

QNFMHS, QNPICU and QNPMHS Summer Artwork and Creative Writing Competition 2026

This year, we held our annual artwork and creative writing competition for QNFMHS, QNPICU & QNPMHS. We had amazing entries and we would like to thank everyone who sent in their artwork and creative writing entries.

QNFMHS Artwork Competition Winner

Below are this year's artwork competition winners called...



'Art from Trauma' by DA from Tamarind Centre

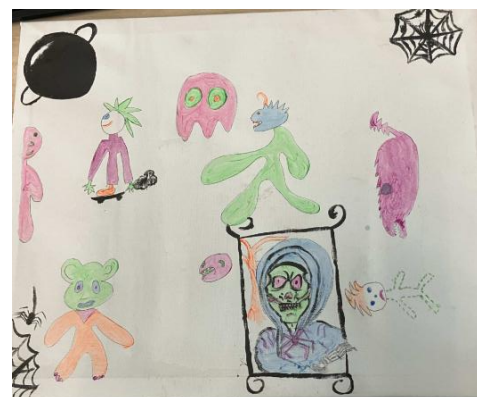
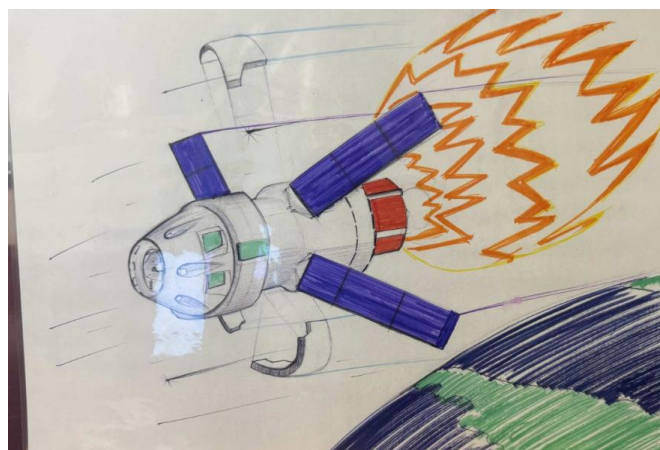


'Bluebell in spring' by E from NLFC

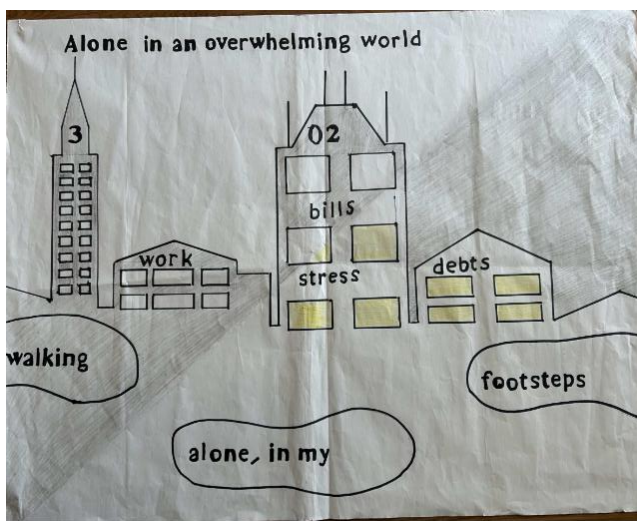
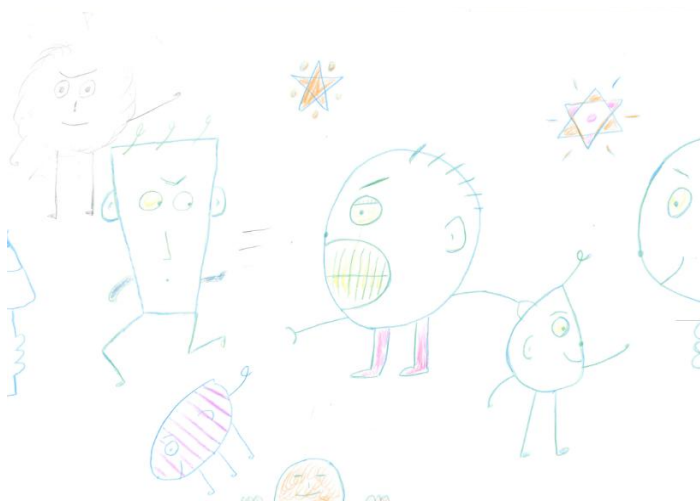


'Hope' by NN from St Andrew's Healthcare Birmingham

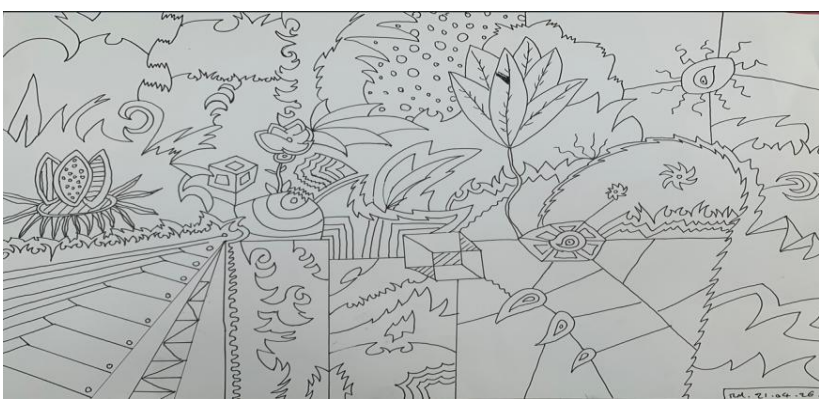
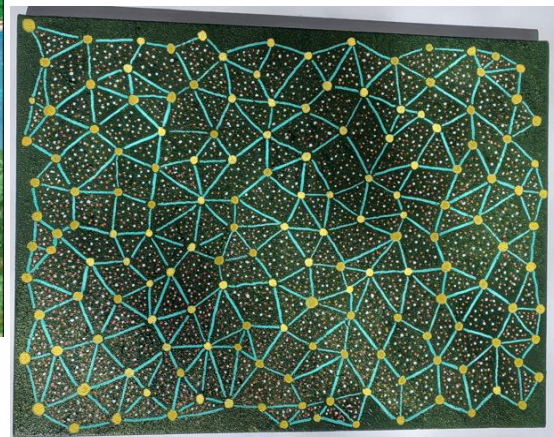
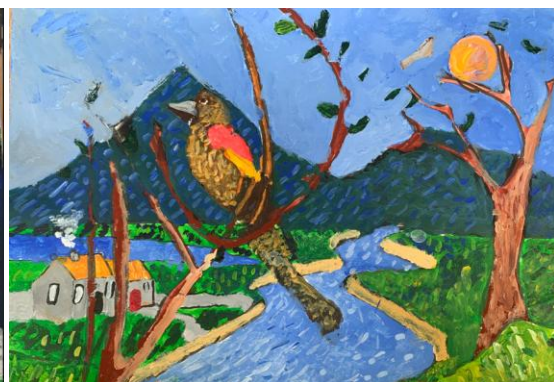
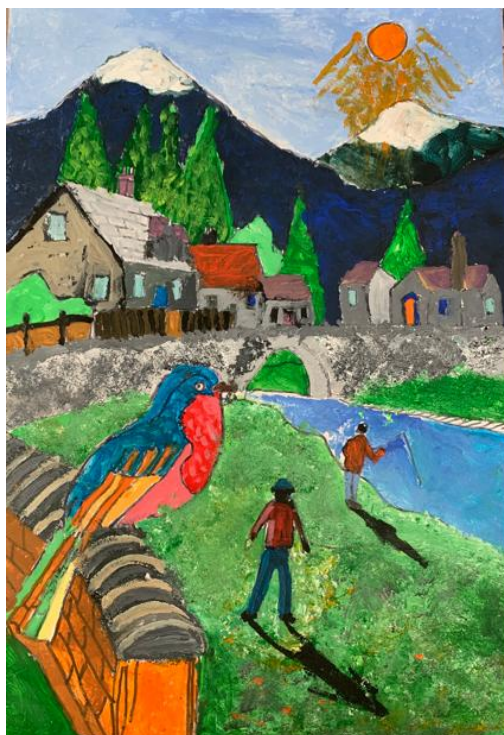
QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



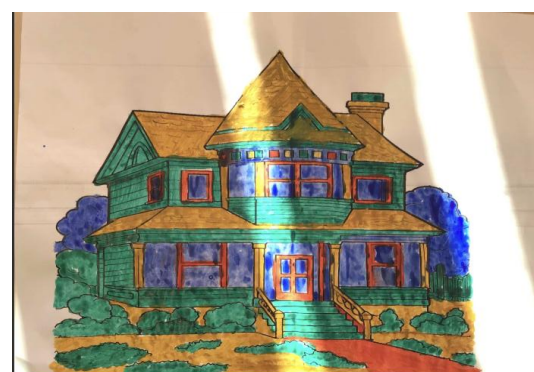
QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



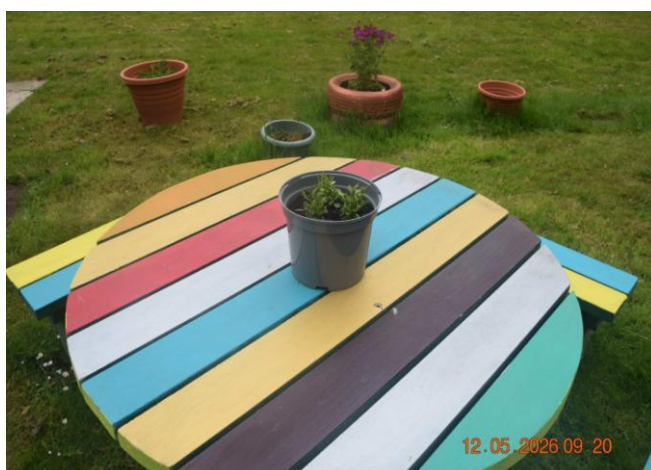
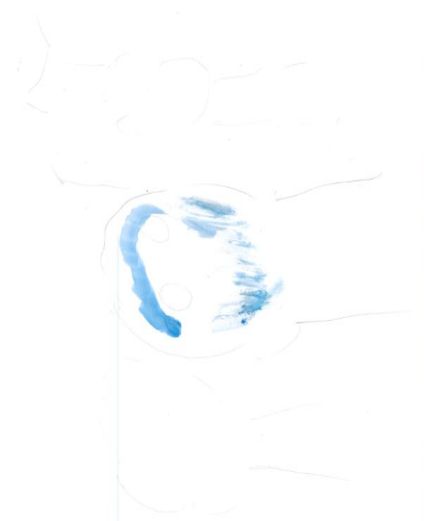
QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



