

A little bit about me

Hello, on the 1st June 2013 I suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury, this has changed my life forever, in some ways for the better but the majority is for the worse.

I am determined not to let this beat me, I have just managed to accept it now, I am learning who I am and building a new pathway, I have days where I'm stuck at the crossroads not knowing which way to turn, days where thoughts in my head cause confusion and also days that are a blur but hey ho, I'm here right!!

I started my poetry when asked to write a thoughts diary, I felt pressure and could not cope but needed my thoughts to disappear and clear my brain, I find it helps me a lot.

I hope this may provide encouragement for others to write, which will help them to clear and understand their thoughts and feelings but most importantly to know that they're not alone on this journey.

Thank you for taking the time to read my poems.

Take care

Helen

xx

Introduction

*I would like to introduce myself, Helen, 42,
A survivor, fighter and sufferer too.
Please read my poetry so I can help/learn,
Other individuals who sometimes want to quit, give up & burn.
I am on my seventh year and still find it hard,
Each day is another and most I feel retard.
The judgers, the evil, the quizzers and stares,
If only they knew, but nobody cares.
Friends will have walked, you're not good enough now,
Users and fake but you're the nasty cow.
Accusations, opinions, but let them flow,
Concentrate on yourself and let your new pathway grow.
Acceptance is the key, until then you will struggle,
There'll be good days and bad but just learn how to juggle.*

Enjoy my poems

Helen

XX

Who am I?

*First thing I remember is Dr Low interrupting me,
I was watching Burghley Horse Trials in bed on tv.*

*My curtains shut tight to keep me in the dark,
All I could hear were voices and the odd bark.*

*Dr Low always smiled and I felt he did care,
I needed "me" back, perhaps he would help get me there.*

*Why no help? I felt all alone,
people came and went, I was boring, all I did was moan and groan.*

*Where's Helen gone I used to think,
I wished it could all be over in a blink.*

*My son, Finn would look after his mum while I lay,
Feelings of cuddles and love for me will always stay.*

*Suicidal thoughts would try and make me lose,
Game playing is not me and that way I would not choose.*

*I needed to find Helen, the girl I once knew,
Perhaps she'll find me, I will wait and in time she may shine through.*

*Months went by with Helen still gone,
Still don't know who I am, by now thought she would have shone.*

*Thoughts and feelings change every day,
All I would like is Helen back, I'm determined to find a way.*

*I feel all alone, I can do this I'd say,
Where is the help just to find my pathway?*

*I will do it alone just help me start,
Surely someone knows how to lift me out of this clart.*

You look ok

*Life would ease showing scars or lacking movement or limbs,
I wouldn't be judged doing my hobbies or attending gyms.
People are cruel and can be dangerous at times,
They make up stories in their head creating riddles and rhymes.
When they see you, they're fake and pretend to be nice,
By saying oooooo you look ok, I had to look twice!
Of course, that means I'm all fixed, they'll be right!
If only they knew the pain out of sight.
When people say, you look ok, don't take it to heart,
Just lets comments blow away and not tear you apart.
Sometimes the genuine ones are unsure what to say,
But they mean really well and they cope their own way.
Just stay away from gossips and ones wishing to know your life,
They don't care and only live for others' trouble and strife.
Maybe you do look on top of the world and ok,
Take it as a positive and be grateful each day,
Only you know your pain, live life as you can,
Things can be made a lot a better if you make a daily plan.
Routine helps and is always a start,
Begin a long journey to rebuild the missing part.
Let the new pathway begin, but remember to plan,
Follow your dreams and keep going, take your time if you can.*

You don't understand

*Everyone's different and each day is another,
I am a daughter, a sister, a partner and mother.*

*On a morning I make a plan of my day,
I have appointments or visits prebooked but not always the way.*

*I have found that no matter how hard you try,
Others understanding is rare so please don't expect high.*

*It upset me so much to begin with and even now,
I don't understand why I am treated different somehow.*

*People don't talk and I feel leave me out,
I have realised it's not worth crying about.*

