

A painting of a cherry blossom tree with a small house in its branches. The tree is covered in white blossoms with red centers. The background is a bright blue sky. The tree's trunk is dark brown. The leaves are green. The blossoms are white with red centers. The sky is blue. The overall style is impressionistic.

For Such A Time As This

If this speaks to just one person
And for their prison it's the key
Then nothing has been wasted
If someone else is living free

By
Rosie Philomena

For Such A Time As This

**Seems real life is much stranger then fiction
Well, you couldn't make half of it up!
In these poems you'll find my life story
And I hope that you're blessed by this book**

**In my twenties, my faith would be tested
Through my choices and other events
I would battle some difficult issues
But God proved that He'd be my defence**

Psalm 94:22 (GNT)

But the Lord defends me; my God protects me

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Cover artwork 'Blossom' by my dad for my mum.

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Contents

<i>Dedication</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Prologue</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>We are family</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>From the heart</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Change in direction.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>The results are in</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Are you ever prepared?.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>If at first you don't succeed</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Having it all.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>What now?.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>So, what do you do?</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>The challenge</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Running on empty</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Just saying</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>What's the point?.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Just enough</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>The years of plenty.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>The sun, moon and stars</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Giving back.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Looks can be deceiving</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Fully equipped</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>The best things in life are free</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Blessing, upon blessing, upon blessing.</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Blind to the truth</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>One step at a time.....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Prophecy.....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Angel in disguise.....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Save yourself</i>	<i>58</i>

For Such A Time As This

<i>Pastures new</i>	62
<i>All is not lost</i>	68
<i>A new chapter</i>	69
<i>The big issue</i>	74
<i>Things you take for granted</i>	79
<i>Over time</i>	81
<i>Attention to detail</i>	82
<i>Destination unknown</i>	84
<i>(Part one)</i>	84
<i>(Part two)</i>	87
<i>(Part three)</i>	90
<i>(Part four)</i>	93
<i>I will bloom where I am planted</i>	96
<i>Feeling at home</i>	100
<i>Seasons</i>	101
<i>Plans</i>	102
<i>Well prepared</i>	103
<i>Courses</i>	105
<i>Words</i>	110
<i>Validation</i>	111
<i>Something's off</i>	113
<i>(Part one)</i>	113
<i>(Part two)</i>	115
<i>(Partthree)</i>	122
<i>Peace</i>	124
<i>Girl power</i>	125
<i>Therapy</i>	126
<i>(Part one)</i>	126
<i>(Part two)</i>	130
<i>(Part three)</i>	135
<i>Trauma</i>	138
<i>It's not a problem</i>	141
<i>(Part one)</i>	141
<i>(Part two)</i>	143

<i>(Part three)</i>	147
<i>The process</i>	149
<i>(Part one)</i>	149
<i>(Part two)</i>	151
<i>(Part three)</i>	153
<i>Out of the fog</i>	154
<i>In the silence</i>	156
<i>God knows.</i>	157
<i>Insomnia.</i>	158
<i>Emotions</i>	159
<i>Rescue mission</i>	162
<i>Findingmyself</i>	164
<i>The power of a single word</i>	166
<i>All the clues were there!</i>	168
<i>A servant heart</i>	169
<i>Who am I?</i>	170
<i>It's not you, it's me</i>	172
<i>Pandora's box</i>	175
<i>Moving on</i>	178
<i>The journey</i>	180
<i>All at sea</i>	182
<i>Love</i>	185
<i>Different kinds of love</i>	186
<i>Insignificant.</i>	190
<i>Worth</i>	191
<i>Healing</i>	194
<i>Forgiveness</i>	196
<i>Undeserving</i>	199
<i>As you were</i>	200
<i>Self-sabotage</i>	202
<i>My prayer for you</i>	204
<i>Worry</i>	205
<i>Surrender</i>	206
<i>The life laundry</i>	208

For Such A Time As This

<i>Faith</i>	210
<i>God's time not mine</i>	212
<i>Growing</i>	213
<i>Truly blessed</i>	215
<i>The least, last and lost</i>	217
<i>Beauty for ashes</i>	218
<i>Hope</i>	220
<i>Contentment</i>	221
<i>More than enough</i>	222
<i>Purpose</i>	223
<i>Gratitude</i>	225
<i>Withoutwords</i>	227
<i>It's the little things</i>	230
<i>Providence</i>	231
<i>Treasure</i>	232
<i>Remember</i>	233
<i>Jubilee</i>	235
<i>Perseverance</i>	237
<i>For such a time as this</i>	238
<i>The helper</i>	240
<i>Just ask</i>	241
<i>Thank you</i>	243
<i>Freedom</i>	244
<i>Transition</i>	245
<i>The crushing</i>	246
<i>Epilogue</i>	247
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	248
<i>Appendix</i>	251
<i>Glossary</i>	251
<i>References</i>	254
<i>Other resources</i>	255

Dedication

This is written for my loving family
My dear friends and for all those in need
Of acceptance, forgiveness or self-love
And I pray that you're blessed as you read

Prologue

I was looking for love as we all do
But I did so not guarding my heart
Now we empaths confuse love and pity
Once acknowledged, my healing would start

God already knew what I'd be facing
And I trusted that He had a plan
Navigating the mountains and valleys
I'd discover who I really am

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Preface

Three engagements I had, one I'd broken
Then two marriages (one was annulled)
I was clearly a hopeless romantic
And by sweet words was easily lulled

In each marriage I thought I was settled
Furthest thing from my mind was divorce
So it came as a shock to the system
After vows neither one ran the course

I've now given you this brief synopsis
Of the many affairs of my heart
But in order to make things much clearer
I will take you right back to the start

We are family

I was blessed with a wonderful childhood
And we lived by a dairy and lakes
I felt loved, I felt cared for and wanted
More important than that, I felt safe

This is something I'd taken for granted
And I never felt scared or alone
But much later in life I would crave this
As I searched for a place to call home

We had rules, we had boundaries and structure
Manners, values and morals were taught
With understanding, respect and affection
All that said, we were kids and we fought!

We had food, we had clothing and shelter
Life was stable and we had routine
And attention from kind, loving parents
That's just how our life had always been

With more love as the family grew bigger
Final count, my siblings numbered five
It was fun, quite chaotic and noisy
But in that positive home we all thrived

We were blessed with our extended family
Grandparents, aunts, uncles and more
We were showered with love and affection
And I thought that's what life had in store

We'd instilled in us a good work ethic
And had things we were responsible for
We would wash up and tidy our bedrooms
But you'd hardly describe them as chores

As I said, we were real and not perfect
We fell out at times, as families will
But the fact we all thought we were favourite
Meant that fairness in us was instilled

Our faith was the heart of the family
We were taught in the church, school and home
It prepared me for what I had coming
So I felt I was never alone

My parents worked hard for our family
In their own ways for us they'd provide
We were taught the life-skills that we needed
To go into the world and survive

From the heart

You don't have to be blood to be family
It's a bond that is made from the heart
Once it's there it connects you forever
And that's where my next life story starts

I adored all my brothers and sisters
As the eldest I'd watched them all grow
But along with our latest arrival
Came a love I'd not previously known

He was eight months old when I first met him
When he came through the door I was there
Having taken the day off from college
I was helping to get things prepared

I was sixteen when I met my brother
He came home on that spring afternoon
From that day he was part of our family
And it wasn't a moment too soon

I'll correct that, it happened before then
From the moment we knew of his name
I considered him my little brother
And the rest of my family the same

