

MISSION STATEMENT

“Connector Media CiC aims to inspire and educate women by providing opportunities to gain and develop specialist knowledge within the creative media industries”

VISION

“Connector Media CiC is a social enterprise that enables women, especially those most vulnerable, to gain confidence in themselves and in their abilities. Set up by women for women, a variety of education and development programmes aspire to enrich women’s lives and help them reach their ambitions. Connector Magazine and Connector Events act as a conduit to preparation and training that provides the skills and knowledge women need to become economically independent through new job opportunities and self-employment.

VALUES

We believe in providing fair, equal and accessible opportunities to help women transform their lives. We strive to do this in a manner that minimises harm to the environment.

FOREWORD

The group of women who were involved in compiling this anthology were brought together by the involvement of:

- **Connector Media**
- **Expanding Horizons**
- **Merseyside Disability Federation**
- **St Helens College**
- **St Helens 'Skills for Life Test the Town' project**
- **UNLtd Ventures**

A literacy tutor from St Helens College designed and delivered the programme.

All of the women worked towards a Certificate in Adult Literacy.

The poetry has been written from a female perspective. However, males who read this anthology could also relate to the poems.

Without privileging any particular theme, the poems reveal a woman's reality, honest references, experiences and emotions, whilst illuminating humane issues and baring personal feelings and insights.

To assist in writing the poetry, the women 'brushed up' on their English skills and discussed topics relating to:

- family
- hopes and dreams
- future prospects
- past experiences and remembrances
- war

and various other issues.

To celebrate this anthology, you are invited to browse through this publication.

The writers have, most certainly, grown in confidence, learnt so much from their experience and thoroughly enjoyed writing the poems. They hope that you enjoy them too!

Christine, Gaynor, Heather, Kathy, Margaret, Nicola, Sadie, Sue H, Sue R

A LITTLE BIT OF KNOWLEDGE IS DANGEROUS

I went on a first aid course
And passed with flying colours
It made me feel very proud
When my name was 'called out loud'

The diploma was dressed in a satin bow
Little did I know?
That soon the day would arrive
When a poor old man took a dive

It was a frosty night you see
With not a living soul in sight, but me
I witnessed the fall
And knew this was 'my call'

With all the knowledge I had acquired
I made a diagnosis
Broken ribs, I was sure
I knew exactly how to cure

Into action I did fly
Binding him tightly with his own tie
Like a mummy, Tutankhamun
To the hospital, we will be there soon

The doctor was waiting at the ready
With me in tow, feeling heady
Proud as punch with my actions
Then horrified at the contractions

"Who did this?" the doctors voice was raised
As I stepped forward to take the praise
"You silly woman, did you not know?
A heart attack he's had," so

The moral of this story goes
I was sure I had such ability
But ended up
A liability!

Sadie Edwards

AM I MENOPAUSAL?

Hot flushes and grey hairs
Why did I just go upstairs?

Am I menopausal?

Feeling bloated, feeling fat
Did I forget to feed the cat?

Am I menopausal?

Hairs on my chin, it sends me raving
Pretty soon, I'll be bloody shaving!

Am I menopausal?

Aching joints and cervical smears
Seems like I haven't been well for years

Am I menopausal?

Losing my marbles, hard to unwind
Or is it I'm simply just losing my mind

..... **I must be menopausal**

Gaynor McDonagh

PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND

I work Monday to Friday
With my disabled friends
We work very hard
To earn our pay
And make our way
In life

People don't understand and
They make fun of me
It takes me longer
To do things
Because of my
Disabled right hand

What people don't see!
Is the real me
I have feelings
And feel pain
Just like them

How can we
Make people understand?
That we are
Human beings
With feelings

Christine

LIVING WITH ALOPECIA

I was sixteen when
I started to lose my hair
Why?
It wasn't fair
I had long blonde hair
How could this
Be happening to me?

Every morning I'd wake up
And more hair was on the pillow
How I would weep
Just like a willow
The patches were as big as a fifty pence
Why was it so?
It just didn't make sense

A sixteen year-old girl
Who was in such a whirl
Waking up in the morning
Was very scary
Do you know?
It made me feel
So very wary

People stare at me in the street
My heart
It always starts to miss a beat
They shout over
"Are you a man?"
And what's moreover
They don't give a damn

I hate wearing my wig
Because it doesn't make me
Feel that big
But now,
Fourteen years later on
I just ignore them
They think they have won

You'd think it would bore them
To keep calling me
But it hurts
Me so much that
I just want to go
And hide from the flow
It's no fun, you know!