*I offered books and advice to the ones close to help learn,
I even read them myself so I knew where to turn.*

*Don't beat yourself up over somebody's choice,
They were given a chance and also have their own voice.*

*A good friend once said "If you're left to your own device,
Then go for it kidder and roll your own dice."*

*I felt I should do that and seek help by myself,
I am determined not to be stuck up there on a shelf.*

*I will understand and that's all that matters,
I will not let myself be torn into shatters.*

Build a new pathway

A lovely Locum at the hospital one day,
Said I needed to start building a new pathway.
I didn't understand so he explained with a drawing,
My mind was all puzzled but my imagination was soaring.
I will always be grateful to this inspiring man,
And will never forget his idea and still stick to his plan.
From that day forward my new pathway has grown,
It confuses me sometimes, it's all about the unknown.
I have good days and bad but that is the norm,
If I stay on my pathway then I stay in good form.
Sometimes I reach crossroads, don't know which way to turn,
Straight on is the way and it's that I need to learn.
Sometimes I'm off track and bear to the left or the right,
One day I am sure they'll disappear out of sight.
I will keep moving forward along my pathway,
I can't wait until the end; I really pray for that day.
All this help I receive is by talking and one sketch,
Who knows how things happen and what each day will fetch?
My illness and hospital helped me this day,
By meeting this Doc who explained my amazing new pathway.

Trust

*When something bad happens, you may lose all your trust,
It is so hard to rebuild, a bit like a car covered in rust!
Paranoia kicks in and you start overthinking,
This can send you to tears and your heart just starts shrinking.
Why should you care after so many lies?
The ones who you trusted have made you more wise.
You learn by mistakes but now I am stronger,
I won't let the past beat me for much longer.
I have help from the pros and of course family and friends,
They are my heroes and I know their care never ends.
They have been with me right through all bad times and good,
And made me realise that maybe no trust is out the wood.
All will take time but one thing I've realised,
There are good humans around and to that I'm surprised!
Please don't listen to others, always work things out on your own,
Some things said are not true and can lead to the trust blown.*

Headway

*I was wandering round an auction one day,
Most likely viewing animals, I'd say!
When making my way to the toilet via a main hall,
I saw three lovely ladies stood round a stall.
I couldn't help but notice a handmade wood drawer set,
Exactly what I needed for my shed and thought, I must get!
The ladies were lovely, we were chatting about our day,
They were raising funds for a charity called Headway.
It is funny how things happen, this was meant to be,
It was the start of my help and a new family.
It took me a while to build up the courage to go,
How could I enter a building full of people I don't know?
Would the ladies I met be there if I attend?
Or would I just look an idiot and accept I won't mend?
I felt so alone, maybe if I did enter the door,
I would meet new friends; life would change, no longer would it feel like a
war.
Headway improves life after brain injury,
Finally, I found advice and support to help me.
I now have the most amazing people in my life,
I can't thank you all enough, you got me out my strife.
We share laughter and tears with whatever life throws,
Your friendship is what matters, important things in life grows.*

No such word as can't

When I was younger, adults used to say,
It'll all end in tears or Back in my day!
They would come out with sayings that I didn't understand,
I just used to think it was them giving a demand.
Do as I say, not as I do and If your mate jumped off a cliff, would you?
I could go on forever, are these false? No, they aren't,
A certain one is true and that is, there is no such word as can't.
As I grow older, I repeat these to my son,
I hope he takes them on board like I've obviously done,
They actually make sense in their own special way,
Sometimes I often wish I was back in my day!
You will get What if's and Should I's a lot of the time,
And also, thoughts of wanting to be back in your prime.
Back to your hobbies and things you loved to do,
But now is so different, I am useless, but is this true?
Don't bring yourself down and think all is bad,
I understand that's easy too when you lose all that you had.
Believe me when I say, give it a try,
You may surprise yourself not giving up and this is why,
Things are a bit harder now, accept it and plan,
Just remember one thing, change from I can't to I can.

