



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Rosie Philomena

**By studying and achieving the
'Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences'**

NCFE CACHE Level 2 qualification,

I gained further knowledge to help me write the piece.

I used this alongside my own personal experiences

& those of others who graciously allowed me to share their story.



PART ONE



As a child you're reliant on others

To provide all the basics you need

Such as love, food, warm clothing and shelter

And I'm sure on that we're all agreed



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How and where a child's raised could affect them

who looks after them, where do they live?

Are they safe, are they healthy and happy?

Do they have toys and friends to play with?



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Are they settled at school, are they thriving?
Do they have some clean clothes and a bed?
Are they sleeping and do they feel rested?
Loved and nurtured and are they well fed?

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Do they have hopes and **dreams** for the future?

Trusted people who they can talk to?

And support so they reach their potential

So they flourish in all that they do?

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IF YOU'RE BLESSED YOU'LL BE RAISED IN A GOOD HOME

BUT FOR SOME, THIS JUST ISN'T THE CASE

LIFE EVENTS OR PARENTAL DECISIONS

MEANS SOME HOUSEHOLDS ARE NOT A SAFE PLACE



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Adverse childhood experiences were studied

They found living in chaos and strife

Can for some have a damaging impact

Thus affecting their outcomes in life



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**Known as 'ACEs', researchers discovered
Some risk factors that I will address
One or more of these present in childhood
Could increase a child's level of stress**

Relationship breakdown can end in

Separation and even divorce

Which can often cause tension and conflict

Then perpetuated through the courts



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For the child this can be quite distressing

Their close family now sadly estranged

Often trying to please both their parents

Whilst child contact is being arranged



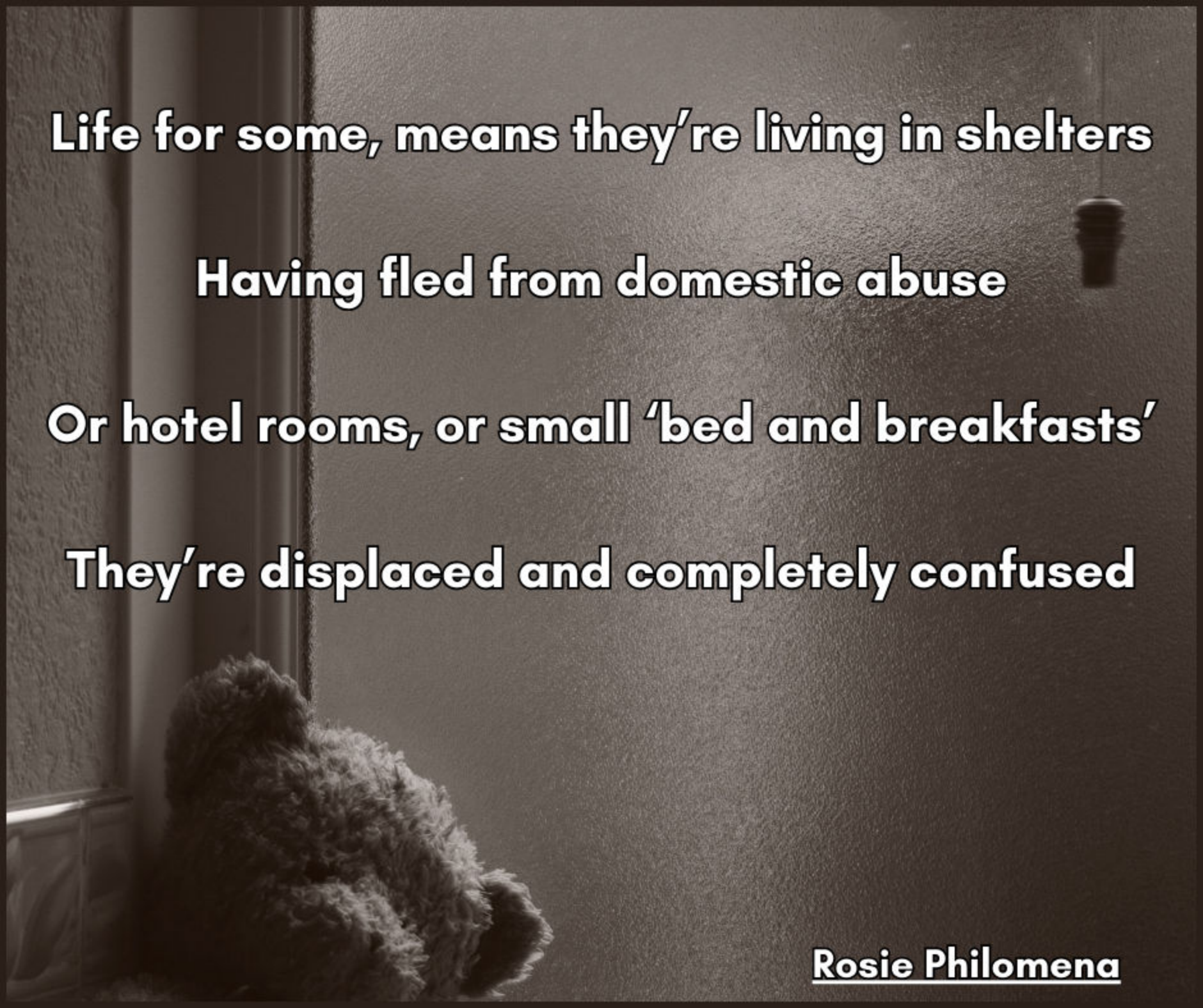
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Enforced changes can have a huge impact
Moving house can be such an ordeal
Changing schools, losing friends is upsetting
And makes life for the child quite surreal