He was little so doesn't remember
But it's something that he's always known
It was spoken about in our family
To be truthful, we'd always been shown

Adoption for us was a blessing
He completed our family that day
A new kind of love he would teach me
And that bond can't be taken away

I don't think of him now as adopted
From that day he has just been my brother
And to love other people as family
Is a blessing I'd later discover

I have heard people say they felt wanted
And it mattered because they were chosen
For some, it's a seamless transition
And then into that family they're woven

For Such A Time As This

I know others who weren't quite so lucky
Felt they never quite fitted at all
This can have such a terrible impact
And their past, try hard not to recall

But we're all part of God's precious family
And He calls each of us by our name
Our mistakes and bad choices don't phase Him
He still loves us exactly the same

Romans 8:15 (NIV)

*...the Spirit you received brought about your
adoption to sonship...*

Change in direction

Then at sixteen I met a young lad from down south
To my pen-pal daft letters were penned
More than thirty years on, I have most of them still
To this day he remains my good friend

Now I had a few dates with a couple of boys
Holding hands and some innocent fun
With a few stolen kisses and cinema trips
Unaware of the life yet to come

So the years spent in high school were not a success
Didn't fill my head with the right knowledge
Knowing lyrics to pop songs and quoting from films
Wasn't great prep for going to college!

I had three years at sixth form and learnt such a lot
But just not the things I was supposed to
I perfected my quiff and a striking red lip
And bid farewell to white high heeled court shoes!

For Such A Time As This

More O Levels I passed then A Levels I sat
Despite studying through sibling's loud noise
But the downfall for me would be soon plain to see
With my first real encounter with boys!

In my black 'bomber-jacket' and turn ups on jeans
I'd have chats with my friend through the week
And I mentioned this one boy who stood out for me
For the way that he dressed was unique

He would get on the bus wearing checked shirts and jeans
And he didn't live too far from me
In my diary I'd write, "I'd seen 'Checkers' that day"
But the future I could not foresee

In a club late one night guess who came into sight?
It was 'Checkers' across the dance floor
We chatted all night on that Friday 13th
My first clue as to what lay in store!

And so that was the start of our budding romance
Then for six months we regularly dated
Being so much in love and the good girl I was
I had saved myself and I had waited

When my exams were done it left time to have fun
And through summer this love felt like fate
I gave him my all, body, mind and my soul
A month later though found I was late

But I still had those exam results on my mind
Because on them my future would hinge
A complete lack of effort and no uni place yet
God soon showed me His plans for the spring

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you
hope and a future.”*

The results are in

So, for quite a few weeks at the calendar I'd peek
I had one burning thing on my mind
With time passing by and not feeling too great
That one answer I'd soon have to find

Now the pregnancy tests that they had in those days
Had resembled a chemistry set
So I bought one with cash from my Saturday job
Almost sure of the result that I'd get

And once home in my bedroom I sat on my bed
Making sure no-one else was around
Then I took out the box from the blue plastic bag
Hard to do without making a sound!

I then carefully placed the test tube in its stand
And next had to read the instructions
Once I'd added my sample I thought to myself
Wished I'd listened about reproduction!

So I left it a while and then opened the door
Of the wardrobe I'd hidden it in
Not remotely surprised when I opened my eyes
It confirmed new life growing within

Hardly slept that first night, it just didn't seem true
Of my news I was trying to make sense
So later that day from a charity shop
Bought a Babygro for thirty pence

But then after the shock and when things settled down
Four months now this baby I'd carried
We planned for our future by getting engaged
And decided that we would get married

In winter that year we both walked down the aisle
Dressed in warm white, my baby and me
And by making my vows I felt safe and secure
Now official our family of three

Some weeks later we moved to a small council house
We'd five months before baby arrived
So making the best of the little we had
Made a home for our family to thrive

Are you ever prepared?

Now working in kitchens, my baby and me
Basic pot wash and serving of food
Almost seven months in, once I'd worked my last shift
I could nest safe at home as I brood

As my due date was nearing, I saw advertised
Parent classes and thought we should go
Learning breathing techniques and the rubbing of feet
There was so much we needed to know

The bathing of baby and what we should use
Also packing our bag, we rehearsed
Told a 'Walkman', a nightie and lip balm I'd need
And with others like me I conversed

Straight after our chats we then lay on our mats
And then draped in a blanket we'd rest
The midwife would play soothing music for us
Now that was the part I liked best!

A week past my due date I'd already gone
Then the big day it finally came
So excited to know I would meet him at last
And my life would be forever changed

Was already a 'Mrs' at nineteen years old
But missed 'teen-mum' by three weeks and a day
With our family of three all I'd hoped it would be
Now I prayed this was how it would stay

If at first you don't succeed....

As she left, we moved into my great grandmas' house
Once the council had granted permission
Where we'd lived, the back yard was infested with rats
And our home was in quite poor condition

When our son just turned two, I had started night school
My A-Levels I sat once again
Sociology being the subject of choice
And I passed, so it wasn't in vain!

And when he turned three I would do it again
This time history, I gave it my best
And with discipline studied late into the night
I worked hard, there was no time to rest

By the time he was four only needed one more
With my uni place almost in reach
Putting previous failures behind me for good
I could realise my ambition to teach

Archaeology exams by now were complete
Late that summer I found out I'd passed
It proved perseverance was worth the reward
Such high hopes for our family at last

Applying through 'clearing' I was offered a place
In a matter of weeks I would start
With my son settled down in a nursery nearby
I'd obtained all the dreams of my heart

Having it all

Well that is the way I'd have liked it to end
But then life's not always as we had planned
I was busy revising the best that I could
Only weeks to my final exam

But then came an event that changed all of our lives
Just four years being a family together
Such a huge shock and my world it would rock
We were headed for grey stormy weather

Now the truth has a habit of coming to light
It will never stay hidden for long
In one single moment your whole life can change
And I knew I would have to stay strong

So, a letter arrived which came out of the blue
Was addressed to my husband you see
It was concerning a child I knew nothing about
Who was born years before he met me

It just didn't seem true, what on earth could I do
It had sadly been so underhand
More questions I asked, for the truth had been masked
This was hard for me to understand

Now you'd think that this news was enough of a shock
Of course mother and child not to blame
So much more was to come, as the letter revealed
Both boys' names were exactly the same!

We decided between us what he would be called
And were pleased with the choice for our son
Now to find that he shared his big brother's first name
That betrayal we would not overcome

But I still got to uni in spite of it all
Though our marriage had come to an end
And now more than ever, I had to succeed
For on me, now, my son would depend

Now you're thinking that this was an answer to prayer
But your body I found keeps the score
Just three months at uni with all of that stress
Seems I just couldn't take any more

Diagnosed with M.E a few months down the line
Time at uni had not gone as planned
And my life from that day would forever be changed
What a life for my poor little man!

For Such A Time As This

Didn't want my young son knowing I was upset
So I held back my tears in the day
The plan was to cry in my bed late at night
But that isn't the healthiest way

Chronic illness is sad, it takes over your life
And the worst bit about this would be
The sheer ignorance of the professionals involved
I was so ill but no-one believed me

You waste energy trying to make yourself heard
Which itself causes complete exhaustion
And you're desperately trying to get your life back
But you're left with cognitive distortion

Now I didn't know then, that emotional shocks
Have effects thus related to trauma
Which resulted in 'burn-out' and chronic fatigue
But back then, there's no-one who can warn you

Went from flying so high on my way to succeed
Now I'm sick, twenty-four and divorced
I was desperately trying each day to survive
Not the life I had previously thought

I must say, my behaviour quite close to the end
Wasn't great since receiving the letter
But that's not an excuse for the way I behaved
I'm sure I could have handled things better

No matter what happened between both of us
We worked hard through the following years
To ensure that our son had his mum and his dad
Though at times with some cross words and tears!