Acceptance

*My life is now different, I hate all this change,
I've got so much stuff I need to rearrange.
It's hard to wake up knowing the day,
I won't talk to many people now as I don't know what to say.
It's easy to stay quiet and behind the closed door,
Apart from my walks where I can explore.
I like being alone, there's no hassle at all,
Being involved in drama and chaos, makes my recovery hit a brick wall.
I am blamed for everything but hang on why?
Sometimes individuals find it hard holding their hands high.
It's time to get rid of this paranoid soul,
Maybe accepting things now should be my new goal.
I should hold my head high, this is so I'm told,
Start venturing out, build confidence and leave all the old.
It takes a lot of courage to reach out and be brave,
This new me was failing, I need help to get me out of my cave.
List after list of writing the new me down,
Encouraged me to learn the way things will be, as I write with a frown!
I won't give up now and will continue to grow,
Acceptance is the key, once you are there then you'll know.*

It's the little things

*Life has changed now and you see things a different way,
I live by wants and needs and I'm thankful for every day.
I used to have lots of wants as I could afford to buy them then,
All I did was work to earn money for our old life, but never again.
Money is very dangerous, it can rule a person's way,
Yes, it's nice to have but there are nicer things I'd say.
Like learning who you are and appreciating life,
Being around people where positive and happiness are rife.
Don't pressurise yourself to keep other people happy,
True friends will be there for you, even if you're feeling crappy.
The best things in life are all free,
Adventures outdoors and visiting friends and family.
It costs nothing to appreciate what you've got and means a lot to you,
Everything else is just a choice, let others choose theirs too.
Everybody is so different, don't worry about their ways,
It's important to make your plans and how you go about your days.
Nobody knows each day when waking up and even what it brings,
Just remember all that matters in life is all the little things.*

In the now

*I think it's safe for me to say,
Bad thoughts from the past hit me each day.
It's a difficult one to get out of your head,
Also very important that it is put to bed.
Talking does help and journals do too,
These get it off your chest, but the blighter comes back shining through.
I found that my Doctors now don't understand, the blame goes to you,
They try just giving tablets, instead of fixing the issue.
The most help I needed was around five years post-accident,
The problem is people assume and think all injuries have went.
If only they knew, to me it's the beginning of a fight,
I am now ready to start learning life again and also what's wrong and right.
Becoming a recluse is the best way forward, least that way I have no trouble,
Saves venturing out in public where all my worries then double.
Go it alone, talk to people who understand and know,
Keeps the judgers away and also gives you plenty of time to grow.
Hold your head high when needing to go out and keep it little as poss,
After all your life is about to restart, you've got this, you are the boss!
Write everything down, keep diaries and notes,
Once you get into routine then everything else just floats.
Concentrate on this, it really works, just don't ask me how,
It's all about learning the new life and living in the now.*

Goodbye help

*Don't feel alone if your help is no longer,
I can give you a positive, by heck you'll grow stronger!
When five years had gone since my accident took place,
I felt I had no one, I was lost in outer space.
The time when you need specialist help more than before,
You just feel dropped, pushed aside and very sad to the core.
People think you're better because time has passed by,
This is so untrue; I will tell you why.
At the beginning you know nothing, all is just one great big blur,
You pretend you're ok to get back to how things were.
You believe everything you're told, after all you are lost.
You don't know who you are, your whole life has been tossed.
Forget all the voices from the ones who think they know best,
Gather up all their comments, say goodbye, lay them to rest.
They can be dangerous and lead you to a nasty dark place,
It's time to forget them and for you to embrace.
You've learnt a lot, you're unique, you're still here and you're brave,
Start thanking the brain injury, you're rid of the bad wave.
Enjoy the new pathway, start your fresh new life as you,
Be forever grateful and use this to help others too.
Forget the false past, just let it be,
It's my time to shine, living my life being me.*

KISS

*One of my helpers paid me a visit one day,
He taught me a word that will never go away.*

*I use it so much and it helps me a lot,
So, let me share this with you, it makes sense, I kid you not!
When you're confused and your brain isn't working some days,
Don't give up, just rest a while and think of other ways.*

*I understand that this is not always easy to do,
Sometimes best to give up, forget it and think I don't give a poo!*

*Please just try and know there is always a way,
You have to relax, have a think then you will manage your day.*

*There are good ones and bad ones, it's the way that it goes,
You have to conquer the bad ones, take control of those woes.*

*Don't let them hurt you, you need to be strong,
They will bish you and bash you to make you feel wrong.*

Life is what you make it, you are your own boss,

Try keeping your days all good ones if poss.