Nicola Jane Hayes

WISHES

Be careful what you wish for
I've heard the saying said
And may I say it is so true
I kept it in my head

The little girl I prayed for
To fulfil dreams of all
Was born to me one Wednesday
So early in the morn

A perfect little person
All sugar pink and warm
Swaddled in a blanket
But looking so forlorn

Happy playing dusting
Shopping, dressing up
Wearing mummy's apron
And wrapping teddy up

Later trying perfume
And choosing beads and silks
Going to a party
And always wanting pink

Bedtime cuddles, stories
And then the little talk
Please mum, when I grow up
Don't make me be a bloke

Be careful what you wish for
I kept it in my head
I wished so much for a little girl
And got a **boy** instead

Heather

A SPECIAL GIFT

My friend gave me a special gift
It's worth a million pounds!
She gave it to me, knowing
That its love, it held no bounds

I know it's rather scruffy
And it isn't very tall
But because it means so much to me
I'll show it to you all

I used to have it in my bed
But it became quite worn
It's travelled many miles with me
Just like a lucky charm

As years have passed, it's travelled less
And no longer frequents my bed
I've put it away to keep it safe
It's in a box instead

As I said, it isn't much
But without further ado
I'll take it from its safety box
And show Ted, just for you!

Susan Roughley

IN 'THEM' DAYS

When I was young we had so much fun
We'd play out all day in the bright warm sun
We had picnics with butties and bottles of pop
In 'them' days you could take the bottles back to the shop

We only had a small bottle, couldn't afford big
We'd pass it around, so we'd all have a swig
On our home made 'tut-tuts' each day we would go
Riding all around the streets, Oh! What a show!

We'd all play together; there was loads of us then
We'd play in the woods and even made a den
Down the grass bankings on cardboard, we'd fly
Then we'd count the coloured cars as they drove by

As we grew older the youth club soon appeared
Each night we'd go and pay the man with the beard
Fencing, pool and disco's, all these great things we had
Then we'd run home late, Yeah, we must have been mad

The summers were hot then and our entertainment was free
Not like these days, play stations, game boys, Wii's and TV
These are some of my memories and I hope you all will recall
The enjoyment and happiness of when you were small

Margaret Rainger

MIRROR IMAGE

I look in the mirror
And whom do I see
My mother's face
Looking back at me

I know it is she
By what I do and say
"Hello Amelia", my son said
Just the other day

She is a woman of strength
And determined too
I say to myself
"Doesn't that sound like you"?

She looks after herself
Eats healthily and keeps fit
Her hobby is dancing
There's no time to sit

At 78 years
She keeps up with the pace
An active body
And a beautiful face

A lifetime of struggles
Happiness and sorrow
She holds her head high
What a hard act to follow!

When I am her age
I hope I am like her
I must make some changes
I must take more care

"Take a leaf out of her book"
Determinedly, I say
I'll keep healthy and fit
For it will surely pay

So when I look in the mirror
In the future, hopefully I'll see
My mother's face
Looking back at me

Susan M Higgins

'IN HER SHOES'

I look after the people
I am concerned about my future
And that
I will look like her
In the future
Not too long!

I'm 40 years old
Nearly like her
I would like
To tell her
That I could
Give her a good life

I will give her a good life
I give her a good hug
I feed her
I wash her
I talk to her
To make her feel better

I keep thinking that she is my mum

No visitors
No one to love her
No one touching her
She is lonely
Just a resident

I will care!

Jongkorkorn Apa

COULD I?

Could I be a poet?
What is one of those?

Could I be a poet?
End up writing prose

Could I be a poet?
Serious or drab

Could I be a poet?
Making people laugh

Could I be a poet?
Sitting down to think

Could I be a poet?
Without having a drink

Could I be a poet?
Searching deep within

Could I be a poet?
Write of who I am

Could I be a poet?
Teacher says I can!

Heather

WHY OH WHY

Why oh why do people have to die
Suffering and pain what is there to gain
Men and women going out to war
We tend to lose sight of the innocent in plight

Families losing their homes while the people in power ignore their groans
Lies causing destruction everywhere
Leaders obliterate the human care
Why oh why do people have to die

When I lived on my own I felt very alone
The house was so quiet there was never a riot
Then three teenagers arrived and to my surprise the fun began

I used to watch the soaps on TV now its rap on MTV
Playing Nintendo and Playstation 3
It's a thing of the past waltzing to James Last
Now its Beyonce and shaking my ASS
My goodness I feel so alive I don't feel seventy five

I once was an old fuddy duddy
Now I am comfortable wearing a hoody
Since my grandchildren moved in with me
I feel great growing old
DISGRACEFULLY