A year later we had our brief marriage annulled
Yes, it's sad when a partnership ends
But we tried to put any bad feelings aside
And respect one another as friends

My son seeing his dad was a regular thing
And was something on which we agreed
It would give him security, and was vital he knew
He was loved and we met all his needs

My ex-in-laws still featured in both of our lives
We would often meet up and have tea
And with genuine love and respect we would show
This is how divorced families can be

But still, I had trusted in God's plans for me
Seems my dream wasn't too far from reach
As twenty years on I'd be given the chance
To realise my ambition to teach

But this time, I'd teach about what I knew best
Chronic illness and its impact on you
I could empathise knowing the problems they faced
This I knew having walked in their shoes

What now?

Nothing ever stays the same
That's not the way it works
We encounter many losses
Which can leave us feeling hurt

So, what do you do?

When you first meet there's one question they ask
"So, tell me what is it you do? "
I dread those few words they strike fear into me
It would seem that your job defines you

But what do you do when there's no job for you?
And for years you've been chronically ill
I would so often hear, "Well you look fine to me"
Some don't get it and they never will

"Hey, someone I know has the very same thing
They missed work for a couple of weeks"
As I stand there and bite the inside of my lip
So the tears won't free-fall down my cheeks

Now believe me I know that they don't understand
I can't count all the tears that I've cried
Graded exercise, vitamins, diets and rest
Just a few of the things I have tried

For Such A Time As This

My son was so active and by then he'd turned four
Though I'm ill I just can't let him see
Now I'm kicking a football whilst sat in a chair
Not the mum I had wanted to be

I always felt sick and I just couldn't eat
What my son ate you'd never believe!
So with food in the oven to mask the strong smell
I would perfume my dressing gown sleeve!

So now I was able to cook him his meal
Nose and mouth in that sweet-smelling sleeve!
Much better to serve him his tea with a smile
Living this way's so hard to conceive

Constant pain and fatigue this condition it brings,
Now the small things become a huge task
And whilst trying to sleep, your bed looks like a nest
With its pillows, ear plugs and eye masks!

But then you meet others who do understand
They inhabit the same world as you
You feel you belong and don't have to explain
That you can't do what you used to do

I tried so hard to fight it for such longtime
But they're fleeting those hours of relief
There's no pattern it seems in whatever you do
For the old me I now had to grieve

On this journey of loss I have learnt such a lot
I've been ill longer than I've been well
So I'm making the best of this God-given life
And on losses I've learnt not to dwell

The challenge

Even when I was so poorly
I still had to be a mother
But some days were such a challenge
To put one foot before the other

Running on empty

Looking back now, just before I was ill
I can see how my body burned out
Revising, surviving and running a home
All that stress made it worse there's no doubt

Just saying

What I say when describing this illness
To the people who don't know the score
I'm up and I'm blinking and breathing
Hope you're not wanting anything more

What's the point?

So, my son was quite young when he said this to me
Oh, the things they share when you're their mother!
"Mummy, we're both like an old pair of gloves
What's the point of one without the other?"

Just enough

I received quite a minimal income
Over time though I'd learn many skills
I would have to be careful with money
So I managed to cover my bills

The years of plenty

Now we're having to live on a budget
And I'm watching the pounds and the pence
I was eking things out such as loo roll
If it ran out I'd make recompense

"Oh, don't worry it isn't a problem"
As I scoured through coat pockets and bags
A variety of napkins and tissues I'd find
Even resorted to cotton wool pads!

Going shopping presents such a challenge
You must limit the things you can't eat
So then tin foil, kitchen roll, batteries and stamps
Are all now in the category of 'treats'

"Of course you can have some fresh orange "
Budget brand so it's weak and diluted
Not to mention the sausages, burgers and pies
From meat that's been reconstituted

For Such A Time As This

Washing up liquid's not best when it's cheap
Barely green and the contents were runny
The bottle would bend in your hand as you poured
Would be sad if it wasn't so funny

My son was quite tall just like me and his dad
Every few months he needed new shoes
So I'd bulk up his feet in those white toweling socks
Then the next shoe size up I could choose!

In the past I laid carpets to save on the cost
I'd find bargains and buy those roll ends
Made the stairs quite an interesting feature by chance
Looked like patchwork, would start a new trend!

When I needed to revamp the old kitchen floor
With a marker I got on my knees
And painstakingly coloured the diamond-like shapes
With the result I was really quite pleased!

Made curtains from flea market's second-hand sheets
I used everything, nothing was wasted
And from old pillowcases, a pelmet to match
Such a cheap way to give it a face-lift

We did so many things just to keep us amused
But they had to be both fun and free
So on Tuesdays we'd go on our way home from school
And choose books from the mobile library

During bed days we'd make up some games of our own
One was basic involving some dice
We would take turns to throw and then list all our scores
On these times you just can't put a price

Some weekends we'd go to the library in town
On computer games we could both play
The one we liked best was the haunted house game
That was always a really fun day

And once, using cardboard I made him a slide
Made it run the whole length of the stairs
My son landed on bean bags and cushions and things
He had fun on those 'apples and pears!'

That winter it snowed, but not having a sledge
I would have to find some other way
So I rooted around in our kitchen and found
Just the thing, yes! our old breakfast tray

I had no more children but was blessed to have him,
Far removed from the childhood I'd known,
But when all's said and done I'd at least had the one
And it meant I was never alone

And sometimes we'd have other family to stay
Just four years between brother and son
It was just like the old days for me when they came
We'd have sleepovers and lots of fun

For Such A Time As This

And then, one by one all my siblings left home
All at different uni's they studied
We could then enjoy holidays visiting them
Family fun for me and my best buddy

We both had such fun with the smallest of things
This despite having little to spare
But a home filled with love, fun and laughter we found
Were the things we'd an abundance of there

We still had each other in spite of it all
And I knew that some years down the line
We'd be able to tell of the lesson we learnt
That the greatest of gifts is your time

Through all of those years and as hard as it was
For perseverance and strength I would pray
And I trusted that God would provide all our needs
But I knew He would do it his way

And during all that I met somebody else
He was good to both me and my son
But I cancelled our wedding as I had my doubts
I'm not proud of the way it was done

He still has a part in the life of my son
And I'm so pleased for them about that
Once again it just shows how relationships work
When you put away things of the past

Despite all the odds that we had stacked against us
A lone-parent and in my mid-twenties
I look back at my life and can say without doubt
Love and fun made them our years of plenty

The sun, moon and stars

My very dear friend once gave me some advice
And I listened because she was wise
Now I often remember the words that she said
As that day I learnt fair compromise

“Now I know that your boy is the sun, moon and stars
But in order to look after your health
You can give him the sun and the moon by all means
But keep hold of the stars for yourself”

Giving back

By assuming the role of a carer
To my siblings and neighbours and friends
And by helping my family with shopping
I was someone on whom they'd depend

But when I was ill I felt useless
And I wanted to give something back
Volunteering for just a few hours
Meant that briefly, I felt back on track

For a time I helped with a support group
Meetings others exactly like me
Monthly gatherings gave me a purpose
To feel normal, back then, was the key

I wanted to be an example
So I worked in a hospital shop
Those six hours a week were exhausting
And once home into bed I would flop

Looks can be deceiving

But by now I had more problems
And they would all affect my health
Fibromyalgia and infections
So hard to understand myself

I now lived with bladder issues
By then my kidneys were involved
Took some poking and some prodding!
Before the problem would be solved

Then they spoke of a procedure
That I would have to do at home
And at first this tricky process
Had looked quite easy when first shown!