Don't make things harder than they need to be,

Keep your thinking low for your brain to be free.

Time for the word, now the thoughts are all rid,

It is KISS and this means "Keep It Simple, Stupid."

Still Human

*Please correct me if I'm wrong and made a mistake,
I am still Helen, I've just upgraded and now I feel awake.*

*I see people today who I knew from the past,
They look at and treat me so different, as if I'm made of cast!
At first this used to hurt me, I used to ask myself "why?"
Now I've realised they're not worth it, let the false ones pass by.*

*I used to blame myself for this happening to me,
I had no one to turn to apart from my brother and close family.*

*I understand sometimes others don't know what to do,
If you care for someone then surely you would help each other fight through.*

*It was awful and I suffered this bad feeling a lot,
You have to get through it and let the bad thoughts just rot.*

*It's easier said and might take you a while,
Concentrate on the circle of friends that make you smile.*

*Life is all about being content and happy,
You needn't worry about the things that make you feel crappy.*

*Set yourself goals, this might help you a bit,
Tick as you go, you'll feel achievements, as if you've made it.*

*Anything that makes you anxious or worry, just ban,
Don't keep doubting yourself, after all you're still human.*

Your Chance

*Professionals informed me I may not work again,
Now that's not nice to hear, I hate my stupid brain.*

*Why can't I be back to normal just once more,
Sometimes it is like bricking up your own front door.*

*You feel locked away from normality,
Working hard pays for living, that's just reality.
To feel useless and broke is devastating enough,
Then to lose your business just makes it real tough.*

*There is always a way, I used to tell myself,
I will do anything at all, even just packing a shelf.
I tried everything but always felt I would fail,
I kind of got the feeling what it would be like in jail.*

*I couldn't understand and had to reassure me,
I would tell myself, it will happen, what's meant to be will be.*

*Six years and five months later my chance then came,
Be patient, your chance in life will happen, you'll feel the same.*

*I could not be more grateful to be given some trust,
I'll never forget the feeling of opportunity but there's a must.*

*I must do this, it means a lot and I will try my very best,
You understand me and have given me the chance, now it's my test.*

*I tried different hours, can't do as many as I thought,
You've adjusted them for me, thank you so much Reach Out Support.*

Give it a go

*From the start of my recovery, I struggled to understand,
There were so many questions and meetings for something I hadn't planned.*

*The brain injury team seemed demanding, I didn't like meetings there,
I needed to find the answers, not just sit down in a chair.*

*I sometimes wonder, are you just another, moving along the conveyor belt,
It seems like everyone's treat the same, at least that's how I felt.*

*You can't do this, you can't do that, everything was a might,
My thoughts were, you'll never know until you try, make the wrong weaker
than the right.*

*I would like to make individuals aware,
there is no harm in trying but you might not get there,
The best feeling ever is achieving your goals,
If you feel like you fail, then don't, that's just the way life rolls.
There's not much you can't do, you just need to find your way,
Only you can work out what way is best, and that feeling will make your day.*

*I understand, now, how and why individuals give in,
I nearly did it myself but managed to throw that thought in the bin.*

*I would like to reassure others and please just take it slow,
There is no hurry to learn your way and certainly no harm in giving it a go.*

Happy Place

*If it's one of those bad and really down days,
Then always have a plan to make sure your positive stays.*

*It is not very nice when bad tries to rule,
Feels like trying to kick on a stubborn old mule!
It's important that you control the problems you face,
For me, this means visiting my happy place.
Sometimes you need to let all your thoughts free,
It helps clear your mind and leaves everything be.*