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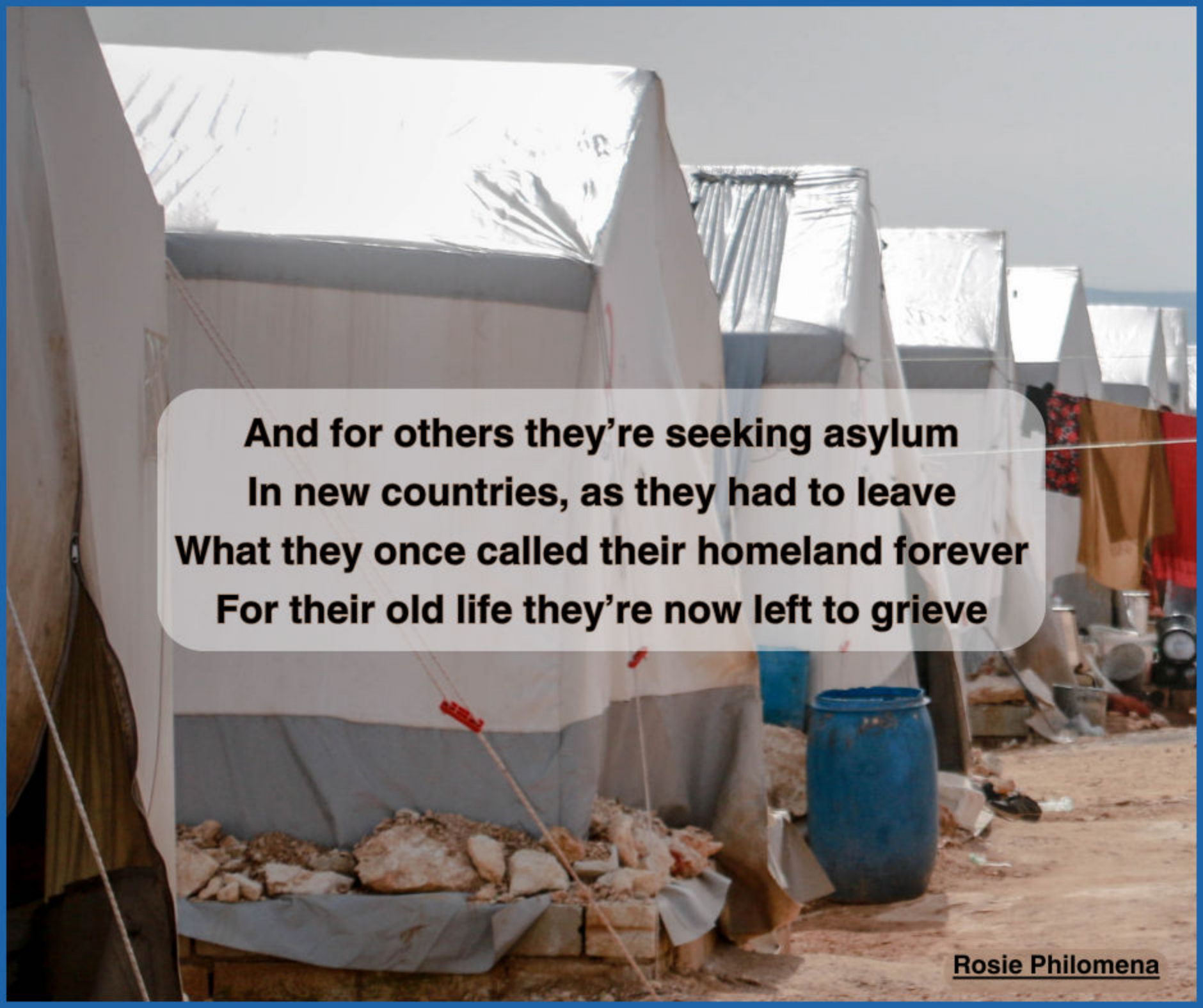
Life for some, means they're living in shelters