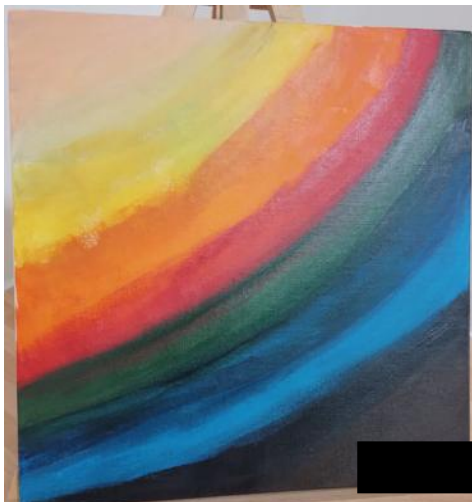
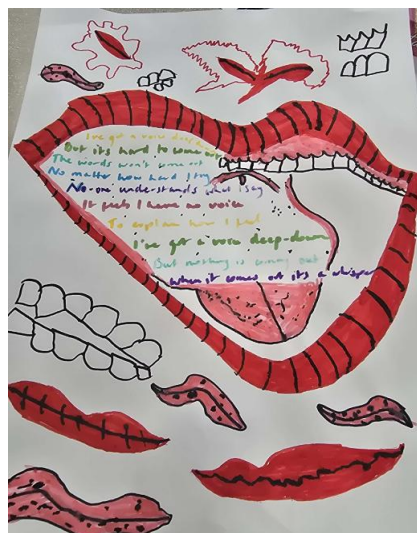
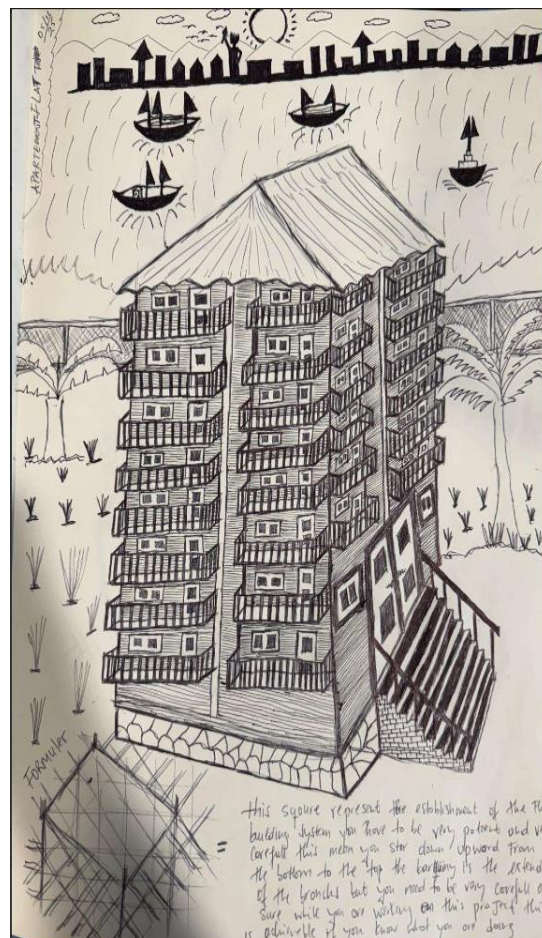
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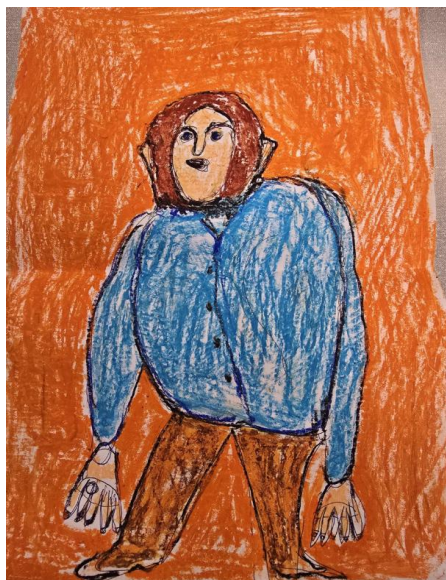
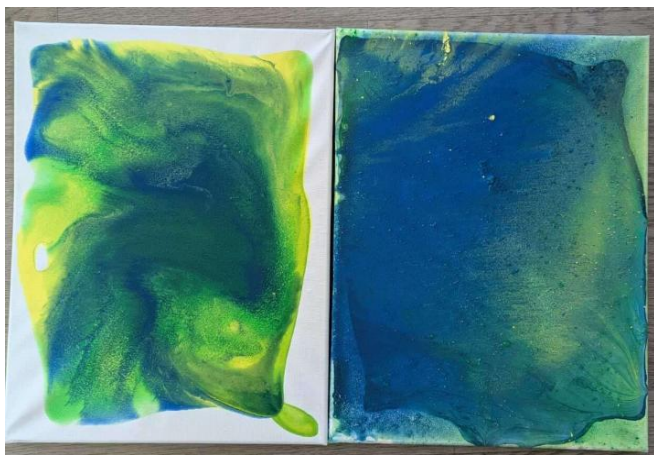
QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



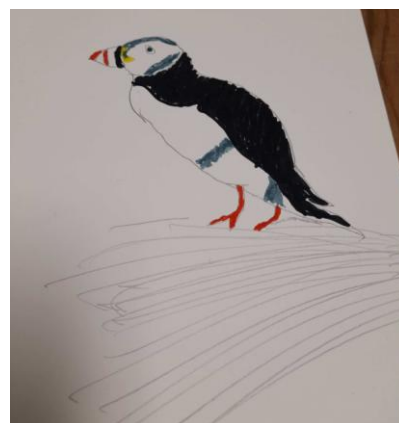
QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



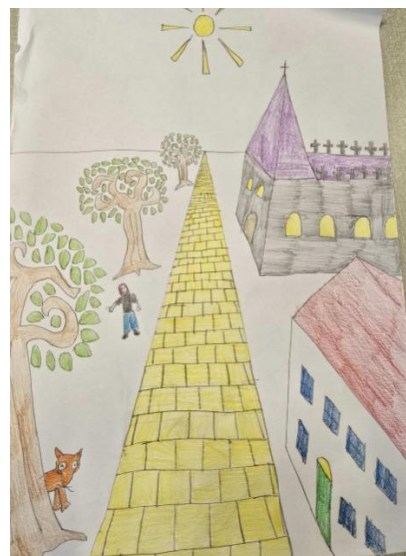
QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



QNFMHS Artwork Competition Entries



QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Winner

Below is this year's creative writing winner called
'Perfection' by SR from St Andrew's Birmingham

Perfection

~By SR~

*Perfection is a word that you cannot achieve,
Perfection is a thing that only fools believe.
Mistakes and flaws are honest and true,
Perfection is a lie that makes you feel blue.
Don't disappoint yourself holding onto deception,
Don't allow the lies to receive such good reception.
None of us are perfect we all have our flaws,
None of us are free from mistakes, there are no cures.*

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Runner-Ups

Light

~By SM~

Is it outer darkness or inner light?
If so, my inner turmoil shines bright.
Do you feel positivity? Full of life?
Is your world a good place to be?

Or does the darkness of your past hurt,
Blind your eyes as you try to see.

I wish for your happiness,
I wish for your health.
I wish you lots of love,
I wish you wealth.

I hope the pain stops in your life,
And I hope that you feel no more strife.
You see my friend, you are unique.
You need to believe!

God made only one of you,
It comes without critique.
She shaped you, moulded you
And gave you your self-belief.
A mind that's able to see beyond mist,
A mind that can view true beauty
And find remnants of bliss.

Any foolish mistakes,
Are nobody's business.

You are given a fresh start everyday,
Abandon the things that cause your heart to ache.

You have no debt to pay,
Those thoughts of self-hate,
They can just float away,
Don't let them ruin your day.

My friend you are beautiful,
Every single day,
In every single way.
Take it step by step,
Take it day by day.

I love you,
So does your God.
She wants you to Love yourself,
And no more bleeding,
Heal your mental health.

Below is this year's creative writing runners up called 'Light' by SM from St Andrew's Birmingham and 'Guess what the illness is?' By AG from Cygnet Sheffield

Guess what the illness is?

Hyper one minute then exhausted the next.

Giving something your full attention to them dreaming and disengaging.

Having a conversation five thoughts at a time, while trying to concentrate at the conversation at hand.

Making the wrong decision and five minutes later thinking why did I do that?

I can only describe my head as a messy filing cabinet, only when medicated my filing cabinet is clear for thoughts.

Trying to focus on the task in hand, only to lose concentration five minutes in.