*I take myself to Rockcliffe Marsh for a stroll,
It's a place with great memories and clears away that dark hole.*

*I went as a child with my Granda, picking mushrooms,
We ate as we picked, including soil as it looms!
Those were the days when immune systems were well built,
The outdoors, nature and unwashed hands left no guilt.*

*I remember the horse trials each year on the land,
I loved walking the cross-country course, it used to be grand.*

*Most recent memories are Caroline and Luca, her dog,
A nice lady I can talk to, as we wander and get stuck in the bog!*

*This makes me switch on to work out what I've to face,
Start your day good, which means sometimes a trip to the Happy Place.*

No change is as good as a rest

*I am kind of wary of writing this one next,
I am relying on understanding, not making others vexed.
I come across this problem a lot during recovery,
I have realised my thought maybe also a discovery.
Sometimes my brain struggles, knowing where and getting lost,
Time is taken away remembering, my memory disappears like the frost.
Frustration plays a big part, it sometimes takes over my day,
I am aware of it, get lost, cannot cure it or create a way.
I tried, what I thought, was everything and have now managed to beat the
worry,
At least I feel I am now out of that giant pit of slurry!
Here goes, I will share, but sorry if I offend,
I am hoping it actually helps folk understand and also maybe mend.
Others will wonder why I get angry and snap a lot,
Sometimes it's caused by humans "helping" but they're not.
This is so difficult for me to explain, but I'll try,
Post injury you need to find ways, that work for you, to get by.
One is everything having a place so you know where to go,
It makes it simple to find things you may forget, it keeps you in the know.
I hope this helps the ones that try and lend a hand,
Don't take it to heart, all that's asked is, try to understand.
Our brains need time and to work their own way,
Ones that do for them, make them angry so they will tend to say!*

Don't give up

*Trying to mend is the hardest thing ever,
Each day you wake up due to pain from your sever.
You try and plan things to do for the day,
Disappointment often wins, you can't do things the same way.
Some days I couldn't do anything, Mum and Dad used to call,
I had to stay in the house, it was awful, I wanted to end it all.
After getting advice, I tried little tasks each day,
Once I started to understand things, nothing would stand in my way.
I found it hard to do everything, it's all time and having a goal,
You really have to want it and give it all your heart and soul.
At first, I was told I may not be able to horse ride,
Look at me now, back in the saddle bursting with pride.
I am conquering the Wainwrights, help a farmer with his sheep,
Even tried Mindfit Boxing, all creating memories to keep.
In summer months I cycle and swim in a lake,
Weather depending, the day is planned when I wake.
To some all this exercise make them think I'm ok,
I wish they all knew and didn't judge me this way.
The best way to describe it is, always find your way,
Have something to look forward to, when you wake up each day.
It will all be ok, take your time, don't give up,
Stay positive and always remember the half full cup!*

Lost

*It scares me some days when I wake up unaware,
I have no thoughts at all, I lay still and just stare.
This happens each week, I feel alone and confused,
Who am I? Where am I? I'm not amused!
Apparently this is normal after brain injury,
Once again just told, no help offered, what will be will be.
I accept this now, although another tough fight,
Not sure my strategy will help others, but it might.
When you wake up all confused and just don't have a clue,
Take the day as you find it, forget plans and things to do.
Don't quote me on this but I think this is why,
Your brain is saying slow down and needs to take a big sigh.
It is easy to make yourself do too much each day,
I understand this now and I've learnt it's not the way.
Take control of your brain don't let it control what you do,
To do this you need rest otherwise your brain will take away you.
Strategies and routine work really well,
Don't plan too much in your day, once you start you're able to tell.
A notebook is handy to write thoughts and remember your plan,
This helps your memory stay strong to keep overthinking as low as you can.
This is simple and comes at no cost,
The best thing about it is, you have control and won't feel lost.*