Sadie Edwards

OUR CLASS

Write me a poem the teacher said
Just write the words that come into your head
So I sat down and thought for a while
Then suddenly I began to smile

All the other ladies that are in my class
Had all started writing, but for me nothing alas
My brain was scrambled, my chin I scratched
Suddenly I thought a poem had hatched

Listening and laughing we all had our turn
At the end of the day we are all here to learn
Writing ideas that come just like that
I'm learning quickly, I'm not as daft as a bat

When the night has ended
We all say our goodbyes
We have a laugh and a joke
Sometimes with tears in our eyes

"Good night" we all say, "See you next week"
With lots more poems and cheer
"We can't wait to finish our book", we say
And keep up the good work next year

Margaret Rainger

SPORTS FOR US ALL

Lads kicking a football around
It seems such fun as they all fall down
Jumping up when they score a goal
Oh! What a joyful and happy sound

They all have their favourite team
Some go to watch them and some watch them on the telly
You see them in their favourite shirts
Singing, shouting and giving it some 'welly'

Rugby league is what I like to watch
The likes of Shaun Long and James Roby
Running, passing, tackling, that's what they do lots
To win the game, you see

Fans singing, flags waving
So happy when they win
They're thinking of the next game
Hoping it will be the same happiness again

Sports is for all ages, young and old
If you're good, you could end up winning a gold
Some play in a team, some on their own
Sports is good for you, so I've been told

Sports is not just a man's game
Women also compete; it is our aim
We also like to watch our favourite game
Like you men, we are just the same

Christine

TOMORROW

The plans of my future are thwarted
If plans they ever could be
To sit in a hospital corridor
And wait for my life to begin

To walk into a room to a stranger
With tubes, drips and bleeps by the score
A man I once was half of
I wish to be half of no more

In one stroke the man became different
With tantrums a two year old proud
Grieving for past times and movement
Speech, to be part of the crowd

To cry at a bedside for hours
To cry for a husband and dad
By maybe I cry for my future
A future I never will have

Heather

AN UNEXPECTED DELIVERY

I had delivered, the other day
A man, I did not know
Overnight, it changed my life
Disruption, highs and lows

I want to keep things normal
There are others in my life
But it's hard to be a mother
A nurse and still a wife

My family had a living room
A TV all could share
But now it is a hospital
And comfort isn't there

Children still should play here
Not be made to think
Of the patient in the living room
A life that's on the blink

That day, I gained another child
I knew I couldn't cope
With nerves and fear, exhaustion
All I could do was hope

So it's hard to be a mother
A nurse and still a wife
But at least I have my health
At least I have a life!

Heather

SUICIDE

Why?

Guilt

Torture

Guilt

Loss

Guilt

Pain

Guilt

Grief

Guilt

Emptiness

Guilt

Brokenhearted

Guilt

WHY?

Gaynor McDonagh

MEMORIES

I went to visit my sister
She was 'feeling under the weather'
Chatting of days gone by
We drank cups of tea together

Reminiscing of our childhood
And teenage years of fun
Then out came a box of photos
Reminding us of things we had done

Photos of when we were in love
Handsome boys, some are now gone
Buckets and spades with the children
Ice cream and kites, having fun

Those years are now long gone
To us, it was just yesterday
When we were dressed in our 'Sunday best'
Well they can't take our memories away

Sadie Edwards

JUST ONE TWEAK

I'm going to have a face lift
Well, some other people do
I'm told they take your face off
And shrink it in a jar
Put it back by morning
So it doesn't go too far

And then there is my tummy
Well, I've got two or three
I'll donate one to my best friend
So she can feel like me

My bust could do with lifting
A foot or even more
But I don't want them any bigger
Or we won't get through the door

My nose, I'm not too bothered
I couldn't stand the crack
I think the money's better spent
On hair removal from my back

My cellulite needs smoothing
My legs are far too short
I've heard that they break them twice
But that's a last resort!

Colonic irrigation
Will free me from the wind
But dragging jugs and tubes about
I cannot recommend

I've just looked in the mirror
And I can plainly see
That I haven't got the money
To change the whole of me!

Heather

COMING OUT

The day I 'came out'
And said "I'm gay"
Was such
An emotional day

What should have been
A day of relief
Was such a shock
Total disbelief

It was all for Elaine
The woman I love
She makes me feel safe
She's as gentle as a dove

Follow the heart
Is what I say
If it's what you want
You'll find a way

Eight years on
We're still going strong
Even though people say
"It is wrong"

So don't judge me
For what I am
I may be gay
But don't make me pay!