Having fled from domestic abuse

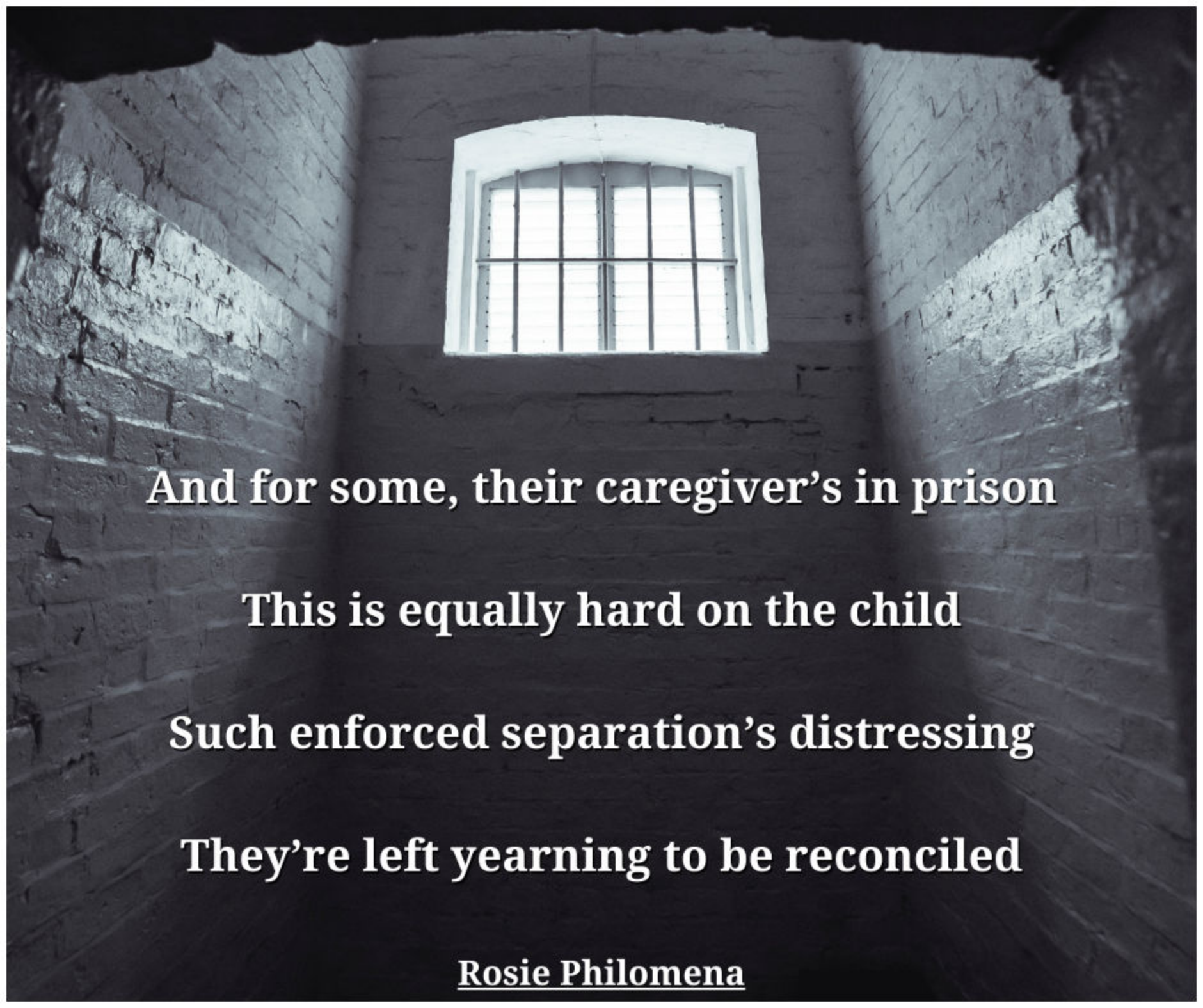
Or hotel rooms, or small 'bed and breakfasts'

They're displaced and completely confused

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**And for others they're seeking asylum
In new countries, as they had to leave
What they once called their homeland forever
For their old life they're now left to grieve**



And for some, their caregiver's in prison

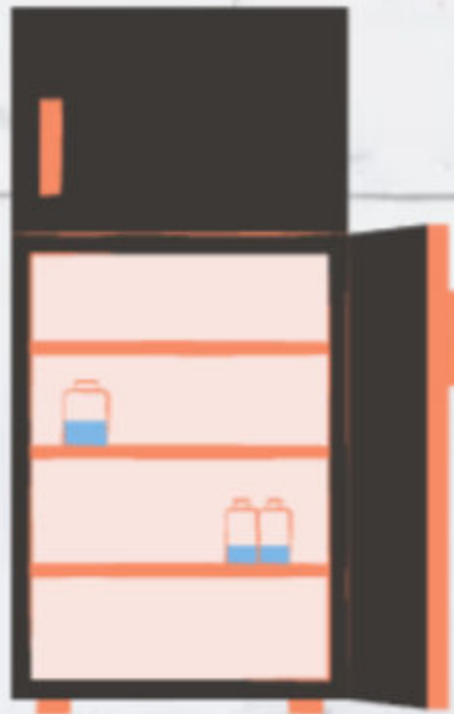
This is equally hard on the child

Such enforced separation's distressing

They're left yearning to be reconciled

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**And for some, child neglect is an issue
Never fed on good nourishing food
Or perhaps there's a number of children
So what's there has to feed a large brood**



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Some young children are left by caregivers

On their own, in the family home

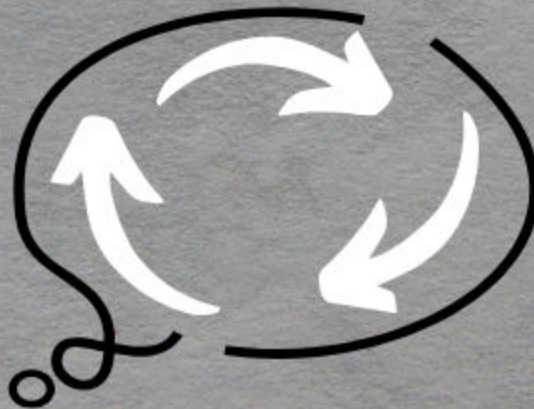
Whilst they're working or off out to party

They're left feeling afraid and alone



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With domestic abuse as I mentioned
Scenes of violence, coercion or threats
Have been witnessed by innocent children
And these memories are hard to forget



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Mental illness is common in families

But quite often this isn't disclosed

Due to fear or perhaps social stigma

So it sadly goes undiagnosed

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Then the families who live with addiction