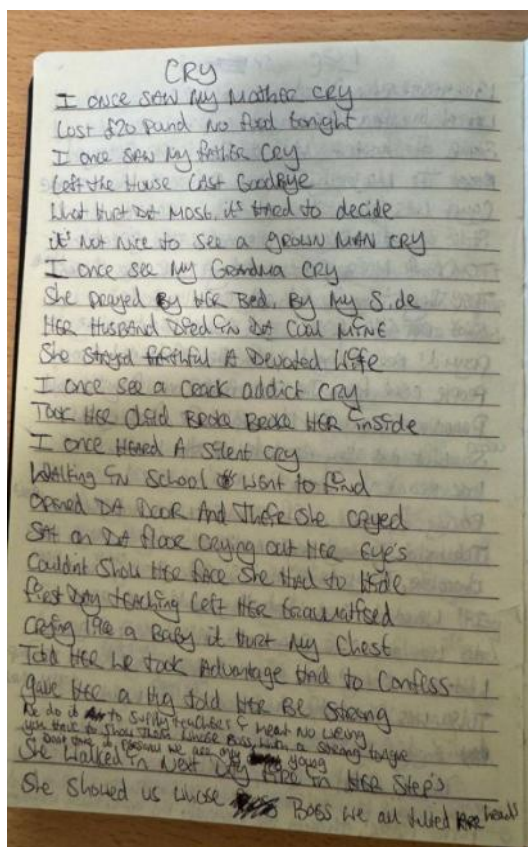
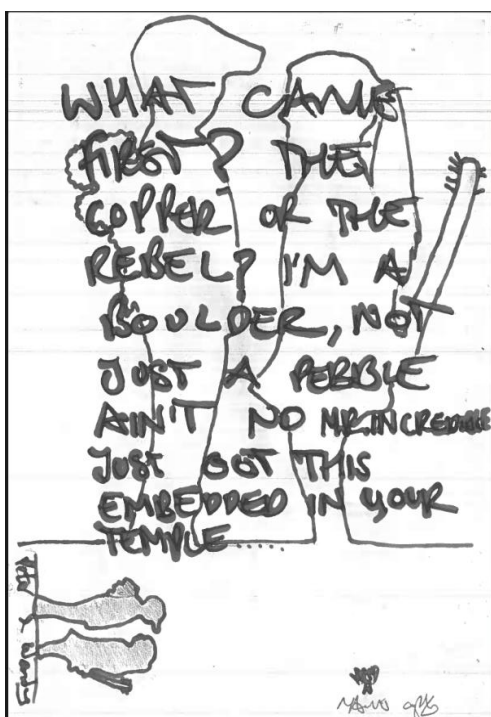
Having all the great idea's one minute, for them to disappear from your head without notice.

Getting fixated on things you find interesting, it will only last a few days and you are onto the next job.

Having so much love for the people in your life and the next mint there the ones you despise.

ADHD is a hard illness to live with but with the right support it's a super power.

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries



The root Of Life

You Gave Me life

You Gave Me Hope

When You Went

I Missed You So

The Roots You Gave Me From The Start

Kept Me Strong When We're Apart

The Love You Gave Me Came For Free

You Will Always Be My Family Tree

MY LIFE WAS HAPPY

WHEN YOU WERE HERE

NOW YOU'RE GONE

THERE IS ONLY TEAR

THE ROOTS YOU GAVE ME FROM THE START

KEPT ME STRONG WHEN WE'RE APART

THE LOVE YOU GAVE ME CAME FOR FREE

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE MY FAMILY TREE

When We Buried you

My Life Fell Apart

But Deep Down In My Heart

I Knew You Loved Me From The Start

You Keep Me Strong now We're Apart

The Love You Gave Me Came For Free

You Will Always Be My Family Tree

PUBLIC ENEMY

Public Enemy: Why They Matter.

Before Public Enemy, black youth were not well recognised in popular white culture. Black experiences and issues affecting young black people were not mentioned in music lyrics or many movies. These lived experiences related to suffering racism and prejudice. During the 1980s black people started to find their voice and their was no stronger voice than Public Enemy



For me as a young black person experiencing racism from police and being divided away from other white communities it was really positive to know that

these groups were out there and available for different races. They pulled no punches in their lyrics and let people know what it was like being young and black in a divided society.

Public Enemy were underground but had a strong following and movement. I felt strong when I heard the lyrics.

I felt powerful when I heard the bass and rhythm.

I felt proud when they spoke about issues relating to me.



Their band brand was a cool target that influenced Stone Island clothing. They wore black monkey boots and military clobber. They were like black cobras moving on the stage.

With the Black Lives Matter campaign, their music, fashion and lyrics reach out to many black people. There are lots of black rappers



and performers but they were the pioneers. They were the first rap artists to talk about black politics. Public Enemy are more relevant than ever.



They could easily headline a Black Lives Matter concert or festival, if ever there was one organised.



QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries



The bus journey of kindness

I remember a journey on a bus that I travelled on. It must have been 15 years ago. I was traveling not far from my mom and dad who lived in Wolverhampton.

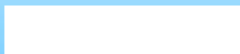
I was feeling a bit down, I was out of work and down on luck.



I was sitting on my own. The bus was empty. Not many people were traveling in the mid-afternoon route. A lady, she must have been 70 years old, came over to me and sat next to me. She was a black elderly lady. I remember her face, she looked very kind and did not seem to have a care in the world, unlike me at the time.

I will never forget our chat on the bus. She was calm and made me feel good in those moments throughout the journey. She told me to look in the church and ask God to find the answers to my problems. She wasn't patronising or talking down at me, she was just advising me. I really wish I would have listened to the elderly, wise lady that day. I heard the words but did not listen to them properly.

She was kind. I hope she is still with us and spreading her kindness. God bless her.



Car Fuel Blues

Woke up this morning
Put petrol in car
My twenty pound note
Didn't get very far

Petrol prices sky high
Going places is rare
No flying the sky
I need some bus fare

Holes in our soles
Won't take us far
Far cry from a rolls
Man, I'm missing my car



Silver Shadows

Shining Shadow in the night
Taking time to gleam
A sight
That I have never seen
From the light of the moon
Brings it all in affect
With no issues
Beauty for me
And for you
And all to see
Silver shadows.

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Jamaica

Bin too long Jamaica
Man I miss ya
They try and dis ya
Friends are not far
Chillin' at the bar
Red Stripe jar
Bob boom out mi car
Dumplings n jerk chicken
Fingers I'm lickin'
Barman I told ya
White rum n cola
Keep it pouring on ice
Helps mi ackee n rice
Mi having long sip
Gonna go for a dip
I'll be back Kingston Town
No tears of a clown
No fear or a frown
Black prince with a crown



Porridge!

I still love my porridge,
It has to be sweet.
No salt, just some honey,
Maybe golden syrup for a treat.

Need to move on porridge,
It's no good for me,
No salt and no honey,
Gonna go sugar free.

Cheerios for my porridge,
Gonna put toast on my plate,
With a bowlful of corn flakes,
I'm gonna go straight.



QNFMS Creative Writing Competition Entries

That's Where I'm Going To Bee ..

I'm as happy as a bee,
Buzzing in this space,
Minding my own buzz-iness,
Guarding my honey.

I'm as happy as can bee,
Trudging in this world,
Continuously watching the clock,
Counting hours aimlessly.

I'm going to buzz like this bee,
Buzzing straight to the hills and trees,
Feeling the Summer's breeze,
That's where I'm going to bee.



QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Stains on the wall

There's blood on the walls, I see it,
There's blood stained floors, I can feel it.
Maroon teardrops, they're stalking me,
Talking to me, walking with me.

A kettle buzzing away on the hob,
Invisible hands tied around my neck.
Getting tighter, makes me dizzy,
A friend that races the formula one.

Any passenger would get dizzy.
A heart that beats like speeding clockwork
Tick-tock-tick-tock beating until its ruptured.

I shave, yet feel unclean,
Inwards and outwards.
In illusion and delusion,
Still refusing to feel equal.

People rush like video clips and stills,
Making their life's first equal, pre fail.
I wonder do they feel clean in what they do,
Or do they have skeletons too?

To quote from a song would be to say,
That trip always filled our house everyday.
I've been quiet for so long, stuck on mute,

Screaming and roaring on the inside.

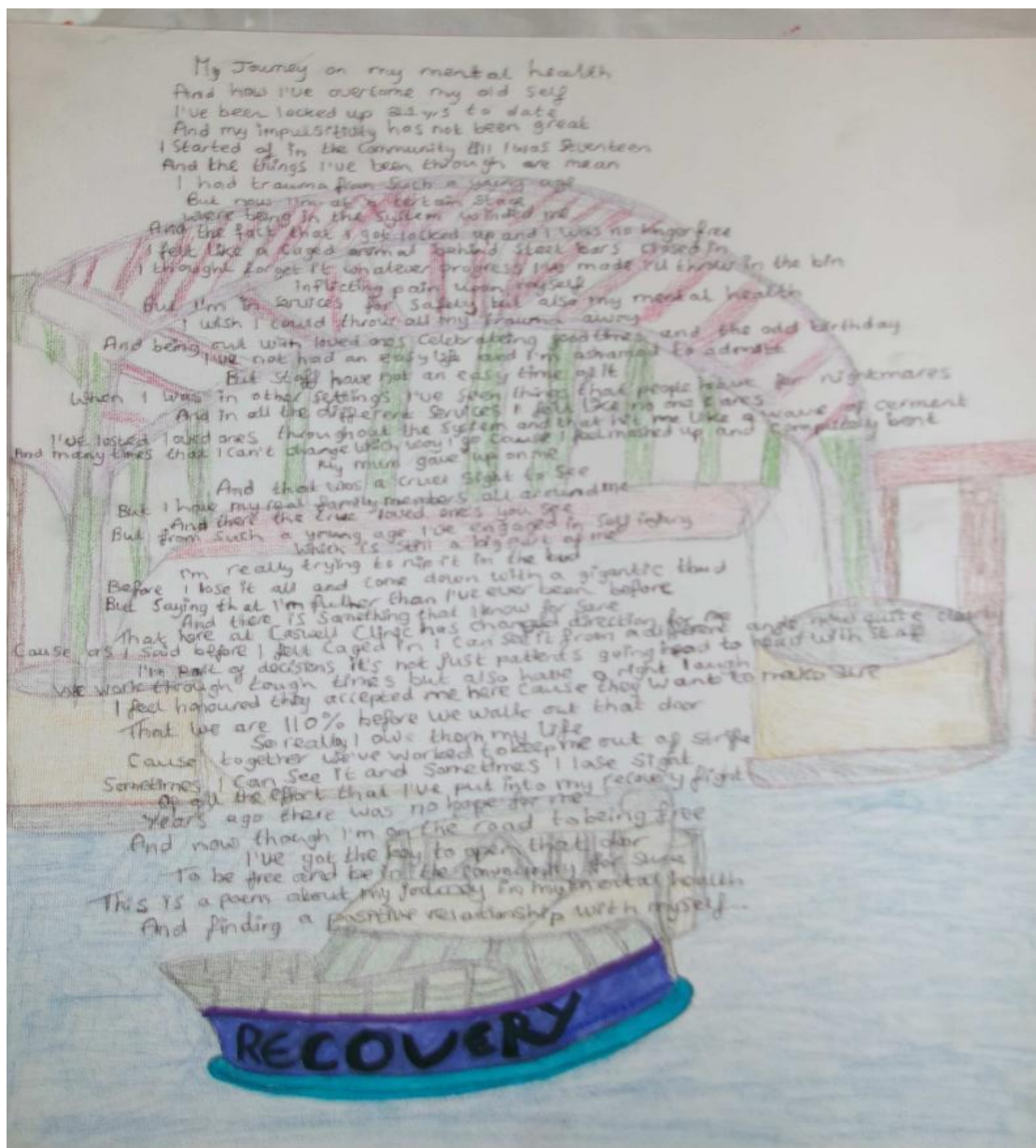
So, why did my heart start to race again?
It has been injured, why had my pulse start racing,
No longer limping, eyes no longer filling.