Nicola Jane Hayes

TEACHER OR STUDENT?

Students, my job role is
To encourage you and teach
Praise you and show you
What potential you can reach

To understand and support you
To conquer your fears
Of feeling worthless and neglected
Throughout your school years

You struggle with spellings
And say you are thick
But the fact of the matter
Is that some of you are dyslexic

I ask you a question
You question me too
You learn from me
And I learn from you

You work hard and study
Punctuation and grammar
You join in discussions
Without hesitation or stammer

I question myself
Constantly
Do I feed you?
Or do you feed me?

I now ask you this question
Don't think I am prudent
Am I the teacher?
Or am I the student?

Susan M Higgins

JUST ONE LOOK

Glance at the world
And you miss it
Look deeper
And what may you see
The ugly side
Of a human
Or an angel
Sat under a tree
We all can't regain
Our beginnings
But we can grasp
At a chance
So look deep at
The world of your brothers
And don't see it short
With a glance!

Heather Balmer

MY SISTER, MY FRIEND

It's wonderful to have a sister
That I love with all my heart
We always think about each other
Even when we are apart
She's always considerate and
Often goes out of her way
Her smile, it shines so brightly
It cheers me for the day

Kindness is her second name
She often puts me first
Her 'love of life' is endless
It's almost like a thirst
As a friend, I know
She's always there for me
Our love, we show, for each other
For all the world to see

If angels live amongst us
Then, I'm sure she should have wings
Because just like something special
She's such a precious thing
So if like me, you're lucky
And have a sister's love
Just count your blessings every day
And know that life is good

Susan Roughley

BEING DYSLEXIC

Don't make fun of me
I'm trying my best, you see
Words and letters, I get mixed up
But you are not
Helping me

Back of the classroom, I go
Not learning anything, you know
I'm wondering what I've done wrong
But it's a mystery, you see
I'm really feeling very low

Why did all the teachers not help me?
It seemed I was on my own, you see
I have a problem with writing
But you didn't understand
How confused and upset it made me

It was only later when I returned to learn
My teachers now are not so stern
They tested me for dyslexia
No more the class dunce
They did me a 'good turn'

Christine

THE SKY

I love the sky in the morning
When I wake up yawning
Watching the sun rise
Shining bright in my eyes

The sky is a beautiful thing
It makes me want to sing
Especially in the morning
When I wake up yawning

I love the sky in the afternoon
And listening to the birds sing
Their happy little tune
Until the rise of the moon

I love the sky at night
The stars twinkling so very bright
I love watching the sky go dark
When cats screech and dogs bark

Nicola Jane Hayes

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Waiting and waiting for what, I know not
It seems I'm waiting for something I've got
I can't put my finger on it but it's as plain as can be
I'm simply not happy with what's in front of me

Wanting to change but now's not the time
Just making do and saying "Oh it will be fine"
Your home and your work are two major things
I must get stuck in and pull on some strings

If I don't make change now I'll be waiting forever
I think that it's now time for me to be clever
To say and do the things that hold me back
And leave this waiting game at the bottom of the pack

Instead of being told just wait a little longer
I'll push out my chest and be a bit stronger
I know I'll make changes for this has to be
And then I will like what I see in front of me

Margaret Rainger

GUINNESS

Each day I have some **Guinness**
“Cause I’m Irish – I just can’t get enough”

Off to Dublin
I’d live
If only
To give
More time
To drink the

Black stuff

Gaynor McDonagh

FEELINGS ARE A FUNNY THING

Feelings are a funny thing
They can make you cry
Like when a child is born
Or when people die

Love is a joyful thing
It makes you tingle inside
Like on your Wedding Day
As you walk up as a bride

Fear is a frightening thing
You feel all cold inside
Like when you are at the fairground
On a roller coaster ride

Sorrow is a sadness thing
World disasters, wars are bad
It makes me feel like crying
It makes me feel so sad

Happiness is a happy thing
It makes the world go round
Children playing and laughing
I love to hear the sound

Peace is a calming thing
When all we have is hate
Let us all pray for peace
Before it's too late!