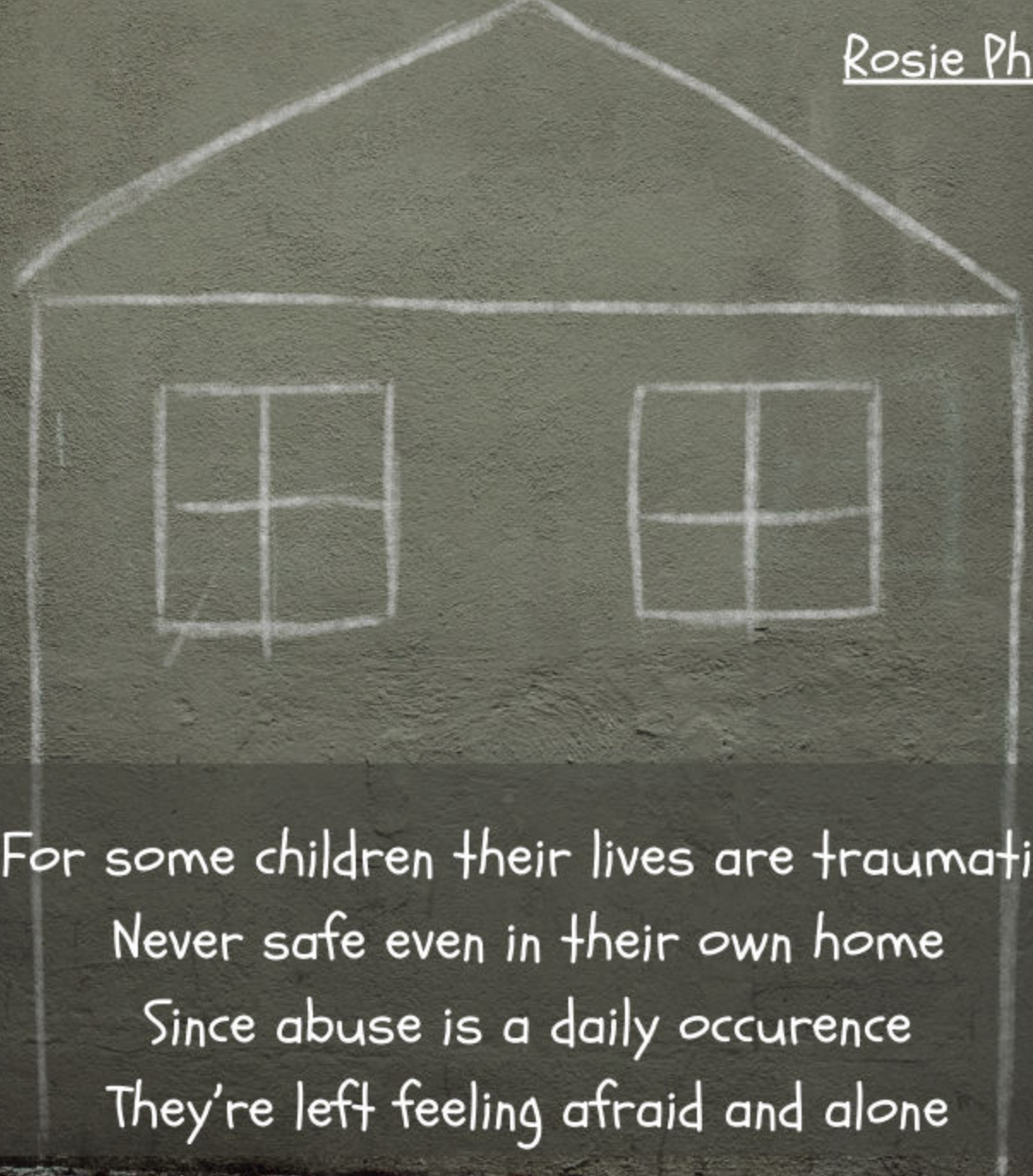
(Which is more common than you might think)

Are left struggling to pay for the basics

Whilst still buying their drugs and /or drink

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For some children their lives are traumatic
Never safe even in their own home
Since abuse is a daily occurrence
They're left feeling afraid and alone

Now withholding affection is harmful
If the child isn't shown love or praise
This can have such a damaging impact
But it's sadly how many are raised



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Not forgetting those orphaned in childhood

Some were babies when they were bereaved

Whilst those older and close to the parent

Were left numb and unable to grieve

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**Emotional neglect can cause damage
If a child can't express how they feel
They're conditioned to think that it's normal
To deny what they know to be real**



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**If they never felt loved or protected
Every day, in a bid to survive
They'd attempt to suppress how they're feeling
Their emotions determined to hide**

**If that child was upset as a baby
And if nobody came when they cried
They soon learnt there was no point in crying
Their desire for some comfort denied**



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And attachment for some is a problem
With many a sister or brother
They're left feeling confused and bewildered
Often moved from one place to another



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**Foster care is for some, such a blessing
Seems at last they've a home of their own
But some children will never feel settled
Since their future's far from set in stone**



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Some were told that the parent was leaving

Only briefly, as struggling to cope

They'd return when they felt a bit stronger

And this gave the child reason to hope

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So they spent their time marking the days off