I would have to use a catheter
This would be done four times a day
And then bladder washes monthly
Such a relief, what can I say!

I now share this lived experience
I'm not embarrassed, that's just me!
It's so important that we speak of
Limitations you can't see

I still have pride in my appearance
Don't want to look the way I feel
As I said, it's quite a problem
When people doubt ill-health is real

I can wake up looking shocking
And often make-up's my best friend
That's why people think I'm healthy
And a false message it can send

I still need those times of rest though
Where I must spend the day at home
I just crave the peace and quiet
And this much needed time alone

Fully equipped

You might feel that you're much less than useless
God works best though, when we're feeling small
For not only does He call those fully equipped
But He fully equips those He's called

Hebrews 13:18-21 (MSG)

....May God who puts all things together, makes all things whole....Now put you together, provide you with everything you need to please him.

The best things in life are free

As previously mentioned
I had always planned to teach
But since becoming poorly
I thought this dream was out of reach

Then years later at the chemist
I saw a poster on the door
Advertising courses
And I wanted to know more

They were Expert Patient Courses
On how to manage being ill
I had been this way for years now
And still not found a magic pill

They were held in local places
And they ran for just six weeks
I thought I might learn something
And some valuable techniques

For Such A Time As This

As I lived with limitations
Trouble processing and more
Soon becoming more apparent
That your body keeps the score

I would learn new ways to do things
When I'd need to send a text
I could use my phone's new voice app
Was such a help, much less complex

Things like how to make a phone call
To make sure I was well equipped
I would write what I was saying
And then I'd read it from the script

Another issue with a phone call
Was the information to take in
I'd record the conversation
Which gave it more time to sink in

It was great to be with people
Who live your life and understand
Having limits and restrictions
And can't always do what you had planned

They teach you to be gentle
And break things down into small steps
Action planning any large tasks
And then you monitor your progress

With this new kind of treatment
Run by people just like me
I looked forward to those Thursdays
It was a comfy place to be

Now the courses being lay lead
I was asked to volunteer
I would help to run the courses
Not too much, just twice a year

At first I said I couldn't
But they gave me all the stuff
For me to have a look at
It would be rude if I rebuffed

I then listed all the reasons
Why I couldn't volunteer
I was cognitively challenged
And had been for many years

But the thing about these courses
Is that people understand
Your many limitations
As they've seen them at first-hand

I sat reading in the garden
And a thought just came to me
But what if I could do this
And it was always meant to be?

You would work with a co-tutor
As you follow from a book
And adapt your way of working
So I thought I'd take a look

What I loved about these courses
Was that you use what you've been through
And as you encourage others
It will have benefits for you

What I haven't mentioned so far
So many close to me would teach
My brother, sisters and my in-laws
And now, I'd also found my niche

By using lived experience
I could share parts of my story
God had known this was my purpose
And that he'd use it for his glory

Blessing, upon blessing, upon blessing

They say that life begins at forty
And to me that sounded fine
But it would be a little different
It began for me at thirty-nine

I was blessed to be a grandma
From that day on my heart was won
We welcomed my granddaughter
And the girlfriend of my son

They had no home to go to
So spent the first few months with me
I had support from my then partner
Although he didn't live with me

Shortly followed by my grandson
He's my granddaughter's little brother
When he arrived, he stole my heart
And I loved him like no other

For Such A Time As This

I then welcomed my new granddaughter
And my son's new fiancée
They took their place within my heart
And I loved them from that day

You are blessed to have your children
Whom you love, without a doubt
But the love you have for grandchildren
Can sometimes catch you out

Of course they're individuals
But in one small thing they do
You're reminded of your own child
As if they're looking back at you

Sometimes you will see yourself
In ways they act, or how they feel
It's just like looking in the mirror
Life can be wonderfully surreal

God blessed me with my only son
Who was sent from up above
But knowing I had more to give
God sent me three more souls to love

Blind to the truth

So during a challenging time in my life
From my partner, now sadly estranged
I met someone else and we clicked from the start
And my life would forever be changed

Ashamed to say now, neither one of us free
Though our relationships were near the end
We both had a need that each other could fill
And we started as very good friends

Much talking of faith and discussing beliefs
Retreats and deep prayer time we shared
We were soon in the throes of a whirlwind romance
And this love caught us both unawares

But on this foundation, how could we have built
Something that was both safe and secure?
Having been so caught up I was blind to the fact
That we both had our issues before

For Such A Time As This

After dating exclusively four years by now
We took vows before family and friends
But unless it is something that God has ordained
On the outcome you cannot depend

So, the journey of healing for me would begin
As I started to deal with my past
I got so involved with behaviours of old
That I started to put myself last

I acknowledged this happened a few years before
But I'd hoped it had come to an end
I then witnessed the person I love lose themselves
Someone I'd spent time trying to mend

Sobriety's more than not having a drink
It's the reason behind it that counts
Seems removing the alcohol isn't enough
It was never about the amount

On return from our honeymoon I was confused
And some answers I needed to find
To an Al-Anon meeting I took myself off
All those jumbled up thoughts in my mind

It's a group people go to which offers support
And I found that it helped me a lot
There I'd learn about alcohol and its effects
Whether loved ones are drinking or not

I sat in the rooms and I listened at first
They described things deep down I had known
A place full of strangers just baring their souls
Which made me feel much less alone

The experience, strength and the hope that was shared
All made sense, but yet sadly so true
Obsessing about them every hour that God sent
Means there's not much time left just for you

'The Courage To Change' and 'One Day At A Time'
Are the books that the group seemed to use
Upon reading them daily I soon realised
That a life for me, I had to choose

The group has a number of slogans that helped
The '3 C's' one example of these
Because you didn't Cause it, you can't be the Cure
And Control will bring you to your knees

The anger and rage that is often displayed
Is something you find hard to fathom
And sobriety isn't the end of it all
This in some leaves a vacuous chasm

"You're not meant to save them" we're told early on
"You are actually making it worse"
All of this time you've been chasing your tail
And your intentions have worked in reverse

For Such A Time As This

So, after a while I decided to find
A sponsor and work on my 'Steps'
I had to jump off the old merry-go-round
And find new ways to cope with the stress

Take what you like, then you must leave the rest
That is what you're encouraged to do
The longer you go then the more it makes sense
And you slowly see glimpses of you

You have to surrender to your higher power
Which is God and that works great for me
And you must keep your side of the street nice and clean
That is where all your focus should be

Codependency traits I would have to accept
And I'd learn about my past behaviour
It was time that I looked at who I had become
And my sponsor became a lifesaver

With nothing to numb all that pain for them now
It results in denial and blame
And no matter which tool they resorted to use
The results were exactly the same

Everyone else is to blame don't you see?
There's no way now, to hide what they feel
You're walking on eggshells, avoiding their wrath
Which for some is a daily ordeal

The demons behind it wreak havoc you see
And there's little the onlooker can do
They take marriages, family, jobs, even friends
And then turn their attention to you

So four months since being a husband and wife
I did something I'd previously warned
I left for the first time to give us both space
Though I loved him I really felt torn