Christine

CITIZENSHIP

Look at me!
Look at me!
I can be a citizen

I am Thai
Living in England
Working in England
Happy in England

It was hard
Reading English books
Taking English exams
Filling in English forms
To become a British citizen

But now I am proud
And I can tell others
That I am
A BRITISH CITIZEN

Jongkotkorn Apa

A LITTLE BRAVE

Gangs with bows and arrows
Going off to war
Shooting at the bad guys
Black hats versus white
Home for tea by evening
Everyone's alright

Older boys go marching
Round a barrack square
Practising with dud guns
Mess tins they all share

Off to war in troop ships
Faces pale or green
Mothers waving hankies
Hiding tears and screams

It's not like playing 'X' box
Real faces of the foe
Won't be home for tea, mum
Won't be home no more

Mum holds on to arrows
Played with as a boy
Brave he may have been
And proud we all should be
But mum wishes her little brave
Was coming home for tea

Heather

W A R

A necessary evil?

Sometimes it is right to end this world of powerful leaders

Who persecute for selfish reasons

Who fill their bank accounts with ill-gotten gains

And care not for their people's pains

Gaynor McDonagh

A JOB WELL DONE

The alarm clock sounds
I can't lie in bed
I try to prioritise
The jobs in my head

There are so many things
That I need to do
Washing and ironing
And 'hoovering' too

I feel like a hamster
That's stuck on a wheel
The next job lined up
Is cooking a meal

I must find the time
And take a short rest
This isn't a race
Nor is it a test

I know I won't stop
Until everything's done
My list has got smaller
I think that I've won

It makes me feel happy
To see things so clean
I've polished the floors
Just look how they gleam

With all the jobs done
My task is complete
And now that it's 'ME' time
I'll put up my feet!

Susan Roughley

I LOVE MY MUM

What a wonderful woman
My mum is
She certainly doesn't
Get in a 'tizz'
She's not just my mum
She's my friend
And I know that
She'll be there until the very end

She's been there
Through thick and thin
She could have easily
Put me in the bin
Especially when I used to
Make a lot of noise
Arguing and fighting
With the boys

My mum is
Very kind
She's the best
You would ever find
She's loving
And caring
My mum is also
Very daring!

Mum, you do
Make me smile
Especially when we are shopping
In the supermarket aisle
Thank you
For not making me glum
I really do

LOVE YOU MUM

Nicola J Hayes

GRANDMA

How wonderful to be a grandma
An angel from heaven above
A light shines from her face
Sent by God's own good grace
My Libby, my grandchild, my love

Gaynor McDonagh

MY NAN

Sterilised milk in a blue-band jug; these are memories for me
Apple pie in an enamel dish, large slices with custard for tea
Bowls of boiled beetroot high on shelf, in a pantry a little too dark
String and wax paper kept in a tin; rubber bands always on hand
Sachets of shampoo there in a box, carbolic soap in a slab

Ailments were cured from a kitchen of things
Like comfrey or butter for bumps
Goose-fat for sore throats
Lemons for chills
And camphor with oil for a cough

Cupboards with purses fill up with coins
For milkman, coalman and such
Counting the coal sacks he's bringing in
Learning who not to trust!

Chopping some sticks for the start of the fire
Twisting up paper for that
Hot buttered toast made on a fork
What could be better than that!

Brown earthenware jugs filled up with sand
Warmed in the oven for bed
Flannelette sheets and blankets six deep
Pine scented potties for when

She may not have been warm and cuddly
But amazing never the less
Teaching all by example
I never once saw her stressed

Looking back she taught me so much
Of flowers and practical things
But the smell of baking still lingers
In my memories with all other things

Apple pie and custard brings memories
I know she is watching me still
So goodbye and God Bless Nan, I miss you
As for meeting again, yes we will!

Heather

THE VIRUS OF WAR

Aircraft ambushing
Bombs blasting
Children crying
Devastating damage
Explosives expelling
Fearful families
Governments goading
Horrific heartbreak
Innocents ill-treated
Jaundiced jailers
Killing kamikaze
Lethal licence
Merciless malice
Negotiating nations
Oppressive opponents
Prisoners pleading
Quarrelsome quorums
Revenge re-occurring
Soldiers stampeding
Tormented tears
Unforgiving ultimatums
Vengeful violence
Wicked warfare
Xenophobic xenophobia
Youngsters yearning
Zillion zealots

Susan M Higgins

THE EVIL OF POWER

Do they fight for our freedom?
Or the pride of a few
You know the old saying
“Do as I say, not as I do”

These leaders stand tall
They think they know best
As all of our warriors
They put to the test

So many, so young
They try to be brave
It's life that they want
Not an early grave

The 'big men' keep telling us
They fight for just cause
Or is it the fact
That they love the applause!

They give them a gun and tell them
'Stand Strong'
Be sure to keep your guard up and
You'll be home before long

All this anger and hatred
Where did it begin?
We are a fighting a battle
That we cannot win

If only these leaders
Would admit they were wrong
Then all our brave soldiers would be home
Where they **BELONG!**

Susan Roughley

I FOUND A FRIEND

I found myself
A teacher

I found myself
A friend

When I'm learning
He's a teacher

When I am sad
He's my best friend!