My dearest daughter, a lullaby, a mother's hug blossoms,
A roaring great shout and upon seeing that sweetest face,
The blood just rushed out from my airways, and finally breathe.

My heartbeat, back to normal, I couldn't believe.

I want her to feel free when she walks,
Laugh and smile when she talks,
Give her the life that I never had,
I know I am not that bad, just incredibly sad.

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries



QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

What I Want

I want to shine bright like this summers heat
I want my readers to jump up on their feet
I want a good life not one on the street
So I get in my zone and put pen to sheet.
Like my handwriting my flow must be neat
I can talk positive or raw like meat
I been in the streets just like the concrete
But I won't talk about that lets keep it discrete
See in music people will want to hear
A good beat, good rap, loud and clear
No one wants to hear someone tell us lies
Or celebrating how someone dies.
Anyway, that's too much information
I don't want to end back in a police station
Id rather perform on a radio station
Positive rhymes heard across the nation.
Then I'll make money doing something I like
Its so exciting having the mic
Even better when you got money for Nike
Maybe I'll invest in a superbike.

RECOVERY
is a journey and not a sprint

I have fallen down, but I
got back up as I never quit,
QUITTING IS NOT AN OPTION FOR ME.
I reached calm and focused and
Sought help. This support gave
me strenght and confidence to
motivate my self, and focus on my
Small goals.
I did this one step at a time and
I became stronger. You have the
Same power and support to
transform your life. Stay strong
and stand up and step forward
as you can do this.

The Disease of Addiction

The chase of the disease
controls my lies,
cunning and smart
lies behind the disease
of the addiction.

The secret addiction hurts,
the chase tiring, but rewarding
as the body and mind
unwined to the darkness of the disease.
The lips sealed
whilst the eyes cannot hide,
I told a lie.

I said, never again
but I'm cunning and smart
and I lie behind the rewards
of the disease: **RELAPSE**

The Green Man

I was walking through a dense forest of oak and birch and walnut when I came across a quiet stream. Perched on the bank was a giant of a man, looking as if he was made of wood. He had leaves in his hair and beard and had a myriad of creatures scurrying over him. He had big golden eyes that seemed full of depth of wisdom. He seemed focused on the stream and, so it appeared, hadn't noticed me yet. He scratched behind one leafy ear and a bat fluttered out, and flew off into the forest.

"Oh hum." I heard him say in a deep melodic voice.

He then sang a tune that all the birds on and around him joined in with. It was as if the forest had come to life. I dared to step a little closer and suddenly his voice, breaking from the melody, boomed out again.

"Who is it that approaches my stream?" he bellowed. "Speak, and let yourself be known."

I froze, intimidated by this colossal green man. My voice came out like a squeak,

"I am Jacob." I said.

"And why, Jacob, do you come here?" He boomed.

"For no particular reason. I was just taking some fresh air."

"This far into the forest? Tell Jacob, truthfully, why you have come?"

I sighed. It felt as if this Green Man saw straight through me.

"I... I was..."

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Short Story

James is sitting with his wife at home after a night out. James' wife Sarah is excited because she just purchased a Euro Millions lottery ticket and she is feeling lucky that tonight may be the night they strike it lucky. They could have so much money from their lottery ticket, that they would not be able to spend their winnings in 10 lifetimes. As the anticipation builds up, the numbers are announced on live television.

Moments later...

Sarah jumps out of her sofa and hugs James. "*We won, we won the bleeding lottery. We are rich!*" James and Sarah are celebrating like their lives are going to be out of this world. Sarah and James are hugging and kissing, and celebrating as young couples do.

Suddenly, James sits down on the sofa and takes a serious look at his girlfriend Sarah.

James – *Look Sarah, I have some terrible news to tell you.*

Sarah – *What the fuck are you on about? We are filthy rich! We can do whatever the fuck we want!*

James – *No. We cannot!*

Sarah looks baffled.

James – *Take a CLOSE look at the damn ticket.*

Voices

Hearing voices is something hard to describe, I just wish the noise in my head would subside.

Listening to his commands and doing as he says is what takes up most of my days.

Tying ligature's and cutting my face, is what stops the voices and keeps him off my case?

Having people to talk to trying to explain but that only lessens the pain.

Having someone dictate your day to day thinking, he switches your whole mood without even blinking.

I wish I never had this voice, but it's my way of life, I have no choice.

I have so many people wanting the best for me, I've just got to open my eyes and see.

I'm at the first step accepting my mental illness.

It's hard, but it's my gateway to wellness.

Sarah looks at the ticket. James erupts into laughter. Sarah carefully looks at the ticket.

Sarah – *Oh my God! What date is it today? What the fuck have you done you jerk?!*

James laughs out loud and continues to do so hysterically. Sarah punches James. He doesn't care though.

It turns out that James handed a winning Euro Millions ticket worth £90 million from LAST week. Sarah didn't think to check the bloody date.

Just goes to show...

Don't believe everything you see.

QNFMS Creative Writing Competition Entries

My Walking Life

Ever since I was in my teens I have had a love of walking in the countryside; both on day walks and holidays. Walking or rambling is such a simple form of exercise, but it is brilliant for not only making you feel fitter — but also motivated— and energised .. especially on a nice day! I first experienced rambling when I was about 20 years of age. We were on a holiday with the family of a workmate of my father's who thought I might like it.

We went to the Lake District one Autumn and stayed in a lodge close to Lake Ulls water. It was a life changing moment for me, both in terms of exercise as well as the glorious mountain scenery of the area. It seemed irrelevant to me if the weather was fine or filthy, which it frequently is in the Lakes! I still got a kick out of it, come rain or shine.

Following this, I went on an organised walking holiday staying in a large country house in the Peak District. I found that being part of a walking group was very satisfying and sociable; as a result of which I joined a rambling club in Coventry. We organised walks, most weekends, using a coach. Although some walks were local, the best ones were in areas further away such as the Welsh borders, the Peaks or the Cotswolds.

I spent many happy years in that club. I met my wife in it and ended up leading walks myself. I was especially keen on leading hill walks; somewhere with spectacular views. My wife and I went on walking holidays until I started to suffer from osteoarthritis in both knees. Our favourite area was the Yorkshire Dales, Moors and Yorkshire Coast. It may sound a bit sad, but we stayed in the same guesthouse in Skipton in the Dales for over 30 years. Also Whitby was another favourite and frequent destination. There weren't many areas we weren't familiar with.

When walking became a problem - physically - it also had an effect mentally. Because I no longer had the outlet of country based exercise, I became frustrated and morose, which in part contributed to the mental health episode I experienced 2 to 3 years ago. I have however had both knees replaced since, so I am now physically in a good place and anticipating, being able to resume some rambling or walking. This in turn has boosted my mood considerably in addition to the medication and psychotherapy I have received in the hospital.

I am even hoping to climb the Clent or Lickey Hills before I am eventually discharged with the editor of this publication! Tomorrow hopefully will be a better day ..

A classical experience .. what music does for me.

I have a deep fondness for classical music, which I listen to daily through BBC Radio 3. I was not that interested when I was younger, but over the years I have appreciated the art of classical music and it has become really important to me.

Classical music is a genre that covers many styles; from full blown symphonies and choral works .. to individual pieces like piano sonatas. Notwithstanding that classical music has been around for centuries, in different forms, ranging from sacred medieval music through to Mozart /Beethoven period of the 18th and 19th centuries .. to the more contemporary music of the 20th century.

I have found that I have developed a liking for all its forms. If I had to name a particular piece it would be a symphony or a concerto featuring a soloist. I personally think these form the backbone of the classical music repertoire and are rightly regarded as the greatest works. All composers have a distinctive style; probably my favourite would be Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, Shostakovich and Mahler.

I am also very fond of British composers, such as Elgar and Vaughan Williams. Their work is evocative of the British countryside and it is easy to form a mental picture and imagery whilst listening to it. If it came to personal choice, I think it would be the Lark Ascending by Vaughan Williams along with the Enigma Variations by Elgar. Both of these works seem to almost construct a wonderful reflection of England.

The type of classical music I am not so keen on is opera. Perhaps it is the high female voices!

I have been in heaven for the last eight weeks, listening nightly to the BBC Proms concerts. I hope you may be encouraged to give classical music a listen .. and enjoy it as much as I do!

Hardships

*Hardship is when we go through troubles at times,
Hardship is when you struggle to find your own peace of mind.
With hardship comes ease so be aware,
Hardship doesn't last forever as that wouldn't be fair.
Hardship is a common occurrence that most people will face,
It might stay for years and it's not a disgrace.
Stay patient, positive and hopeful,
And most of all stay grateful.
There is always someone worse off than you who don't have a lot,
So be mindful of everything you've got.*

QNFMHs Creative Writing Competition Entries

RECOVERY IS A JOURNEY TO DISCOVERY

I've seen Brain injury in reality, it's like battling with the Devil of insanity

Depression, Self-Harm, and several personalities
Low self-esteem it's a tragedy

Bad days lead to sad days, sad days lead to Self-harm
People come, People go – Don't do Drugs it's not the way to cope!