Now going cold turkey just isn't enough
I would learn, as the group shared their tales
To admit there's a problem without any help
Some could relapse and go off the rails

At one open meeting I heard someone say
That the drink answered all of their prayers
But during sobriety they now had to find
More solutions to all of their cares

For eight weeks I stayed with my mum and my dad
Not the married life I had envisaged
But during that time once again we would try
And we'd speak through email and text message

And so night and day I would hope and I'd pray
I found meetings and readings both helped me
We both worked on ways to get back what we'd lost
This was not how things were meant to be

I returned as I thought things had slightly improved
Praying hard and not fearing the worst
Believing at last we'd moved on from our past
Just weeks in though, my bubble would burst

My sister then asked would I help with my niece
At that time, for three nights of the week
This would help as by now we would argue a lot
Either that, or we just wouldn't speak

We found, over time, that the harder we tried
That things hadn't changed much if at all
And the problems we had were much worse than before
These were hard times, as I now recall

The enemy comes to kill, steal and destroy
From such things it's so hard to recover
And you learn that you have to take care of yourself
But this took me some years to discover

John 10:10 (MSG)

The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy.

One step at a time

My Steps would take me nine months
With my sponsor to complete
It would be a kind of birthing
After a soul-searching retreat

Prophecy

One Sunday, part way through the service
A young woman walked over to me
She said in a dream God had told her
She must share with me this prophecy

I was humbled and keen to receive it
Then she told me the message He sent
“God will use what it is that you’re facing,”
And of course, I knew just what she meant

I had started attending my meetings
At that time, no-one else would have known
“Mighty woman of God, He will use you “
And the seed for this book was then sown

2 Peter 1:19-21 (MSG)

*Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men
and women to speak God’s word.*

Angel in disguise

I had just been informed of his plans for divorce
There was nothing else left I could do
Having given two years to my Al-anon group
Now this news, it came out of the blue

It took a few days for the truth to sink in
I felt lost and completely confused
I had so many thoughts swirling round in my head
Since being told of this life-changing news

So, on that fine day in the last week of May
I went out to escape all the fuss
And seeing that I wasn't using the car
I decided to hop on a bus

I met with a neighbour and chatted a while And
quite soon we were joined by her friend
Unaware that this stranger would turn out to be
The first angel to me God would send

For Such A Time As This

In my naivety I thought I'd done well
And my emotions I'd managed to hide
All those private, embarrassing, horrible things
Which leave turmoil and fear deep inside

At first, we made small talk the weather and such
Then we spoke of the lives we were living
How we're often quite strict with the smallest of things
But with others we're far too forgiving

We chatted so freely and seemed to connect
Which was strange, as we'd not met before
I told her that we'd be divorcing quite soon
Not quite knowing what God had in store

She gave me her number before we reached town
Said she cared and had no wish to offend
So desperate that night I would send her a text
Didn't know she'd become a good friend

She told me to come to her house and we'd chat
So I did, not much left I could lose
My home of some twenty plus years to be sold
And court proceedings that I didn't choose

She said on the bus, just a few hours before
That I'd mentioned ill-health and seemed tired
Weeks later she shared when she met me that day
I looked worked up, quite nervous and wired

I told her my GP had been well informed
But my health had since sadly declined
And in light of the fact that they had some concerns
They had followed official guidelines

It seems she had acted on what she had seen
And observing the behaviour displayed
It would lead to receiving a call the next day
From a team member from Women's Aid

Save yourself

"We are following up on a call we have had
First of all, are you able to speak?"
She continued to ask a few questions of me
With the shock I began to feel weak

"So based on the things that you're sharing just now
For your safety, it's best that you leave"
In a strange way I felt a huge sense of relief
But it was equally hard to believe

I answered the questions as best as I could
Then they asked had I somewhere to go
I assured them I did, and on ending the call
I would then let my soul sister know

Now after I'd married, my soul sister shared
That she had some concerns about me
So just on the off-chance and if I was in need
She had given me her front door key

They seemed to be happy with what I had said
This would be such a life-changing day
Then she ended the phone call by letting me know
She'd ring later and check I was ok

You've been told very clearly, "It's best that you go"
And the world as you know it now ends
But knowing you tried and you've done all you could
Means there's no way of making amends

So, you're trying to think of the sensible things
All the stuff that you're going to use
What I ended up grabbing in actual fact
Two faux fur coats and four random shoes!

Next there comes 'Thingy', how could I leave him?
He had been with me since I was twelve
So I rushed to the garden and crouched by the shed
And then into the border I delved

And so I moved 'Thingy' from where he had been
That pet rock I'd brought home from the beach
And I placed him in dense shrubs just by the front gate
"Just wait there now please, safe out of reach"

As I had some concerns for a few of my things
All my documents, photos and frames
Had been left for safekeeping with family and friends
Weeks before this had been prearranged

For Such A Time As This

Then I grabbed and I shoved what I could of my things
Into bin bags and suitcases galore
It was all going well, but quite soon my heart fell
As I heard his key turn in the door

I had seconds to shove my things under the bed
Then he shouted "Hello" up the stairs
So I said "Hello" back, as I covered my tracks
Now for leaving I felt ill-prepared

So I was unable to get my things out
Since I wasn't at home on my own
But experience taught me for quite some time now
If I left, then he wouldn't stay home

I picked up my coat and I shouted "Goodbye"
As I saw my soul sister arrive
Then we drove to a friend's a few minutes away
Life would change, after that brief car ride

And of course, sure enough by the time we returned
Found the car wasn't there any more
So I walked down the path with my keys in my hand
Took a deep breath and opened the door

I rang two more friends and I asked for their help
And by now, we were in quite a hurry
But not knowing exactly how long we had left
I was starting to get slightly worried

We took what we could, and I locked the front door
Then I walked down the path to the shrubs
And to honour my promise, I picked up my rock
“Come on 'Thingy', you’re coming with us”

I would later need therapy in order to heal
And take in the events of that day
But not once did I doubt the decision I made
I knew God had prepared me a way

Revelation 3:8 (MSG)

“Now see what I’ve done. I’ve opened a door before you that no-one can slam shut. You don’t have much strength; I know that you used what you had to keep my Word. You didn’t deny me when times were rough.”

Pastures new

So I moved in with my dear soul sister
And at hers I felt safe and at home
I had no idea what I'd be facing
But through it I wasn't alone

Now I left home for good on the Tuesday
With a friend we had already booked
On an all-women Christian conference
In the rush, something I'd overlooked

My friend said the timing was perfect
And that she still intended to go
Still in shock, this was something I needed
But God knew this, it just goes to show!