Jongkorkorn Apa

MY DAY – MY WAY

It's off to work I go again
Same old route, same old way
After the school run, it's onto the Lancs
The highlight of my day!

The traffic is a nightmare
The cars are so close behind
I let them pass and look at them
And say, "Hey, do you mind"

They want to race
I say "go ahead, feel free"
You may want to kill yourself
But you won't kill me

On the way home
A different way I go
Lots of people pass me by
And some of them I know

The beautiful countryside
The colourful fields
The wildlife all around me
Echoing in the breeze

A scenic route, this way I see
All the beauty that's in front of me
No one racing at this time of day
I'm glad I go home a different way!

Margaret Rainger

WAITING AT THE GATE

As it starts to go dusk the fear sinks in
Of hearing the planes go over as they drop the bombs within
The hate and fear on people's faces as they go running
Thinking of what they'll be going back to
And whether they have got a house to sleep in

"Why is there bloodshed and hate?"
Just thinking of home and of mum waiting at the gate
Why do people shoot to kill and want people to die?
As raindrops fall on my face as I wait to die
As I close my eyes, mum's still waiting at the gate

The battles we fought with each other
Knowing only one side would win
Now we have suicide bombers
Who kill themselves as well as others
Oh! What a cruel world we live in

With sadness, I think of 9/11
And the Twin Towers falling
How upsetting it was when the news came through
Oh! What a cruel world we live in
Knowing what damage some people can do

"Why do we have wars?" It makes me feel so sad
Seeing people fighting, I can't see the point in that
Battles and bloodshed, killing and hate
I pray for peace and the troops to come back
And for all of those mothers who wait at the gate

Christine

VERTICALLY CHALLENGED

Sometimes it's very trying
Not being very tall
There's lots of things in daily life
That are difficult when you are small

The simple things like shopping
They stack the shelves so high
Are they aware that I can't reach?
The things I want to buy

If only I had a better view
When I go to watch a show
Instead I see the backs of heads
It's just another blow

I go to the bar to buy a drink
But the bar staff often see
Not the small one, next in line
But the tall one stood behind me

I know God made us all unique
With His Power and His Might
I just wish He'd given me a little more thought
And added a bit more height!

Susan Roughley

W A R

The floor covered in blood
Women, men and children lay dying
This is bad, this isn't good
People are 'only just' surviving

Casualties are rushed into hospitals
Screaming in horrific pain
Thinking about their families and pals
Do they think it's just a game?

Nurses and doctors, fighting to save lives
Keeping their minds focused and strong
Families hoping that their 'loved one' survives
The pain of waiting is so very long

Planes bombing the countries
How long is this going to last?
Too many unnecessary tragedies
Are certainly, coming too fast!

Men and women going to war
Leaving their friends and family behind
Believing in what they should fight for
Yet, not really knowing what they will find!

Nicola Jane Hayes

ALL AT SEA

We set off in a gale
Why oh why did we sail?
The captain seemed blasé of fears
In the Solent we rolled
Oh my God, 'the bell tolled'
Twas the worst storm we'd all seen in years

Through the night we were holed by the anchor
Jim, from France, said the captain's a 'w.....ker' – nuisance
Why set off in such storms
Dismissing passengers' qualms
We were lucky
It could have just sank her!

They repaired her quite quickly
In Falmouth Bay
Many hours and much solder
Then on our way
Cross the Atlantic racing
And full speed ahead
All our troubles behind us
We all went to bed

Now the moral of this
Story's quite simple
Don't risk your life out at sea
Take a bus or coach ride
To 'Butlins'
Or just stay at home
LIKE ME!

Gaynor McDonagh

CHILDREN OF MINE

Children of mine
I thank God for you
Doctors said "you won't have any"
But God blessed me with two

I've tried to direct you
In ways which were good
To do things my way
The way I thought you should

But you are yourselves
And this I failed to see
I tried to control you
I know you'll agree

I finally saw
That you needed to grow
In your own ways
Reluctantly, I let go

You needed to learn
Go out and achieve
And live your own lives
It was time to leave

Children of mine
Try to do your best
Learn as much as you can
Make this your life's quest

Be true to yourselves
Be honest, respectful and kind
Be happy, have fun
And enjoy peace of mind

Embrace opportunities
When they come your way
Live your life to the full
Right now, don't delay