Always Be Kind and stay positive, Confidence is Key to progression.

My Journey has just begun, Guild Lodge has given me the ammunition
to complete my mission...

TO BE IN THE ARMS OF MY FAMILY AGAIN.....

Love is Death and Back

I've been looked down upon because I drink alcohol or take drugs but only to forget
worries and trouble from drugs

Do you really think this choice of life is mine or everyone else's ignorance, my decline?
It's really not nice knowing your worth so much more, but now even getting up is seeming
a chore. For I once I was the boss, the gather the man, I now feel as small as an ant.

Sick to death of being put down and not seeing my family or children around
Being told I should not go back to work! Are you crazy are you a jerk or do you even listen
to a single word?

I have been my own boss and head hurtled by others in fact most previous boss mums
acted like Mothers

My Mum committed suicide than my ex wife took my children away from me so the very
next day I didn't want to breathe

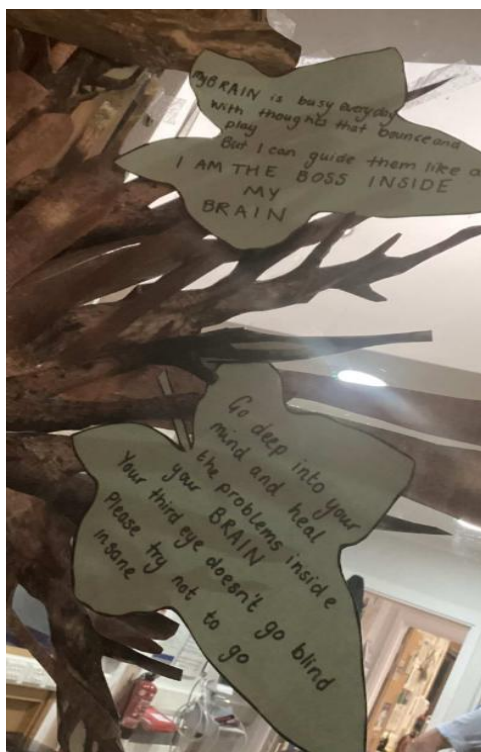
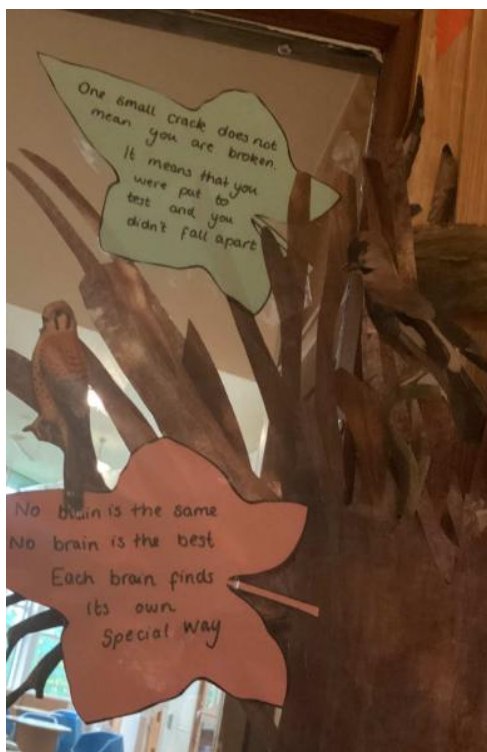
I tried to take my own life and did die not these times but four till they turned off the life
support

Halloween known to most as 31 October died and came to life. Now pls everyone off day
and night. I have learned my lesson and learned it hard but on the bright side even four
deaths never made me a 'Tard'

I love my children more than before now I can see them again, let me support

Been sober two years can manage some more

Just need to prove to my kids I'm not an on's'le



QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Poem

A Text Box for Inspiration

Christmas time
It's Christmas time so the song goes
Time to join the Huzzle and buzzle
The throngs that are so deep
Rushing around for the last-minute gift
To please that someone special

This one gift is something special
Special because it shows i love you

It's a gift no one else can give you
It's a gift from the heart
It's that special

It's that special because it shows i love you
It's a gift that is part of me
So this Christmas my love the gift i give you is my Heart

Hardships

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Hardship is when you struggle to find your own peace of mind.
With hardship comes ease so be aware,
Hardship doesn't last forever as that wouldn't be fair.
Hardship is a common occurrence that most people will face,
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Stay patient, positive and hopeful,
And most of all stay grateful.
There is always someone worse off than you who don't have a lot,
So be mindful of everything you've got.*

Nothing Left

Roses are red violet are blue, I'm so sick of falling for you.
For those who believe in love, tis a charm for those who
believe, for those whom don't like me tis a curse which doesn't
be fall us.

We get used and abused by those loved one's that hurt you
time and time again, until we have nothing left.

Love to me is a signal for others to harm me, Use me, and
abuse me, it gets to the point where I have nothing left to
give.

Every time I told my sister I loved her the words felt hollow
and untrue, I can't fake it anymore even for her.

Every day I think about you all, its torture but I can't
stop, I can't love you all as it hurts.

You hurt me beyond love its self, I'm too afraid to love
because I know I'll get hurt, I'm avoiding it at all cost.

Love and trust go arm and arm with each other if you can't
trust you can't love you can't to do one without the other.

QNFMS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Anxiety
Anxiousness
Anxiety
Not a rarity

What a mess
All that stress
For lots and me
Even when I have a cup of tea

When I meet someone
The anxiety rises a tonne
Avoiding eye contact
A sorry fact

Look away
Ruin my day
Look at the floor
As I try to find the door

Escape
Wishing I had a cape
Too hide
A terrible ride

My mind goes blank
Feel enclosed like a tank
The solution for me
Is hard to see

Hold a smile
For a while
Keep eye contact
The answer compassion, make a pact

Ride the nerves
Have the simple pleasure you deserve
Lots of people feel the same
What a shame

I never saw the smile before
As I looked at the floor
Look up
Even when you have a shaky cup

A bit of understanding
About this feeling
Anxiety
It's not pretty

A dark place
Your heart race
Depression
A sad situation

But you can find the light
Shine so bright
Love and kindness
To quell the anxiousness

Friendship
To make the nerves dip
Someone you can trust
Is a must

More common than we know
Making people feel low
Human contact
Not an act

Lack of friendship
A stinging whip
Someone who cares
Seems rare

Fifty years
Of fear
Help
What a hand to be dealt

Mental health
Physical Health
Hand in hand
You can if you think you can

Look up
Drink from life's cup
Be the best version of yourself

Express yourself
You are amazing
From the cleaner, carer to the King
Confidence
A little patience

Little improvements everyday
Hard in every way
You can do it
Just stick to it

QNFMS Creative Writing Competition Entries

P, P, J & N P,P,J & N Distinguished men of guise and style P P J & Forever N What a wonder in the den First there's P A memory man we do agree Then again there's P of which there's two A man who's thankful to give him his due But what about J A man of immense original play And don't forget N He certainly tries to bring the zen We came to Binnian to do the CHIME And now we've turned to learn the rhyme	Friday's the day we make the hay And with these words we learn to play Happy the crying, we're moved to tears Keeping our emotions in abeyance and arrears Very much part of our creative art Never too late to finally start The canvas is blank We are the original think tank But what about CHIME We've considered and nurtured a bit of our time A play on the word we call it Connection Very much part of our Recovery reflection Then there's Identity To which we know ourselves true	Next we've Hope Please don't call me a dope Meaning & Purpose, we've got this now This programme surely shows us how And how this all leads to Empowerment Equipped we are for such and every moment This is the tale of PPJ & N The where, the why, the will, the when We're the four Portrane & beautiful men P, P, J & N Distinguished men of guise and style P P J & Forever N What a wonder in the den Reflecting on the words We're certainly not nerds Connection gave us the many people No need to be, in any way, deceitful	And with Hope we talk about happy Not everything is going to be eternally sappy Then there's Identity and what's in a name Let's move on and light the flame Meaning & Purpose leads to new things It's not just one of our futile flings Empowerment points us towards the strength This will of ours is truly meant P, P, J & N Distinguished men of guise and style P P J & Forever N What a wonder in the den Then there's the nurses With injections there's curses Most favourite of all Coming to our protection when in danger of fall What about the docs ! They certainly mind us around the clocks	But, that's not everyone As we sail off with the aroma and care of the setting sun P, P, J & N Distinguished men of guise and style P P J & Forever N What a wonder in the den We're going to WRAP this up So, let's go for a sup That's it for now What a great pow wow We're proud of ourselves With our words and our delves Four men who drive We're very much alive Trying to spread the love We're at peace with the dove Learning and wonder Like a clap of thunder	P, P, J & N Distinguished men of guise and style P P J & Forever N What a wonder in the den
---	--	---	---	--	---

ONE

The friends are here
As strange as it sounds
Their energies fly forever
Like long lost family members
But still, I feel
No shelter from these associates
When did I get here
Where did this all go wrong
The opposite of utopia

The doors closes and the play begins
Feet splashing heat racing
A taste if freedom or chains
Heart beats are everything for a moment
And then back to reality again
If my life were a book
It would be a best seller
My mind is a one off as wish it wasn't.
The walls, those walls

They remind me of so much
A touch of grace of God
Can turn so cold so quickly
But the good memories call me
Safe me from this moment
Potent
My brain how it weaves
Or should I just call on my faith
Tangling me, constricting me

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Roots

I'm proud of my roots, I don't care what they say
The time will come when they learn in God's way
How it feels
The happiness it steals
God's will and beauty in nature
Born from heavenly lands of the green pasture
I am a flower
And feel the Lord's power
A seed in earth
Taking form, giving birth
Reaching out in different sections
The possibilities of life and its many directions
At the centre I see my branches stretching out
Reaching my loved ones, always trying to be devout
And having faith that helps me bloom
In my heart I have so much room
Paying no thought to my injustices though
Even forgiving those who wronged me so
Both sun and rain are good for the soul
The bad and good making a person whole
Through the days looking up at the sun
Life's over before it even begun
Aged and wilting, I've done all I can
I've fulfilled my purpose to God's plan
For those who come next and fall to the ground
The new generation in their time found
All of us, brothers and sisters together
Joined in a bond that lasts forever
Coming from the same soil
Whether in luxury or to toil
A continuously different world is born
My time has come and there's nothing to mourn

Everyone's beautiful wherever they come from
Why should anyone care when there's nothing wrong

Death

Nothing says an end like a Sunset
A life within a day
Storm laden clouds
I feel so far away

Melancholy
So much lost love
Sand falling through my hand
Soaring like a dove

A summer ending
Shine gold
The afterlife will be good
Or so I've been told

So many, Too many precious times and people
All gone in the passage of time
Standing barefoot on the beach
My next stage has come and I feel fine

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Is there a God?