As I'd left home in such a great hurry
I still didn't have all of my clothes
Although not one of life's major issues
It still added to all of my woes

Now I knew I would have to think quickly
Couldn't go there in scruffs and odd shoes!
So in thrift shops I bought a few items
There my credit card had to be used

But I didn't see this as an issue
I had used all these shops years before
Once again I knew God had prepared me
He just knew what he had laid in store

We arrived at the hotel and rested
The first session was later that night
At the venue we met two nice ladies
And my friend told them both of my plight

We all had our reasons for going
As we spoke I was feeling less stressed
And I felt a real move of the Spirit
Then the ladies said I should be blessed

They reached into their handbags and purses
And then gave me a small gift of money
I was touched by the kindness they'd shown me
But receiving it made me feel funny

Now don't get me wrong I was grateful
But it's not easy for me to receive
It was due to my worth and my value
Something I had to learn then believe

For Such A Time As This

As we took our seats in the Arena
Seemed the pastor was talking to me
When she spoke of Rapunzel's high tower
I just knew this was all meant to be

Then the words she said next really moved me
"Now Rapunzel please let down your hair
Girl you can't live your life being held captive"
This confirmed God had answered my prayers

I found the whole conference inspiring
I felt blessed and was so glad I went
And the money the ladies had given me
I could give my soul sister for rent

But that wasn't the end of my problems
Well in fact, it was only the start
And since more was becoming apparent
I'd no time to be falling apart

When we married I lost any income
I'd received from DWP
As a wife was no longer entitled
That was not such a great place to be

I'd been told by him weeks before leaving
I was on my own financially
Once divorced and the house sale completed
I'd be paid with the Final Decree

In the meantime I'd have to make phone calls
Get advice as to what I'd do next
Seems my case would present quite a challenge
Those who helped me were often perplexed

Took eight weeks to receive any income
Sickness payments I'd have to reclaim
As our bank account had been held jointly
I would now need one in my own name

I eventually got all my clothes back
Some weeks later I went to the house
I was told I could go to collect them
With the brief absence there of my spouse

Then on Thursday the 10th of November
It had been six long months after leaving
I had met with my two faithful prayer friends
And I told them that I was believing

That God wouldn't leave me forsaken
And for me He had always provided
This was all in His plan and I trusted
That by His safe hands I'd be guided

So on Friday the 11th of November
With my soul sister I went for a walk
We sat on a bench and we rested a while
When a man came and started to talk

For Such A Time As This

Now I wasn't so comfortable being near men
So I left her to do all the speaking
And the prophecy given the evening before
Proved that this would be no random meeting

So just like the angel I met on the bus
A divine meeting arranged just for me
He spoke about work and his plans for the day
For the local estate agency

My soul sister told him what I had gone through
And as soon as they finished their chat
He picked up his phone and then passed it to me
In three days I'd be viewing a flat!

Now let us rewind and just think about this
I'd a house I'd been told I must leave
With no reference, no job and no prospects at all
A new home was so hard to believe

My family and friends rallied round to help me
With the bond and to cover the rent
They could all be repaid once the house had been sold
A real lifeline had been heaven sent

I had more than a year then until I was free
With the legal stuff and the divorce
But now I was blessed with a place of my own
When God moves, He's an almighty force

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NLT)

And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

All is not lost

Now remember in life things are temporary
Like possessions, your job or your home
With one letter or phone call, your whole life can change
Then your future's far from set in stone

But remember the things you take with you
Are the ones with a lasting impact
Such as honesty, dignity, courage and truth
And integrity to be exact

A new chapter

Then onto the next real-life chapter
A fresh start for me in my new flat
I knew no-one where I was going
Might seem strange, I found comfort in that

I would have very little to start with
My bed frame, wardrobe and TV
Had been brought from the house with some glassware
As permission was been granted to me

In the six months that followed my leaving
I would buy things for my bottom drawer
Such as pans, towels, a kettle and toaster
And under my bed these were stored

Didn't have much so had to be thrifty
Looked in charity shop's bargain bins
Although starting from scratch was a challenge
My new life would now have to begin

For Such A Time As This

Buying things for a home you don't have yet
Was surreal but it had to be done
But I always believed and I trusted
In God's time I would find the right one

By the time the God incidence happened
With the man that I met in the park
I already had things that I needed
On my new life I could now embark

I signed for the flat two weeks later
And I moved that first week in December
I felt blessed and was very excited
A feeling I vaguely remembered!

So having collected essentials
I would soon make it feel like my home
One bedroom, lounge, kitchen and bathroom
It was bliss this new home of my own

I was blessed with chairs, table and sofa
Other items would just have to wait
I'd the use of a portable gas stove
And with this, cheap meals I'd create

I could make a good meal out of nothing
I'd buy cheap soup and savoury rice
It was tasty and also quite filling
If you add some black pepper or spice!

I had neither a washer or freezer
Now you can't always have everything
But with family and friends there to help me
I knew I could face anything

Oh my previous life was just awful
Drove to car parks and cried late at night
But now there was such a big difference
In this home I could put those things right

I found different ways I could do things
I washed clothes in the bath and the sink
For bedding and towels this was tricky
Having tried, I would need a rethink

So I bundled them in my wheeled suitcase
And would go to a launderette close by
With no garden or yard for my washing
At least then they would all come home dry

I'd no car but I still needed shopping
So out came my trusty wheeled case
The pain wasn't great to be honest
But I managed it at my own pace

Now God had already prepared me
I had lived in this way years before
I was constantly watching the pennies
And I knew I could do this once more

For Such A Time As This

Now I had direct debits to think of
And to keep personal credit intact
Sold my wedding rings and broken jewellery
So that I could pay my council tax

I would hide the way I was now living
Having always been private and proud
Independent and too self-reliant
Don't tell others I'd secretly vowed

But why then if I was a helper
Would I stop people from helping me?
Now this would be part of my healing
And from old ways I had to be freed

My parents called just before Christmas
And they saw my distinct lack of food
God bless them, from then on they brought me
An amount that could feed our old brood!

This new home was a calm, tranquil haven
Where this peace could be fully exploited
I had time for reflection and healing
A safe place where I made my own choices

I would sit in the silence for hours
From the world for a while disappear
Unlike living with him, this was peaceful
Such a cosy and warm atmosphere

I'd have baths in the day at my leisure
And could eat my main meal at half three!
Singing and laughing and resting
Basically, trying to find the old me

I already had many health issues
Now add stress and divorce in as well
There was so much involved in the process
Of the house I'd been trying to sell

I still had the legal proceedings
These would run for at least one more year
Representing myself through the process
All this time though, I knew God was near

Hebrews 13:5-6 (MSG)

Don't be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have. Since God assured us "I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you," we can boldly quote;

God is there, ready to help. I'm fearless no matter what. Who or what can get me?

The big issue

I'll go back just a bit to explain things
Now the law is an ass so they say
I would find, to my cost, many loopholes
That have changed since, I'm so pleased to say

Bought the house two days after we married
Whilst on honeymoon all signed and sealed
This would later become a big issue
And those problems would soon be revealed

After four months I left for the first time
As I said, to my dad and my mum's
On the house had been registered home rights
The implications of this still to come

Sixteen months after us getting married
Was the time when he filed for divorce
Though I'd left, we would still be connected
Which would leave me with little recourse

So the marital home was in my name
But since rights had been placed on the house
Until the divorce stuff was over
It was still occupied by my spouse

By leaving, it had its own problems
I was safe as I lived with my friend
But trying to get other housing
Seemed a nightmare that would never end

Years before I'd been told of a story
Which involved a great grandma of mine
This poor soul had been orphaned in childhood
Sadly, that wasn't rare at the time

She was sent to live with distant family
So at least she was given a home
But the jobs that she did were just awful
And she must have felt very alone

She would sit on the steps of the town hall
Now remember, they were quite deprived
And her job was to pluck scores of chickens
It's a wonder she ever survived

I was blessed that I wasn't left homeless
There were people much worse off than me
But I knew that I had to get answers
And find out what my next step should be

For Such A Time As This

So I spoke to someone at the council
And was signposted to the town hall
Said I'd have to tell them of the issue
As it was quite unique after all

They were sadly unable to help me
As I was an unusual case
And now since I had run out of options
I just had to get out of that place

So I walked out of there so discouraged
And I wondered what I could do next
Then I thought of my own poor great grandma
Who had sat on those same town hall steps

To be named after her was an honour
I have photos with her as a child
She was such a remarkable woman
In the way her past she'd reconciled

So I couldn't declare myself homeless
As I actually co-owned our home
The divorce was a difficult process
But with God I was never alone

I had legal help in the beginning
But denied help as we went court
The house being a marital asset
Legal aid would not give me support

In the absence of legal assistance
And defending myself as the accused
I would have to prepare my own papers
Which, of course, wasn't something I'd choose!