And remember this
Wherever you may go
You always reap
Whatever you sow

Dear God, I thank you for
The precious children of mine
I'll cherish and love them
Till the end of time

Susan M Higgins

A HOLE IN MY POCKET

I haven't spent money since August
The bank man he told me you see
Be careful with cash in your pocket
As a hole in the edge I can see

So I sat in a room for a few weeks
Ate crumpets and food from a tin
Then a postman he came with a letter
An invite for plastic within

So I sent off the form by the next post
When another, it came through the door
So I sent for card with a tiger
By the end of the week I had four

To add to the tiger, there's smarties
And goldfish all swimming around
One is all wrapped in silver and
A gold one, of this one I'm proud

I just hand them over the counter
Salesmen, they smile and they say
Thank you for that, do you know dear?
There's 'ten per cent off' here today

Well, now it's December and Christmas
A wonderful time of the year
So I've purchased a whole bunch of presents
I know we will have some good cheer

Now the bank man has told me a strange thing
He says I've been spending a lot
But I told him he's wrong, it was plastic
And it hasn't cost me a jot!

Heather

DAWN TILL DUSK

The dawn of our lives, the beginning
We stretch, we play and we run
But by breakfast we learn times of sadness
And know, in a race we must run

Elevenes bring new excitement
The changing of bodies and boys
Bit by lunchtime it maybe the choosing
Of careers or baby doll toys

At tea-time we've made most decisions
For good or for bad we will know
Supertime can bring a sadness
For many who missed the main goal

By evening the light it is waning
With time to reflect on the day
So if lifetimes were twenty-four hours
I'm sure we shan't waste it this way

Heather

MOTHER KNOWS BEST

Please Mum, don't make me wear wellies
I get stinging knees in the rain
And I know if you give me a 'Vick' rub
I will only be laughed at again

I'm the only one with a liberty bodice
Please get me a vest, I won't freeze
My home knitted cardigans, different
Can I have a 'shop bought one' please?
To go with my new summer sandals
And white socks that go right up to my knees

The boy next to me, he's got short hair
A nit nurse came round after play
He's now sporting patches of purple
With him, some of the kids won't play

My ponytail tied with a ribbon
Is pulled on my scalp very tight
It swings like my kilt of scotch tartan
To my ankles, I must look a sight!

A new 'mac' for winter is purchased
I think it was made for a chimp
But I'll grow says my mother so sternly
And the lady just gives me a wink

I won't be like Mum when I'm older
I won't make my kids wear a hat
But now that I am a mother
I think she was right, so that's that!

Heather

GOD'S CREATION

Look around you
And you will see
The wonder of creation
God has given to you and me

The clouds above
On a rainy day
They move so fast
They are so grey

The wind blows wild
And bends the trees
Branches and leaves start to dance
Like ballerinas in the breeze

The flowers raise
Their heads up high
Reaching to face
The warmth from the sky

The birds sing
A melodious tune
On this glorious day
In the month of June

So look around
And you will see
The wonder of creation
God has given to you and me

Sadie Edwards

MY FEAR

Sweaty palms
Thumping heart
Not long to wait now
Before we depart
Take deep breaths
Try reading a book
We're taxi-ing now
Don't want to look

Building up speed
Don't like the sound
This massive machine
Will soon leave the ground
Within a few seconds
The feeling gets worse
Panic sets in
It feels like a curse

I try to relax and
Pretend to be brave
While old 'terra firma'
Is all that I crave
Sit back, have a drink,
It might calm my nerves
It's a bottle I need
As the machine takes a turn

In another two hours
These fears will be gone
And I'll start my vacation
In the lovely warm sun
Enjoy my two weeks and
Forget about life's strain
Because, before I know it
My fears will start again

Susan Roughley

WAKE UP

When I'm feeling down
I look at the people
They don't have anything like me
I still have a brain
I still have breath

Don't sit and wait

Don't sit and waste the time

Wake up and make a new life!

Jongkorkorn Apa

THE LISTENER

I'm happy to be the listener
Yet sad in a way it had to be me
Because he can't tell his family
As he feels life is hard enough
As it could possibly be!

I feel sorry
But listen I can only do
I try to help
And I tell him
"There are people out there for you"

But he won't tell people
He's got a problem
Because that would be hard to do
To own up about his mum's drinking
He'd be too upset it's true!

After working all week, she takes all of his money
Leaving him with so very little to spend
She uses it to buy her drink
Whilst he goes without
Frightened, hungry and left alone to fend

He hasn't the money to buy things
Like any normal lad would do
He'd like to have friends to go out with
But he can't pay his way
Like me or you

Finally, he's owned up to the problem
I'm happy for him, aren't you?
I hope he gets the help he needs
Because he deserves some happiness
In his life too!