On the calendar, waiting for mum

Or their dad to come back to collect them/to the family

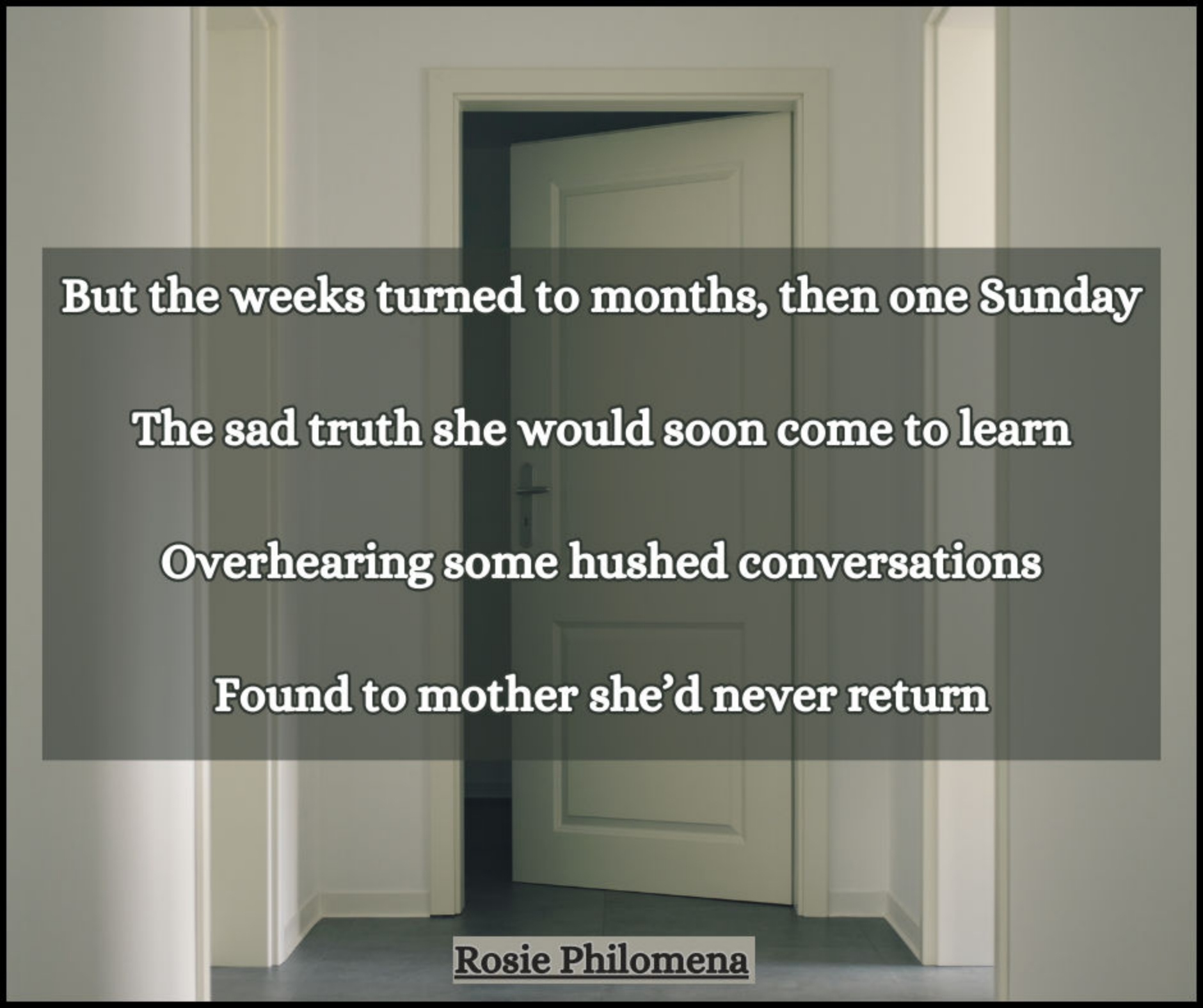
But that day, sadly never to come

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**I've an elderly friend who's health problems
Could be traced back to being a child
She was told it was in her best interest
To be sent to her aunt for a while**



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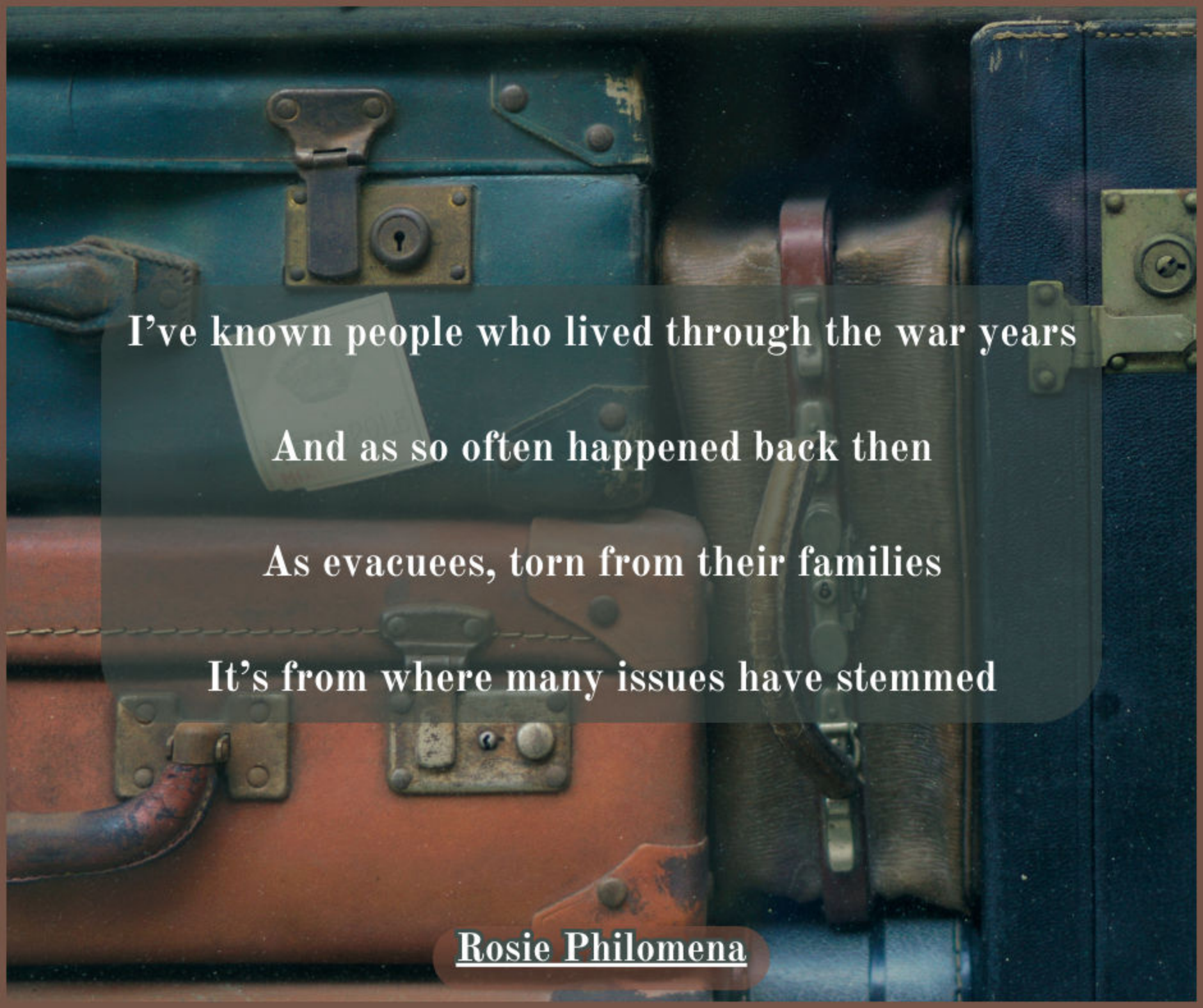
But the weeks turned to months, then one Sunday