Everything starts with a seed
Birthed from a parent
In all things
It's inherent
I look up at the stars
And all the time I wonder
What's really out there
Beyond our reach in the wild blue yonder

Is there a God?
Hiding behind a brick wall?
Wouldn't it be strange
If the universe was all?

Mundane society
Ever in decline
Is there someone who cares
I pray always to no sign
If we can reach back
To the first atom
Something science could never explain
Where did it come from?

Is there a God?
Does it see us?
Do we not see its actions
In this sin filled hellish fuss?

Is there an ultimate creator?
And if so how?
Did it make us imperfect deliberately?
The world we live in now
Can there be a non existence?
What is our true lord?
Are we even real?
To live and die by the sword

Is there a God?
Tell me please
I ask for an afterlife to save me
Begging on my knees

I hope for redemption
From our designs faulty
Who's cause is it really
To bring such insane cruelty?
When we die

Unanswered questions, will we know?
And see through the cosmos
Will a smiling face show?

Is there a God?

Roots

Starting with a seed
In soil a nurturing greed
Spreading roots
A flower shoots
From ground above
To the sky with love
Drinking in sunlight
And the rain of night
Proud and tall
With its own seeds small
Many ways of birth
Landing in the earth
But an everlasting life
Across the world rife
Just like people with roots of their own
A variation far and wide, all home grown

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

The Boy and The Man

I was six years old when I met him. I was in the shop with mum and I had run off to look at the sweets. Mum didn't listen. Mum never listened. She had told me I couldn't have any sweets today but I was going to. Looking at the different selections my mouth watered. I couldn't choose. An old man spoke to me "Candy isn't that good for you, you know" chiding me.

I turned round and looked up at his face. He was smiling kindly "Shouldn't you be with your mother?". I stared. He responded "All children love candy, it's a well known home truth" he chuckled "When really you need your greens". He didn't understand. Just like all grownups. "I want sweets and I'm going to have sweets" I stamped my foot.

He laughed which made me angry, he said "Everyone thinks they know best... especially children" I retorted "You don't know best" He laughed again "Of course not. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that no one, including me, is ever right".

He must've caught the small smile that had appeared on my face "What are you thinking?" he asked me "Will you buy me sweets?" He sounded serious "No" "Why not?" "Because no one can always have whatever they want and in time you'll learn that. Just like everybody else. What you do need is to find your mother. If you want I'll help you" The man looked safe but my mum always said 'Never trust strangers' "No. I don't trust strangers". "Good!" A nod of agreement.

"That's exactly right! Even as an adult, sometimes you can't". He looked at me "I'll tell you something now though. There's more to life than chocolate and if you're not allowed, you're not allowed. You, everybody, can't fight every battle, some just can't be won".

At this, the man seemed suddenly distant "So many hardships. Life's full of them" I couldn't tell who he was talking to. Perhaps himself. Snapping out of his daydream "Don't be a spoiled brat" I didn't like what he said "Well when I'm older, I'll buy and eat as many sweets as I want". Shaking his head in amusement "Really? Do it then and see where it gets you. As much as you may disagree, which children often do, people change. When you are grown up, you won't be interested in that" "I will! And when I'm an adult I'll come back and give myself whatever I want!".

A smile "I don't think that is what you'd do and besides, if you saw your older self, that means you'd know you'd have to do that in your future and wait for however long to do that, but... what would you really say?"

A question came to me "What happens?" the man was enthusiastic "Now that's a question worth asking! But you have to consider, could you say what happens? Should you say what happens? Would you need to do and say the same as you first saw? And if you did try to tell your younger self of the future, would it make a difference? It'd be quite strange, maybe even dangerous to try and change the past. Me. I'm Sixty and life hasn't been kind. So I tell others to be prepared. I've suffered a lot, some of it unfairly...

but however curious it may be, I'm happy that happened. It made me a better person, a character I value and I want the same for you. For you to grow up and like me, become stronger, selfless, genuine. Don't worry, I have faith in you... Charlie"

That was my name. I stared at him. He went to leave. I tried to follow him but before I could "Charlie! Charlie!" My mum saw me "Oh! I might've known you'd be here" dragging me away, I knew he was gone and that I wouldn't see him again.

I was six years old when I saw myself.

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

The Sunshine

The sun it shone for me today,
The sun woke me with a smile.
So this I pray, that she will continue
To do this to me everyday.
As I lay sleeping in my bed,
She tapped lightly on my window
And this she said:

"Hey you, its me the sun, your friend,
Come and stretch, don't snooze,
And don't pretend! Only vibes of
Positivity and happiness I will ever send!"

I rubbed my eyes to see if it was there,
And it was the sun that was peeping in my window,
As though to come through.
So I got up and stretched up right, not
Like normal when id wake so uptight.
I looked up at the sun as she was smiling back so bright,
I said yes sun I think you are right,
I will wake up and feel alright.
She replied with this:

"This is my job to wake you up every morning,
To brighten your lives when the day is dawning.
She said, even if I can't see me I'll be there,
From behind the clouds, I'll reappear, but if you doubt,

Take some of my light, off you go!
Go up and get dressed, don't waste the day.
Take me with you, because I'm here every single day.
We don't know what tomorrow may bring.
So go enjoy yourself!"
This she did sing,
I love the sun.

Feelings in meanings.

Walking grandiose in a big illusion,
All this confusion,
Negative thought intrusion,
What does it mean to feel so unseen?

Integration into society
No, I'm not that keen.
I know it's what I need,
Spending all this time alone.

Following my own lead,
Waiting for positive seeds,
Feeding on communication,
From someone I plead.

But I can't find it,
Where is it?
That boost I desperately craved,
I know the time will come,
I know I will be saved.

But I don't know, at this point in time,
That s why I wrote this little rhyme.
It is not a crime,
Not salty or sour, like vinegar wine.

It just feels that way
What do you have to say?
Are you okay?
Just give me what I need,
Some real communication to feel.

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Mistakes

*Have you ever made mistakes?
They are as easy as baking cakes,
Have you ever been brought to account?
Were you charged the right amount?
Is that the way to make it right?
Or should we hide them out of sight?
No, mistakes will always be,
A sign that we are human for everyone to see.*

Love

*Love is rational, fair and just,
Love is caring no room for lust,
Love is giving and sharing,
Love is hope never despairing.
Love is committing that's when you know its true love,
Love is a right sent from above,
Love is lasting, solid and strong,
Love is secure where we belong,
Love is warm and bright,
Love will comfort you in the middle of the night,
Love is supporting holding you tight,
Love is the only things that feels right.*



QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Children

Children are precious tiny and pure,
They require your time and energy and so much more.
They are mischievous curious, happy they won't make you sad,
They will make your life so full and that you will be glad.
The moment you meet these bundles of joy,
You will smile to know whether it's a girl or a boy.
They grow up so fast and do so much,
All they require is a mother's loving touch.
They hold your hand so tight you see,
They love you unconditionally.

What is it to create
something that's yours
you love to make
whether it's art
or a photo you take
or something you write
Make no mistake
doing something
from your brain's pool
make it happen
do something cool
sitting at your desk
or on a stool
it'll make you feel
left tall
and it's
even better to share
do it to
show people you care
even something
that makes your heart fare
is worthwhile
to have someone there
being creative
doing something good
goes a long way
as it should
help someone that's down
I know you could
make their whole day
that you would

Happiness

Happiness is freedom, days out shopping,
Happiness is cleaning polishing and mopping.
Happiness is organizing tidying and more,
Happiness is cosy comfy and warm,
Happiness is babies newly born.
Happiness is holidays travel galore,
Happiness is smiles and laughter at the core.
So that's what happiness means to me,
It comprises of myself being free ultimately.
Free from stress, uplifted and light,
Never distressed depressed and out of sight.
Happiness is fun, cheery, hopeful,
Never sad, miserable or dull.

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Hope

*Hope is the drive that keeps you going,
Hope is the positivity that you are showing.
We all must hope,
As it's the only way,
To raise our spirits throughout the day.*

Endurance

*To withstand hardships that's what it means,
Like to run a long marathon in teams.
The ability to sustain a prolonged activity,
Without exhibiting too much negativity.
To resist, recover and remain,
To have the ability to suffer and endure pain.*

Croissants



It's 10:51 nah

They're croissants not buns nah

Bust some moves

Bounce with the groove

Grapes



Grapes taste good, just like vapes

It always feels good to be safe

Grab a plate and cut some shapes

QNFMS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Patience

*Patience is a good trait to possess,
Patience is a tool to use when you are given less.
Patience helps you to navigate freely through life,
Patience is the key when married with a wife.
Patience is essential for all those who know,
To help you with the stress to fend off the woe.*

Hardships

*Hardship is when we go through troubles at times,
Hardship is when you struggle to find your own peace of mind.
With hardship comes ease so be aware,
Hardship doesn't last forever as that wouldn't be fair.
Hardship is a common occurrence that most people will face,
It might stay for years and it's not a disgrace.
Stay patient, positive and hopeful,
And most of all stay grateful.
There is always someone worse off than you who don't have a lot,
So be mindful of everything you've got.*

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Loss

*Ever had a loss?
Loss of limb or life?
Both will cause you strife,
Loss of your loved ones separated from you,
Loss of your sight, now its only darkness you see through.
So sad it must be to lose what you love,
But you must find peace through prayer and gain patience from above.
You will soon find tranquillity in all that you've been through,
And one day you will heal and look back on how you grew.*