Christine

SOULFUL FEELINGS

It's weekend again
And I'm raring to go
Out dancing with
Some friends I know

I call up my friend
And say "Polish your shoes"
She's happy to oblige
It will shake off her blues

We arrive at the venue
The music is loud
I say "Hi" to my friends
They're a lovely crowd

I'm soon on the dance floor
Moving my feet
To the good soul music
And the rhythmic beat

The rhythm is loud and fast
As everyone danced
When I'm on the floor it's like
I'm alone and entranced

My feet are so light
As I dance on through the night
I love to dance
It feels so right

Dancing is my life
It runs through my veins
If I don't go out dancing
It causes me pain

So next time you're out
Remember one thing
Get on that dance floor
And 'shake your thing'

Margaret Rainger

WELCOME TO THAILAND

Welcome to Thailand
The 'Land of Smiles'
Beautiful mountains
Beautiful Lotus flowers
Beautiful beaches
For miles and miles

Every year in April
Is the New Year for Thai's
Lots of celebrations
Lots of fireworks
Lots of love
In the beautiful 'Land of Smiles'

Jongkorkorn Apa

Messages From My Father

My father passed over
Nearly three years ago
His spirit is still with me
And he lets me know

His photograph, smiling
At the side of my bed
Reminds me of all
What he did and said

When I'm feeling low
He comes to me
In dreams and thoughts
He lets me see

That he's always there
In the spirit kind
He comes to me
To ease my mind

Through songs, he speaks
"Susan, I'm here with you"
When I hear Nat King Cole
Luther Van Dross too

Keep sending me messages
I'll watch for signs too
Dad, I am very aware
That they are from you

My father, I know
That you'll never leave me
Your human body has gone
But we know, don't we?

I'll follow my path
Pursue my destiny
Till the day you are there
Waiting for me

Susan M Higgins

THE FISHERMAN'S TALE

The fisherman's wife can get lonely
He leaves her from dawn until dusk
No need for a vitamin supplement
For omega three is a must

For dairy she visits the milkman
The butcher, well she gets a share
And with veggies a must on the menu
The grocer will always be there

So don't waste your time nursing maggots
Or throwing a fly in the stream
For your wife may be doing the shopping
Or maybe just having a dream

Heather

W O M E N

Wives, mothers and sisters are we
Only giving love and it's all for free
Meeting the needs of life's daily chores
Energy, stress and fatigue, we all know
Never letting our true feelings show

Margaret Rainger

WHY?

Why do we crave?
What we have not got
And reject
All that we have

Why do we strive?
For the next thing
Forgetting a moment
Just passed

Why do we wish?
For tomorrow
When the day
Has only begun?

Why is the grass?
In the next field
Always greener than
The grass that we grow

Why can't we live?
In the moment
And be happy
With all that we know

Heather

Follow Your Path

Follow your path
Wherever it may lead
The opportunities await

Grab hold of them
Do it now
Before it is too late

Follow your path
Though times be rough
And from it you may stray

Listen to your heart
Listen to your mind
And visualise your way

Follow your path
Believe in yourself
Even though you may fear

Have confidence
Do it now
Don't wait till the end of the year

Follow your path
Things are meant to be
Your spirit chose it, before you came

In human form, on this earth
To honour and fulfil
The mission of your birth

Susan M Higgins

WOULD YOU WALK THE SAME PATH?

Do you ever consider if given the chance to go back in time, whether you would walk the same path?

Have you ever considered then, that the path you have already walked has made you the person you are today? **maybe** a little rough at the edges from the stones and boulders you have encountered? **surely** your irregular surface only adds a little character – who would want to be totally smooth?

What wonderful lessons to be learned with every bump and hollow along the way!

Would you walk the same path?

Well, would you?

Gaynor McDonagh

THANK YOU ALL

I want to thank you all
For not letting me fall
I never knew that I had
Friends who care
And who treat me very fair

Coming to English class on a Monday
Makes me feel like it's a fun day
Thank you all
For not letting me fall
And for making me feel very tall

At the moment I'm having a ball
With friends who didn't let me fall
But there's one person I want to thank
It's you Paula, you helped me when
You gave me your number to call

I thought that I was going mad
That's what made me
Feel so bad
I'm feeling more positive now
Especially now that I know how

I want to thank you all once again
For making me feel so sane
I'm ever so glad
That I've got my friends
To stop me feeling sad

Nicola Jane Hayes