The sad truth she would soon come to learn

Overhearing some hushed conversations

Found to mother she'd never return

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I've known people who lived through the war years

And as so often happened back then

As evacuees, torn from their families

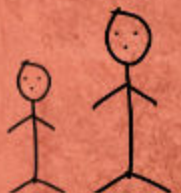
It's from where many issues have stemmed

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Some were left to look after their siblings
And these children, then wise beyond years
Had to shoulder the burden of parents
Living lives far removed from their peers



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MANY OTHERS DEFINED AS YOUNG CARERS
GIVE SUPPORT TO CAREGIVERS, ALTHOUGH
IN SOME CASES, IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE
AND A LIFE OF THEIR OWN THEY'LL FOREGO



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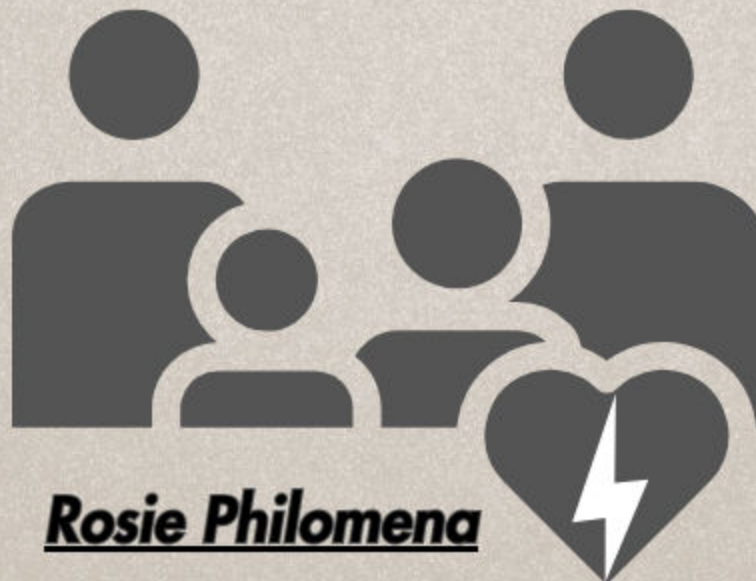


With some families both parents are present

In their own ways they really do care

But they can't express love to their children

Their priorities lying elsewhere



Overcrowding means some don't have bedrooms

Somewhere cosy for them to escape

For a while, from the world all around them

An oasis where they can feel safe



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Unemployment can have a huge impact

Temporary contracts or no job at all

Can leave families with little resources

And a weekly financial shortfall



The background is an abstract composition of warm, textured colors including red, orange, and yellow, with some greenish-yellow areas. A dark, wavy, horizontal shape is positioned behind the text, creating a sense of depth. The text 'PART TWO' is centered within this dark shape.

PART TWO

Now let's look from the adult's perspective

And how this can relate to the child

They could also have some complex trauma

From their past which is unreconciled



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So they struggled to cope as caregivers

In some cases, not fully equipped

To provide the support that was needed

And to parenting couldn't commit



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**If unable to cope as caregivers
Some develop a feeling of shame
This affects the whole family dynamic
And the child could think they are to blame**



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Some could find once they've been blessed with children