Weakness

*A frail fragile state,
An exhausted powerless person a complete deflate.
We all feel weak at some moment in time,
I hope you take solace in this poem, my rhyme.
We are born in weakness and we die weak,
So don't become worried or bleak.
It's a fact of life that is just the way,
So please don't allow it to spoil your day.*

QNFMS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Pain

*Pain is an ache it runs so deep,
It cuts like a knife watch the blood seep.
Pain is a feeling that does not sleep,
Pain upsets you and causes you to weep.
However pain is normal it comes and goes,
Its apart of life along with the highs and the lows.*

Sadness

*Sadness is the dark that over shadows light,
Sadness is the dull that removes the bright.
Sadness is a lull that takes over,
Sadness are tears and crying on a shoulder.
Sadness is your freedom taken away,
Sadness is the night overtaking the day.
But there is a silver lining to the sadness you see,
It's something that will pull you through to appreciate the glee,
Patience and endurance will help you through,
To fight the sadness that makes you blue.*

QNFMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

Mother

*A mother's love is pure and sweet,
A mother's love is hard to beat.
For all those mothers who love because they can,
For the mothers who raised you be her fan.
She tries so hard,
To do her best,
She pushes her limits to the test,
She's sad when you're not with her,
But her love will not deter.
Her hugs are comforting and this you should know,
Her love and kindness is never just for show.
She gives all she can to those who she loves,
She would go to the end of the earth and above.
Her heart breaks when her child is hurting,
She's never among the disconcerting.
A mother is a friend indeed,
A mother will never wilfully leave.
A mother helps to heal the pain,
A mother never has anything to gain.*

Time

*Time flies by, time goes fast,
Time makes the future become the past,
Time is deceiving to those that don't know,
That time won't last forever and only your deeds will show.
So make the most of time,
Think of it 'time well spent',
Don't waste time, for that purpose it wasn't meant.*

Life

*Life has its ups and downs,
Sometimes life can make you frown.
Although a short prayer is sufficient for you,
To give you hope and mercy too.
Patience and faith is all you need,
To help you go through the times when you bleed.
Hardships are bound to go
The ease will come, this you should know.
Soon better days will come around,
And you will say it was from the strength you found.*

Acknowledgements

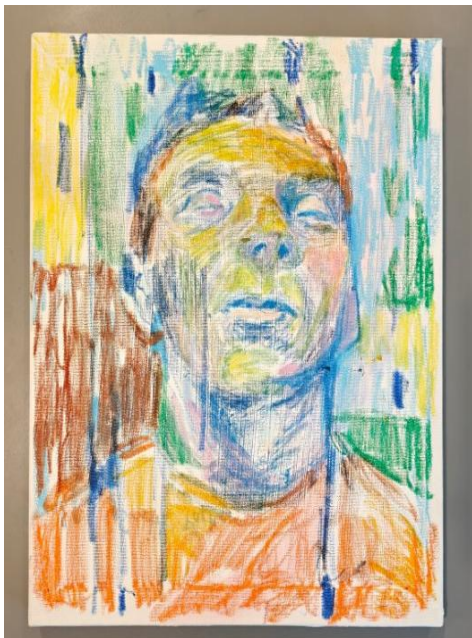
- Container, Contained; Neon light and dark lights; Dark flights; What do you see in me? Hillis Lodge, by TW
- The Disease of Addiction, Priory Hospital, Lincolnshire, by ET
- Starry Night with Collapsing Moon, George Mackenzie House, by JE
- Alone in an Overwhelming World, Priory hospital Lincolnshire, by ET
- Drawings, North London Forensic Service, by WK
- Poetry Collection, St Andrew's Healthcare Birmingham, by CF
- SM Poetry Collection, St Andrew's Healthcare Birmingham, SM
- Cry, North London Foundation Trust, by AM
- The Green Man, Fromeside, by Anonymous
- My Family, Cygnet Sheffield Spencer Ward, by LM
- Nothing Left, Cygnet Sheffield Spencer Ward, by RC
- Freaky, Cygnet Sheffield Spencer Ward, by DS
- Eggcelent, Cygnet Sheffield Spencer Ward, by JS
- Thinking Feeling Pain, The Bay Guild Lodge Forensic Bleasdale Ward, by Anonymous
- The Boss Lady, The Bay Guild Lodge Forensic Bleasdale Ward, by Anonymous
- Recovery is a journey and not a sprint, Priory hospital Lincolnshire, by ET
- Recovery is a Journey to Discovery, LSCFT Guild Lodge Whinfell Ward, by C
- Love to Death and Back, LSCFT Guild Lodge Whinfell Ward, by GN
- Journey, Cygnet Sheffield Spencer Ward, by NE
- Tip of my tongue, North London Forensic Mental Health Services by Anonymous
- Hope, St. Andrews Healthcare Birmingham, by NN
- Shelly, Prospect Place, by DM
- Poetry ... 'P,P, J & N ', NFMHS... Evolve Recovery College, by Patients and Evolve Recovery College in NFMHS
- Is There a God?, Wickham Unit, by W
- Roots Mixed Media, Wickham Unit, by W
- Roots TC, Wickham Unit, by W
- The Man and the Boy, Wickham Unit, by W
- Death, Wickham Unit, by W
- Silver Shadows, North London Foundation by DDG
- One, Tamarind Centre by SB
- Natalie, Littlemore Centre by Anonymous
- Coffee Morning Poems, Fromeside by BBW
- Recovery, Caswell Clinic by SB
- The Root of Life, St Andrew's Healthcare by Anonymous
- Avatar – The Legend of AAng, North London Forensic Service by ETM
- E's Tattoo, St Mangus Hospital by ES

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- The Angry Martian is nipping at Inol's head, St Magnus Hospital by ETL
- Blue Trees and Bushes, St Magnus Hospital by NT
- Beef Burger with Tomato by EN
- Art from Trauma, Tamarind Centre, by DA
- A Classical Experience: What Music does for Me; My Walking Life: The Benefits of walking for Mental Health, St Andrew's Healthcare by JH
- What came first?, Langford Centre by AB
- Anxiety, Arnold Lodge by SE
- It's Christmas Time, Cygnet Hospital Clifton by MHIN
- Tree of Dreams, Cygnet Bury Hudson by MD
- Short Story, John Howard Centre by Anonymous
- My Home Country, Cygnet Bury Hudson by AS
- Rainbow, Cygnet Bury Hudson by TB
- Peace, Cygnet Bury Hudson by CF
- Tree of Happiness, Cygnet Bury Hudson by HL
- Creativity, Cygnet Bury Hudson by PD
- Flowers in Bloom, Cygnet Bury Hudson by SK
- Home, Cygnet Bury Hudson by PR
- The Eye, Cygnet Bury Hudson by PN
- ARTEMIS 11, Tamarind Centre by DM
- Do Something Nice, George McKenzie House by RM
- Various, NFMHS by Anonymous
- Prison, NFMHS by DH
- TD, NFMHS by Anonymous
- Let the world unite in peace. World cup 2026, Cygnet Bury by ES

QNPICU Artwork Competition Winners

Below are this year's artwork competition winners.



"self-portrait"
by anonymous at The
Junipers PICU



"in snow storm"
by anonymous at
The Junipers PICU



"Abstract Man" by JP
at Cygnet Health Care-
Woking Acorn PICU

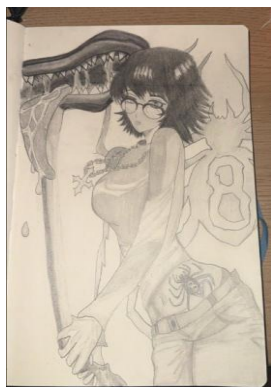
QNPICU Artwork Competition Entries



Star T-shirt by BH at Priory Hospital Burgess Hill



Dot Art by OO at Priory Hospital Burgess Hill



PICU (Human Form) by MA at Cygnet Beckton Svanna (PICU)



"Insomnia" by anonymous at Priory Hospital Burgess Hill



Worry Stones and Dinosaur by BH at Priory Hospital Burgess Hill



Beautiful woman by JP at The Junipers PICU



Haze by anonymous at The Junipers PICU

QNPICU Creative Writing Competition Winner

Below is this year's Creative Writing competition winner called '**Every Mind Every Soul**' by JB at **Cygnets Hospital Hexham**

Every Soul Every Body

every second is a blessing every minute that goes by i feel the light on my skin every new day for new beginnings seem so bright as i lie here in my bed tossing my body and turning my head i look to the left and the the right which seems to be all the same the same as always i wish tonight as i see a shooting star i may be older but I'm still aware that sometimes people have to believe to give them comfort and hope to see what's been in front of them this whole time

inferior of the strength built within me without question, it was believed that my past was to let go of it not alone withdraw from my soul it jump right out of me and turned away walking as like i wasn't awake still i was shocked at how it felt but deep within in side of me was still me i was confused nearly crying for answers but she kept on walking a way from me i don't know what i did i screamed out loudly please come back please turn around i need you i really do for only i can't make my path with out you you are my imagination my Instincts my knowing to every question that i didn't ask before i need my soul i need you so i understand know what you are here to do if we work together me and you mind and soul we'll find are way to are better days for Everything seems better now we are finally back together connected by are body of skin and bones the blood within turns into stone hard like a break strong enough to do anything stick like make the person you want to be to choose weather you can be brave to break the ticking time for clocks are just there to keep you on time not to control you're life that's in you're hands so am i now I'll say my saying goodbye's |

QNPMHS Artwork Competition Winner

Below is this year's artwork competition winner called
'Summer "Solstice
Solstice' by DW in HMP Birmingham



QNPMHS Creative Writing Competition Winner

Below is this year's Creative Writing competition winner called 'My Journey in a Life with Asperger's' by DM in HMP Wakefield

My journey in a life with Asperger's by D. M.

As a child I was diagnosed with high functioning Asperger's Syndrome. I manged this largely by ignoring it, and accepting that by normal societal standards, I was a 'weirdo'. Whilst this was not ideal – in the main I had a successful life.

I have always used writing as a way to exorcise all of the thoughts, feelings or emotions I would otherwise struggle to process. I took great strength from the ability to remove myself from being around people when I felt overwhelmed with this nonunderstanding.