Finn

*I spent a lot of my time living in guilt,
Thinking, “what about my son and the life we had built?”
An 8-year-old child who wants to go outside and play,
My priority was Finn, I had to pretend I was ok.
Trying to hide all my pain and tears I would pour,
When his smile after trampolining would appear through the door.
He relied a lot on Archie, his mate who was always there,
Finn could talk to him, share his feelings, a true friend who did care.
They would walk down to the Co-op or over the fields to the beck,
I would panic where they were but could ring them to check.
Changing schools affected Finn, I had no choice, it was tough,
For him to deal with another change, as if one wasn't enough.
Finn has been so strong through all this, he's had to cope with a lot,
He's so brave and I'm grateful for the bond we have got.
He has helped me and seen things that have caused some concern,
I am told “that's life” and he will only learn.
He tells me stories of my recovery and things he used to do,
Like checking me in bed, keeping curtains closed so no light shone through.
I couldn't be happier, I know he will be okay,
He is a young man now and growing each day.
I can't thank him enough for all that he's done,
I love him so much and proud to call Finn my son.*

Animal therapy

*An outdoor country girl with a love of animals,
The therapy they give is unreal, my best pals.
Animals give you a reason to get up on a morning,
They create motivation and stop the bad day warning.
I thought I was invincible post brain injury,
I didn't want to know and caused more damage to me.
In the end I had to give in and hold my hands high,
It broke my heart saying goodbye to my horses, at least I did try.
In the end there was one, he helped me through it all,
I trusted him to look after me so I wouldn't fall.
I would sit in the stable sometimes crying in pain,
He would nuzzle at my head like he was massaging my brain.
My love for that horse will never leave my heart,
I was broken saying goodbye having to make my new start.
Max and Jip were my dogs they were such good therapy,
We went on adventures for miles, it really helped me.
Kimmy is a pony who really helps me mend,
She is one in a million and belongs to my closest friend.
Then there is Bella my special Princess!
She takes away all my anxiety and stress.
We get up every morning, feed the guinea pigs then walk for miles,
She loves playing with other dogs also learnt jumping over stiles.
Animals heal everything and make a difference to life,
They are the perfect solution for sorting your worries and strife.*

Memories

*Nowadays my brain doesn't work how it used to,
My memory is shorter and it shuts down 'til it feels new.*

This is a pest but it's the way it's gonna be,

This change is hard to accept, it really affects me.

*Some problems don't leave but you can make them less,
Start creating new memories before your life ends up a mess.*

Get rid of "What ifs" and wishing dreams could come true,

There's someone that can do this and that someone is you.

Believe in yourself and always find a way,

Even achieving small things is a start to your day.

You need to be patient and know it takes time,

You will get there eventually then feel in your prime.

Photos and diaries are great, they keep you in the know,

They are lovely to look back on and make memories grow.

Sometimes I find they help me relax and slow down,

Reading and viewing life knowing I no longer want to drown.

This also frees your mind to help your brain be less full,

It makes such a difference and you don't feel as dull.

Don't get yourself upset thinking you're going to forget,

Write it down or take a photo then your mind will be set.

Forget about the past and the things that have gone,

A life with new memories and a new you is the one!

I made it

*One thing I still need to remember and I always do forget,
Is don't go back to how things were, the past is now only regret.
Thank it for making you stronger and learning you more about life,
Let this help you to move forward and make the positive rife.*

*Never stop learning and always have a goal,
Achievements are the best feeling ever, they touch your heart and soul.*

*Keep your circle small and be grateful for each day,
Recovery lasts forever but make it easier and find a way.
Don't forget most things are possible but might be done differently,
You will work it out yourself, I can't do this as you're not me!
The biggest difference for me and the one that's helped the most,
Is accepting how I am now and making the past now a ghost.*

*Life has all been changed but not always for the worse,
You still have good and bad days and times when all you do is curse.
It's difficult when your brain switches off and you're lost knowing what to do,
For me I know it's a bad day, nothing works, you're confused and can't pull
through.*

*Take each day as it comes and be grateful you are here,
Be very proud of yourself and never ashamed to shed a tear.*

*My pathway all started in the bottom of a deep pit,
Some days I sit back and think "hey girl you made it".
So when you are down and start thinking of that half full cup,
Just remember stay positive and never give up.*