They've no parental feelings at all

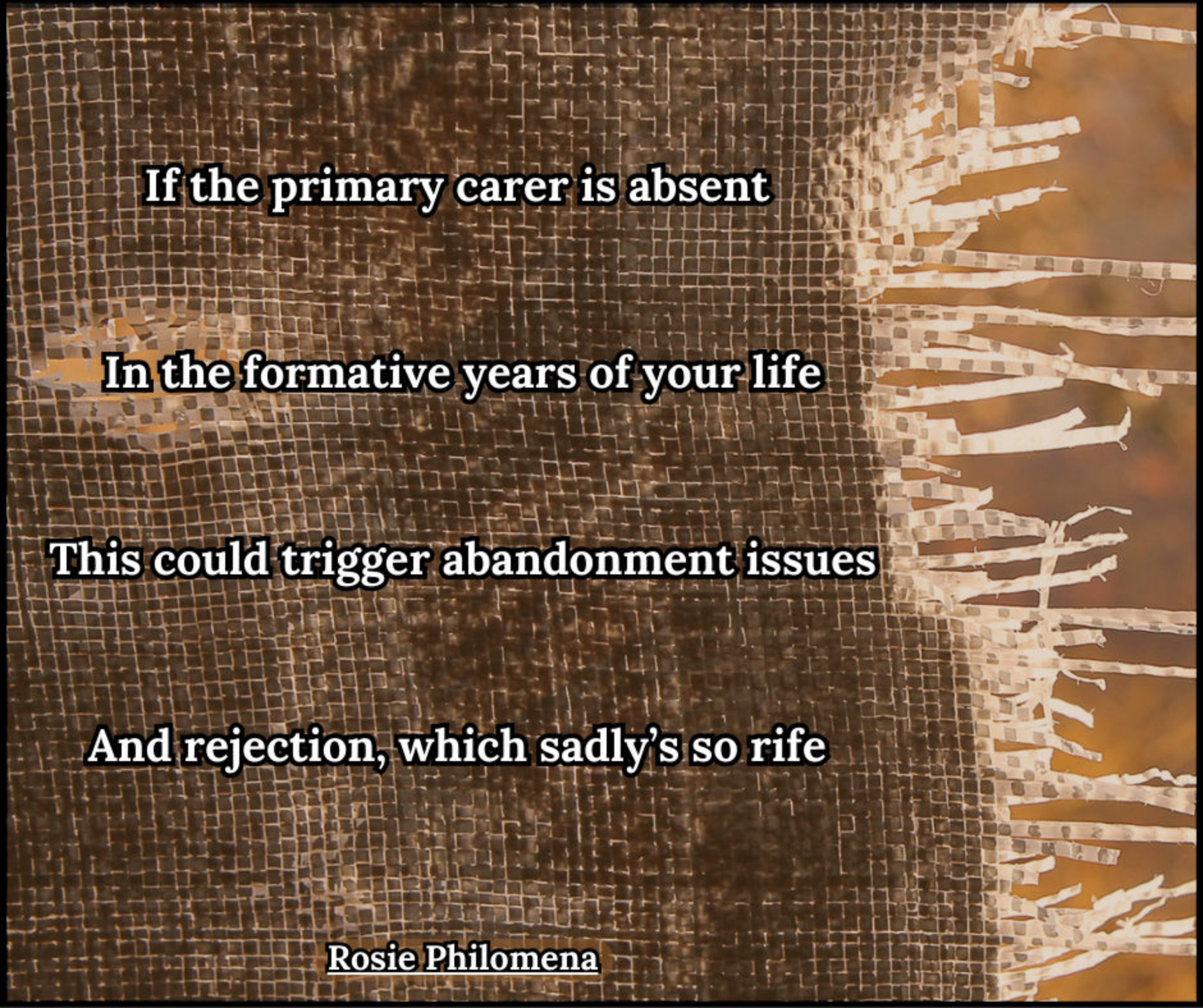
They're unable to bond with their offspring

And those children are often stonewalled

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An abstract background featuring broad, expressive brushstrokes in shades of blue, white, and orange. The composition is divided into vertical and horizontal sections by these strokes, creating a textured, painterly effect. A central orange banner with rounded ends contains the text 'PART THREE' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

PART THREE



If the primary carer is absent

In the formative years of your life

This could trigger abandonment issues

And rejection, which sadly's so rife

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**If the child feels abandoned in childhood
This in some, could cause feelings of fear
They've mistrust for the people around them
So they learn not to let people near**

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As we've seen there are so many factors

That affect how we function or cope

In our role as caregiver or parent

We must give children reason to hope

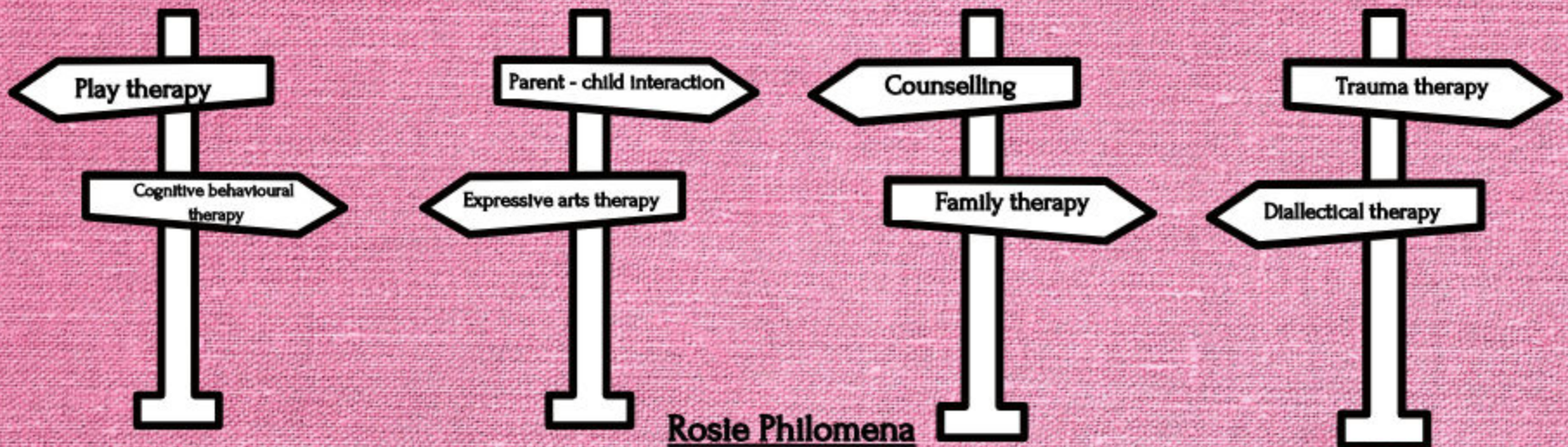
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And sometimes, intervention is needed