It is the loss of this ability to remove myself from people that I have struggled most with since being incarcerated. Even when behind the door, and essentially alone – the communal aspect of prison for life is never far away.

I wrote this poem to help process this unfortunate reality. It is based on a quote by John-Paul Satre – 'Hell is other people'

*Hell is other people -Their thoughts, their words, their deeds.
Hell is other people -Their ever-changing needs.
Hell is other people -Their moans, their groans, their sighs.
Hell is other people – Their constructs built on lies.
Hell is other people –Their jokes, their lves, their Strife.
Hell is other people – Their prejudiced views on life.
Hell is other people – Their fashions, their folbles, their fads.
Hell is other people – They' re driving me F*@king MAD!*

This is my life, I struggle daily – but with the support from friends, family and a role that actually makes a difference. I get up every day and succeed. Despite the 'Other People'

QNPMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

①

Ignorance is bliss

I sat comfortably on my bed listening to my music for hours. Three Days Grace played on repeat and I sang along, not caring about how bad my singing voice was because I knew I had the house all to my self. I heard my parents take my sister out hours ago and right now I was quite happy in my own world staring at the large poster on my wall of Amy Lee from the band Everesence.

I was so fixated on how cute she looked I didn't even care how cold my room was. My door and window was closed yet my fingers were frozen, so I knew my room must have accidentally turned off the heating before she left. My neck was stiff, softly aching a little and I put this down to sleeping funny at an angle last night, so slowly I massaged it, but it was no big deal. It didn't really matter that much, it just didn't bother me. Just lately I found nothing really bothered me much like it used to.

Take Sonya for instance, she was my girlfriend for three whole years. She was my whole world and I loved her to bits. I would have done anything for her. Then four weeks ago I found out she was cheating on me with my best friend Chris. Again I should have been angry with him too. I've known him all my life, we grew up together, went to primary school together and now high school, but like Sonya my feelings for Chris were none existent. I just didn't care any more. I just felt numb to the whole world like I had just tried weed for the very first time.

School was another bore. Education felt like a whole waste of time so a few weeks ago I simply stopped going. I was expecting a big argument from my parents on the first day I didn't go, but it never came. This just means

②

one day soon my mom will just lose it and explode.

She will yell at me, ground me and give me a million chores while my dad will argue with me and tell me I'm throwing my life and education away.

The second I heard my mom's keys jingle and the front door open I snapped out of my peace and quiet. I heard foot steps race up the stairs and knew it was Hayley my younger sister racing to her bedroom. To my surprise Hayley didn't go to her room, she came straight to mine instead and let her self in. "You know there's a sign on the door right?"

It says knock first. I told her, but she ignored me completely and dropped on the bottom of my bed and lay there silently.

I looked her up and down and wondered where she had been with our parents. She was wearing a black dress I had never seen her in before, black shoes and a black cardigan. Before I could ask her anything I saw the sorrow in her eyes and the red rings around them. It was clear she had been crying and came to me to cheer her up.

Before I could open my mouth my mom came into my room, sat on my bed and wrapped her arms around Hayley.

"You know you could do this in your own room right?" I told them, but as they hugged each other tightly they ignored my sarcasm. Some thing had happened and I was sure I'd hear all about it soon whether I wanted to hear about it or not. "What is this music? It sounds angry" my mom asked. Before I could answer Hayley smiled weakly and said "it's Three Days Grace. It's not that bad."

It was on when I came in here. "Yeah I was listening to it in peace until you two barged in here" I told them.

As my door squeaked open a little further me, Hayley and mom saw dad standing in the door way. He wore a black suit and looked smart, like he was going to a job.

'Ignorance is Bliss' by a
patient in HMP Haverigg
(part 1 of 2)

QNPMS Creative Writing Competition Entries

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③ interviews. I was about to ask him where he's been when he said "is it me or is it a bit nippy in here?" Course it's nippy I told him. "You turned off the heating before you left this morning." Andrew do you want to come in and sit with us?" My mom asked my dad. "Why are you inviting dad into my room? I want you all" I began, but was cut off mid sentence by my dad saying "I'm fine here. I'm not ready to go in there just yet Anette. Every time I look in that corner I still see...." My dad looked like he was about to cry. I wondered why all three of them were acting strange, so I turned and looked at the corner of my room my dad was avoiding. The corner with the beam on the ceiling, the same corner I hadn't looked at for days and days. That was when I remembered why most things didn't bother me any more, why my entire family were ignoring me and acting strange and why I haven't been to school for quite a while.

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'Ignorance is Bliss' by a
patient in HMP Haverigg
(part 2 of 2)

QNPMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

A reflective piece of work inspired by |

Compassion - An exploration of the concept in a custodial setting

Compassion is defined as; an act of pity or mercy. Compassion in prison is a different concept. One must consider to whom it is shown? Who is deserving of it? By what matrix is this judged? Who defines the Matrix? Who decides deservedness? These are all relative and subjective questions, with answers that ultimately will vary with the individual. Hopefully this essay will prompt the individual to consider their honest answers, and therefore grow from the process.

There can be no doubt that we are fully immersed in a society where people suffer—and on the surface at least are thereby deserving of pity or mercy. Many of those suffering however have wilfully committed heinous, vicious or horrific acts—is their suffering then deserved? Is that at least not part of the justice system to which they are subjected?

In a custodial environment, compassion is frequently exploited. The adage 'the squeakiest wheel gets the most oil' is an undoubtable truism and as such, ensures that many create an air of suffering, or go to extreme lengths of physical or emotional self-harm in order to receive compassion and therefore attention from whoever they may solicit it from. The phrase "He's just attention seeking" is bandied about so frequently as to be rendered meaningless.

'Compassion' by DM
in HMP
Wakefield (part 1 or 2)

Undoubtedly compassion ^{for} from the long-suffering nurses, offices, tutors etc is well deserved. They chose to turn up daily to deal with so any many often deeply disturbed—professionally, pathologically manipulative individuals. The wage they claim in exchange for the daily turmoil cannot possibly be a reasonable recompense. It needs to be remembered however that theirs is a choice and that other options are available—whether this makes them more or less worthy of compassion is a question for another time or place.

If compassion is delivered on a 'speak as you find' basis then there are frequent, easily deserved instances where pity or mercy would be both appropriate and right—despite any real or perceived prior stains on their character. This requires a separation of the individual as they present from the individual that committed X, Y or Z. Often this level of separation is a chasm to wide to bridge.

When considering compassion in prison, one must also consider how deserving oneself is of it. Whilst judging others is felt to be expected or unavoidable—with certain individuals, or crimes in particular—we must accept that others will be judging us—viewing our actions from the point of view of their belief systems, constructs or biases and that we may therefore fail to reach the standard of acceptance required before compassion can be issued.

Unfortunately, these thought systems render compassion from a unique, guiding principle of the human condition to something resembling an award certificate' - "You

QNPMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

meet the standard—congratulations have some compassion"

Can we really accept this as a valid way to co-exist with our fellow prisoners? For better or for worse we are literally stuck with them. We may feel passionately about the circumstances that led to their incarceration, but by viewing individuals through the lenses of the offence, we miss any spark of humanity, which may exist within them and as a result we risk losing our humanity—spark by tiny spark and its humanity which is so woefully missing from this environment

Compassion by DM in HMP
Wakefield (part 2 or 2)

A Creative writing workshop supplied Health inclusive information for our Newsletter. If interested in creative writing groups, you can put an APP into Activities

In HCC we sit & wait
Whilst we're locked behind the gate
Waiting for a name to be said
Some feeling a little bit of dread
As they try to hide the fear
Knowing time with the dentist draws near
Some will get things off their chest
When talking to the prison psychiatrist
For those of us who wear specs
It could be the opticians turn next.
After all appointments come to an end
Back behind the gate the officers send
To await guards to take us back
Along the in-line route, they'll track
But before we're allowed to go,
Wanded and rubbed down high and low
Then taken back to our wing
To see what the rest of the day may bring

In HCC We Sit and Wait by IT
in HMP Wakefield

QNPMHS Creative Writing Competition Entries

My Journey

A long time ago, in a prison far from home, I started a sentence, me against the storm troopers!

Back at the beginning this was the way prisons ran "Them and Us" The only time we would interact was when we were fighting.

I fell down the stairs on my way to the seg a few times, even though here were none! Living conditions were, well! they weren't.

Arriving at reception we were stripped naked and ordered to take a bath, 3 inches of water no more and 5 mins maximum. We were then given a set of clothing, used and damaged and very rarely fitting, one man even got 2 odd, different sized shoes!

We were then taken to dirty empty cells with only a bed, stained sheets, worn out mattress and broken locker and no curtains. There was power, water ect, but it was all outside the cell. The toilet in the cell was a bucket in the corner, if you were unlucky enough to share a cell, you also shared the bucket.

Cell lights went out at 10 o'clock no matter what you were doing, and a bell rang at 6 o'clock every morning. Then came the pleasure of 600-700 men all emptying those buckets at the same time.

After years of this routine, I met my Yoda!

A wonderful lady teacher who tricked me into taking O Level (level 2) English. She told me I was doing a mock exam! Only afterward did I discover it was the real thing.

I passed.

This experience changed my life. I had been told by schools that I was not clever enough to take exams, this experience encouraged me to go onto higher education! This in turn improved my self-esteem and confidence, leading to a total change in attitude and behaviour. I am now more confident in myself and have a whole new armoury of skills, meaning that my days of struggle and conflict are behind me and I have a much more positive outlook on life and a far more optimistic view for the future.

I went from a stressed, highly strung and volatile person, gradually as I improved my social skills, attitudes, motivation and have even reconnected with my family in a supportive and positive way.

Over all I would say that for me education has led to a major lift in my mental and physical health. I would suggest that for anyone in prison, especially on a long sentence a good way to improve your life and health is to find something that interests you and put your energy into a positive activity, whatever that is, for me it was education, for you it could be the gym, yoga, chess, puzzles, cooking or even reading, just do something other than complain or sleep!!!

It really does make life better, I speak from many years of experience

The Old  Lag

The Old Lag by a patient in
HMP Wakefield

**Thank you from the
QNFMHS, QNPICU &
QNPMHS Teams!**

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