For some years I'd had cognitive issues
Due to Fibro and of course the M.E
I just couldn't retain information
Comprehension was so hard for me

I now had to research the process
And just how to fill out all the forms
As preparing the many court bundles
In my life, this had not been the norm

With no wi-fi or access to printing
I spent months in the local library
Preparing the packs that were needed
One for him, one for court, one for me

I was offered some help by my dear friends
To type up the work I'd collated
Working blind with no clue how to do it
We worked late and were often frustrated

It appeared this whole thing was ill-fated
But my case filled with its anomalies
Would expose many flaws in the system
I was exactly where God wanted me

And my experiences wouldn't be wasted
As the information was going to be used
For a change in the law some years later
To ensure legal aid's not refused

Romans 8:28 (MSG)

*That's why we can be so sure, that every detail in
our lives of love for God is worked into something
good.*

Things you take for granted

I had a fridge but not a freezer
It was already in the flat
But this wasn't such a problem
I could sure make do with that

You take some things for granted
But now unable to freeze food
You're restricted in your purchases
And many things you must exclude

If you're buying some fish fingers
You have to cook them in one go
There's no buying tubs of ice cream
That was an absolute no no!

It means that you can't batch cook
You have to eat the same all week
You'll buy more herbs and spices
And start to love bubble and squeak!

For Such A Time As This

Had no room for a fridge freezer
The kitchen being short on space
Would be described as small or bijoux
But I loved my little place

Mum and dad bought me a freezer
After months was not too soon
I found the perfect place for it
There in my living room!

It would live under the table
And you'd have to watch you head!
But this was a small price to pay
To ensure I was well fed

The freezer was a small one
It was a little table-top
This for me was a game changer
As it changed the way I shopped

I could buy myself cheap lollies
And not have to eat a box of six!
I could now make a whole loaf last
And buy some frozen stir-fry mix

For such things I was so grateful
I couldn't think of what I'd lost
When you're taken back to basics
There's no time to count the cost

Over time

Over time, as I was still adjusting
I was blessed by a number of friends
With some items I desperately needed
In their own ways, each was a Godsend

Friends and family to help made a difference
All my problems I knew I'd surmount
They gave household and electrical items
Even blessings in my bank account

Attention to detail

I love God's attention to detail
In this tale of a cherry blossom tree
As a gift for my 40th birthday
My childhood friend kindly bought one for me

A reminder of wonderful memories
Of making perfume, when we were quite small
With a glance from my living room window
Happy times I would often recall

At school we were asked to bring flowers
For the crowning of Mary in May
Being children and not always too careful
It was a twig by the end of the day!

The pink petals fell like confetti
And only lasted a few weeks of the year
The backdrop for our family photos
Wasn't long till they all disappeared

The tree was a casualty of leaving
Some years on, it had grown fairly tall
But God knew just where He was to place me
He'd a wonderful plan after all

I moved to the flat in the winter
And no garden or yard I had there
But as I looked from my living room window
In spring I witnessed a floral fanfare

On a row of trees I hadn't noticed
Soon pink buds slowly started to show
With a majestic display of the blossom in May
What a blessing on me God bestowed

Isaiah 35:1-2

"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing..."

Destination unknown

(Part one)

Some years before I left for good
With still so much to understand
A road trip with my soul sister
We had meticulously planned

A time to really find ourselves
And leave behind our daily strife
But little did I know how much
That trip would change my life

A few days in a tranquil place
Our journal writing could be done
I now see this was the catalyst
For the life that was to come

We'd arranged to meet a friend there
And we thought it would be fun
But some weeks before, the plans changed
And there was more of that to come!

At the Buddhist place we headed for
So much more would come to light
Not quite knowing what would happen
We then headed out of sight

By now we'd travelled a fair distance
When the place came into view
Our troubled, weary hearts and minds
Now so keen to be renewed

I thought, this place for me, would be
Almost like living in a dream
But as so often in this life
Things aren't always what they seem

We walked along the winding path
Then my body shook with fear
I have ornithophobia
And peacocks roamed free here!

My soul sister would stop one night
Then with family she would stay
For two nights I'd be here alone
And she'd return on our last day

"I've got it sussed " I said to her
"I'll spend the time in bed"
I'd brought some food and snacks with me
So at least I would be fed

For Such A Time As This

Although it was a lovely place
And I tried to face my fear
It soon became quite clear to me
That I wasn't to stay here

But what on earth was I to do?
I didn't know where I could go
It's not at all what I had planned
But I felt God would surely know

So tired by now, I got in bed
And on the pillow my head laid
I then turned on my phone's radio
As Kenny's 'Gambler' song was played

So I lay there and I listened
To what the lyrics had to say
And that night I learnt the lesson
That sometimes you're not meant to stay

(Part two)

Now with mind made up I had to go
That fact I had to face
So, one night in we packed our things
And left their sacred place

I trusted in God's plan for me
My faith in him was strong
To prepare me for what was to come
He'd known that all along

So we got into the car again
And we began to drive around
We didn't have to spend too long
As then The Bladnoch Inn we found

I booked two nights above the pub
To an en-suite room was shown
A cosy place, to keep me safe
For the nights I was alone

My soul sister had left by now
And I was feeling quite unsure
So with concerns for my own safety
I placed a chair behind the door!

For Such A Time As This

It was late and I was hungry
So I looked through what I'd brought
I found a flapjack and some biscuits
To carry food I had been taught!

I thought I'd better rest now
So I settled down to pray
Things had not gone as expected
Oh, what a strange eventful day

I woke up the next morning
But it dawned on me quite soon
That my foodie bits were dwindling
And I'd have to leave my room

I moved the chair and waited
Then I opened up the door
As I stepped onto the landing
I soon began to feel unsure

I wasn't very confident
To walk down there alone
This was the first test I'd be facing
And many more were to be shown

I don't know what I expected
How your mind plays tricks on you
There was just one cute old couple
Eating breakfast just for two!

I chose a table in the corner
Theirs looked nice, so ordered mine
And when the couple finished
It just left me there to dine

Now talking to myself I said
“Hey, I’m so proud of you”
I still had a whole day left
What on earth was I to do?

