
squeals along downgrades to endless depression.
Slowly, slowly, now changing its pace,
grinding anxiety fades without grace,
becomes the depression that takes its place,
but it cannot be stopped, a runaway train.

There is no escape from the train of despair,
relentlessly onwards until I am aware
how it's circular journey must pass again
through the same dereliction that was today.
No terminal exists, there is no end,
for the the train that can't stop, the runaway train.

Gate And You

There is a gate that I can see
With you the other side waiting for me
When I get close I understand
That you want to lend a hand

*

To help me push open or climb over
To be together in the clover
So why do I hesitate
And watch and wait

*

What is it that holds me back
Is it desire that I lack
Or is that I want to succeed alone
So that I can say, this I own

*

An independent streak pushing me
To stand alone yet want to be
Hand in hand with you in clover
It's just this gate I need to get over

*

Help me please and let me see
The joy of your loving company
Together we can, together we will
I love you now and always will

CANCER WARD

I've seen the gaunt bodies,
Stripped of flesh, misshapen, bellies swollen
Belsen-like
Once I would have felt revulsion
But now I feel
Only compassion

They point the way for me
The road
Toward inevitable death

And it is not so frightening
We must all die
All of us must die

A.H 2018

Wondering

We sit together spending time,
With no discussion, is this the end of the line?
Have we nothing in common anymore?
My life now to you, is it such a chore?

You never involve yourself in my world now,
In your own little bubble but we plod on somehow,
Secretly wishing things were how they were,
But we all know while I'm still on this earth that will never occur!

Reality hits me like I'm having a heart attack!
I'll never, I'm sure, ever get the old me back,
Gone are the happy carefree days
Now it's filled with lots of hospital stays

I often sit and wonder what did I do?
That I, and you my family have to go through
All the pain and heartache that this Cancer brings,
Til one day I'm set free and will gain my Angel Wings

Never forget me, talk of me often,
Tell my grandchildren all about me & how much I would so love them,
To watch them learn and grow
Oh! how I will miss all of this so!!

Remember one thing how I loved you all so much,
I gave you my love, my life and my touch,
My boys, you've made me so very proud,
Never give up your hopes and dreams. This you are allowed.

If I'm not physically here for all your important days,
Like Marriage & the birth of your children & their school plays;
My soul, I assure you will be with you every step of the way!
Speak to me; I'll comfort you, anytime, night or day!

SMALL THINGS

Blue tits flirting in the bare bushes
On the glacée'd lawn a blackbird
Morosely
Tosses over dead leaves
Continually disappointed
A wren so small you hardly notice her
Busies herself at the base of the brokenbrick wall
So tiny.

A.H 2018

When I am gone!

I often cry when I'm all alone
In the car or whilst I'm at home
When I sit & wonder how things will be
When I am gone, for my family!

I look around at all the things
That make me smile & the tears that memories bring,
There's been good times and bad
Smiles, laughter & being sad

My boys are now fine grown men
And doing very well, I'm so proud of them!
I hope I'll be around for a long time to see
Them, when they're older, with their own family.

A mother's wish is to see her children thrive;
With a nice home, enjoying holidays & just being alive;
Happy in their work and a good family life,
With a handful of children and a good loving wife.

I hope & pray that all the things I have done & seen
I can tell these tales to my grandchildren of how my life has been
Encourage them to believe in themselves and have hope & fulfil their dreams
And to follow their heart and that all really can be achieved.

I love you all, I always will
This my promise to you, I instill
Speak of me often; I'll always be near
When you laugh, shout or shed a little tear!

Goodbye & farewell to all my loved ones
I soon will leave & then I'll be gone.
The thought truly tears me apart
Of the fateful day we will have to depart...