If the child or young person needs help

We can signpost them to the right people

To support them with their mental health

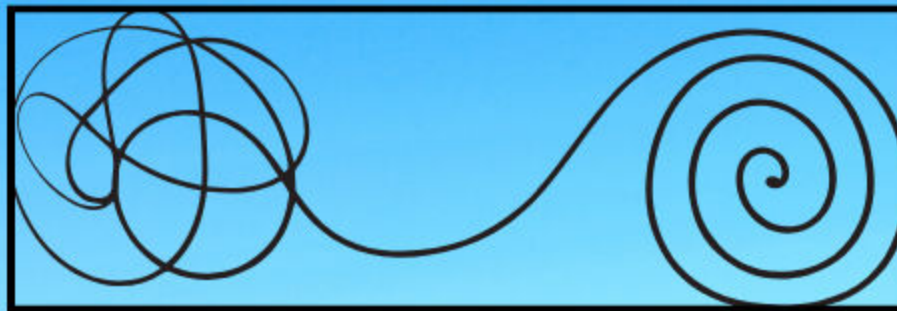


Talking therapies are beneficial

They help deal with the feelings within

Psychotherapy and counselling are useful

And could be where the healing begins



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And play therapy's good for young children

This involves things like drama and art

They could use them to deal with emotions

And their innermost feelings impart



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Being trauma informed is important

It's a specialised area for sure

If it's not understood by their counsellor

Then it could cause more harm than before



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Childhood trauma affects mind and body
Thoughts and feelings are trapped so to speak
But with EMDR, trauma counselling
Or emotional freedom techniques

Painful memories can safely be processed
And those flashbacks erased or reduced
Over time, with support, care and guidance
Inner feelings of calm are produced

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But remember we're all very different
And for some, that's not always the case
There are those who will prosper regardless
This in spite of what they could have faced



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Research found in the study of ACEs

If some strategies were introduced

To support our young people and children

That these adverse effects were reduced



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We've a duty to give hope to youngsters

And ensure that each has the same chance

Aim to help them find their true vocation

Then in life and career can advance

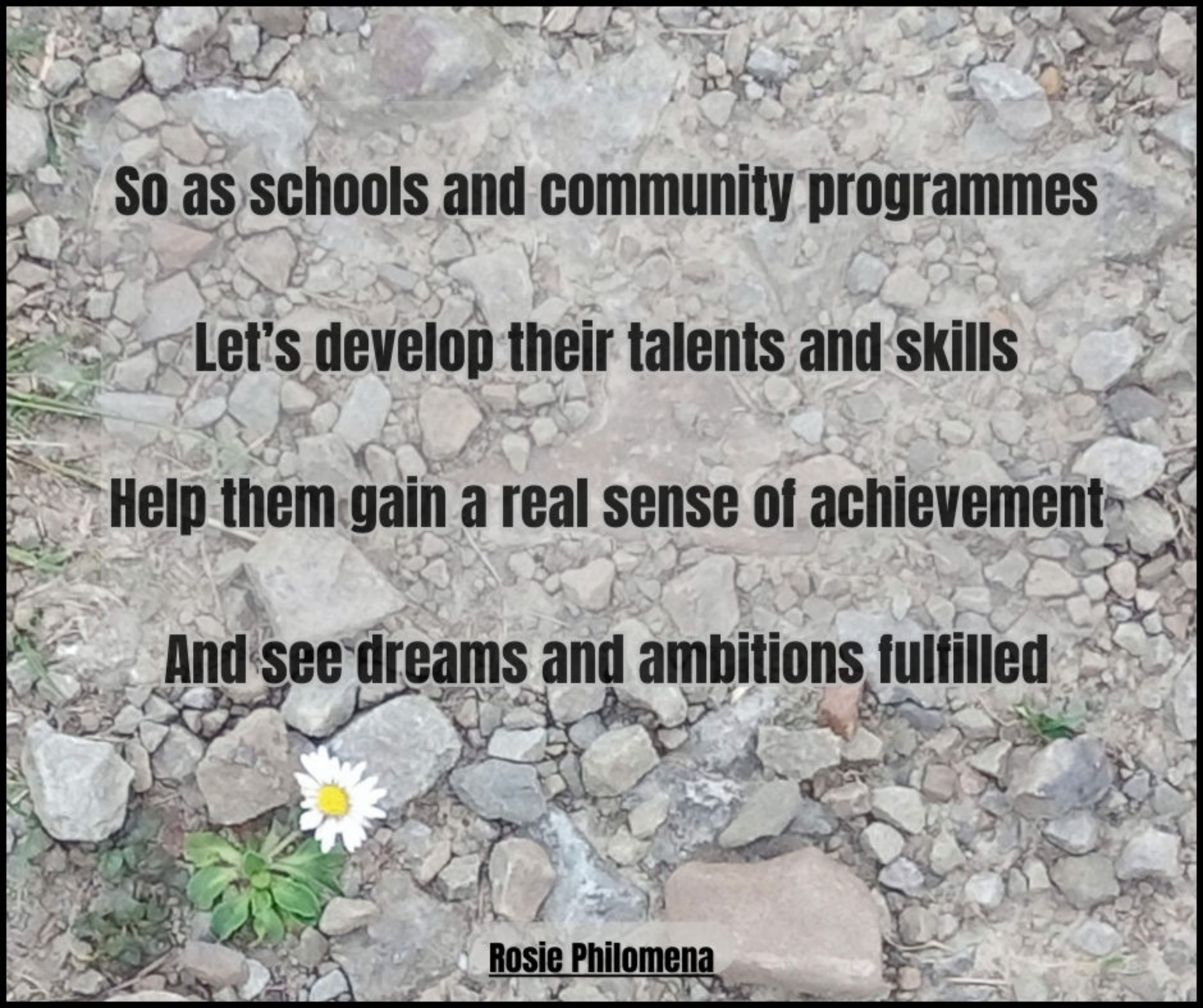
But no matter the issues they're facing

There's still hope and it's never too late

With encouragement, help, care and guidance

All those problems won't seal a child's fate





So as schools and community programmes

Let's develop their talents and skills

Help them gain a real sense of achievement

And see dreams and ambitions fulfilled

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References

**The CDC- Kaiser Permanente
Adverse Childhood Experiences
(ACE) Study 1998**



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