The owner said, “Without a car
Head for Wigtown, it’s much safer
There’s pavement all the way from here
Have fun, I’ll see you later”

I walked along the country road
The River Bladnoch ran close by
Passed sheep and cows in lush green fields
And soon in Wigtown I arrived

For Such A Time As This

(Part three)

At once I saw the library
Although I'm not a bibliophile
I took my time, perused the shelves
And sat and read awhile

That hour just seemed to fly by
Being free from all my cares
I just loved my little outing
And I'd still all day to spare

So, due a change of scenery
I set off down the street
I soon found a little café
And thought I'd get a little treat

It wasn't hard to notice
The outside was painted pink
It stood out from other buildings
Was really cute and quite distinct

Now this was still a challenge
Stepping into the unknown
So I found a quiet corner
And ordered coffee and a scone

I sat and took my coat off
And I giggled to myself
I had found my own oasis
Again, with books on every shelf

The café wasn't busy
But that more than suited me
I reflected on our road-trip
I was right where I should be

I finished off my coffee
And the cream and jam-filled scone
Then I got my things together
By now not feeling so alone

I left the little café
And then I spent the afternoon
Mooching around the book shops
My mind and feelings now in tune

This time was such a blessing
I had surrendered my control
This was such a lovely feeling
I felt such freedom in my soul

By now I was quite tired
So decided to head back
I was getting rather hungry
Since I'd eaten all my snacks

For Such A Time As This

I passed the River Bladnoch
And then I headed for my room
I had a rest and a few biscuits
But knew I'd need a meal quite soon

I headed to the restaurant
But this time I wasn't shy
I ordered salad and lasagne
And then a piece of apple pie

I slept that night so soundly
With no chair behind the door!
It was a positive experience
Next day, was ready for some more

Part four)

I was meeting my soul sister
And with her I'd spend the day
Seeing where we'd end up
By now, surrender was child's play!

I took her to the café
And being warm, we sat outside
I told her of my visit
And I must say I burst with pride

So after a brief car ride
Soon we found a lovely beach
There were steps down to the bottom
This little place was called Monreith

Now we hadn't been there too long
When a problem soon arose
After drinking that last coffee
A need for powdering my nose!

You see, I hated public toilets
It was a major thing with me
And being such a germaphobe
I didn't enter them with glee!

For Such A Time As This

So I walked up to the toilet
Back up the 100 and odd steps
And I soon began to wonder
Just in what state it had been left!

As I reached the metal cubicle
I slowly opened up the door
To such a clean and tidy bathroom
I'd never seen the like before!

Inside there was a notice
That volunteers helped keep it clean
Now I have to give them credit
I must say it was pristine

We would spend the next few hours
On that quiet secluded beach
Where we paddled and we journaled
And left our phones way out of reach

We left just before teatime
And made our way back to the pub
Then we had a meal together
Some really lovely home cooked grub!

She booked into her room there
As this would be our final night
We reflected on our road trip
And saw that things had turned out right

I had learnt so many lessons
They would stand me in good stead
Then we spent the evening chatting
Before retiring to our beds

I would realise years later
That this trip would prepare me
For the challenges I had coming
Although the future I could not see

I thought I had it figured out
And that I knew where I was going
But diversions can be blessings
To ensure we keep on growing

Proverbs 3:5-6 (MSG)

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure everything out on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.

I will bloom where I am planted

One year in I had a problem
In the flat with lots of flies
These bluebottles were just awful
And further problems would arise

There was an issue in the cellar
Which was the place of origin
They were coming through the floorboards
I had to stop them coming in

My flat was on the first floor
So the only thing to do
Was put a sheet across the stairway
To try and stop them coming through

Not a pleasant place to live in
I'd use whole cans of fly spray
And I'd have to do the limbo
With the stair sheet in the way!

With my painful neck and shoulders
Believe you me was no mean feat
I knew I'd have to move soon
This place no longer my retreat

Then my friends again, so kindly
Offered me a place to stay
So I put my things in storage
"Where to next dear God?" I prayed

We had finalised the court stuff
And the house would soon complete
I could start to look in earnest
For my next cosy retreat

So I browsed the online pages
Of all the places I could rent
And I prayed for God to show me
Where I'd be safe, but still content

I had made just one enquiry
And when I went along to view
The person booked before me
Didn't show and I just knew

As I wasn't in employment
I didn't have wage slips to show
Six months' rent up front I paid them
I didn't want the place to go

For Such A Time As This

My dear friend lent me the whole sum
And God bless her, saved my skin
Once again, a bid for freedom
Meant my new life could begin

This place was meant just for me
I knew God had made a way
And it wouldn't be much longer
Before my friends I could repay

When the house sale was completed
In the spring I'd move again
I'd continue with my healing
And work on all my hurt and pain

For the first time I had choices
And enough to pay my bills
Believe you me, that feeling
Is really one of life's great thrills

I continued with my courses
And my trauma therapy
Now feeling safe and settled
I could really work on me

Through this time of introspection
I would work on self-respect
And I'm still a work in progress
After years of self-neglect

I have been on quite a journey
I'm the best I've ever been
And I'll bloom where I am planted
Now my life has been redeemed

Isaiah 45:2-3 (MSG)

"I'll go ahead of you, clearing and paving the road."

Feeling at home

Now as you might remember
When I was living in the flat
I had a freezer in my living room
What on earth was wrong with that?

I just love where I am living
But just to make me feel at home
The washer's in the bathroom
At least I've got one, I won't moan!

Seasons

For everything there is a season
And a time that it was done
You can't rush, or try to stop it
It will come when it will come

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (MSG)

There's an opportune time to do things; a right time for everything on the earth

Plans

God knows the plans that He has for us all
Meant to prosper and not bring us harm
And knowing that we have a future and hope
Is the reason that we can stay calm

Jeremiah 29:11 (MSG)

*"I'll show up and take care of you as I promised and
bring you back home.*

*I know what I am doing. I have it all planned out - plans
to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you
the future you hope for."*

Well prepared

God knows what He is doing
He would have me well prepared
With the subjects I would study
But at the time, was unaware

When I chose to study history
I would look at past events
It would shed light on my choices
And the impact's been immense

And likewise sociology
As humans, how we all relate
Our patterns in relationships
Defined by what our culture states

The same with archaeology
I was digging up the past
For the future this was needed
I've learnt some lessons now at last

For Such A Time As This

With chronic disease self-management
I would learn to help myself
Just by learning many techniques
That would all improve my health

Courses

Once I realised how I'd been living
And how life had got so out of hand
I needed to find explanations
And find others who would understand

I found Al-anon gave me some answers
For my healing it opened a door
But that was the start of my journey
Unaware of what else lay in store

When I left I was fully supported
By Women's Aid and they understood me
I attended a number of courses
And met my Advocate regularly

Validation from her was important
She explained things and gave me support
She could signpost to other resources
And was with me as we went to court

Online courses would help with my healing
So determined was I to get well
These are the things that I learnt there
From the stories that people would tell

They explained, on their journey of healing
They were left with a myriad of woes
But now they had time to work though this
Moving on with their lives was the goal

Control was a subject they spoke of
Minimisation, denial and blame
Are the tactics some used to control them
Perpetrated as part of a game

They said some would use intimidation
Coercion or violence and threats
And of course, these are very disturbing
Which had caused a great deal of distress

There were various ways they abused them
By emotionally draining their soul
Using physical, verbal, financial abuse
Or by means of coercive control

It's all psychologically draining
A whole host of traumatic events
With some, sexually abusing their victims
Whilst others used spiritual content

They would use their religion against them
Quoting scripture, whatever their faith
This too, could be used to abuse them
Once again, on control this is based

With some, they involved their poor children
Like a game they had used them as pawns
But these poor human shields don't deserve this
Things like this, by group members you're warned

And some turned their children against them
They were fed a complete pack of lies
If successful with this alienation
It leaves one of the parents despised

With many, their employer was toxic
And their boss had exerted control
Some passed over for every promotion
Leaving others then facing the dole

As they turned up for work, they'd be guessing
Just what kind of mood they'd be in
This for some was a daily occurrence
They'd prepare for the games to begin

I would learn about feelings of shellshock
How the life that they lived seemed surreal
And following psychological trauma
They were now left unable to feel

For Such A Time As This

For protection through this time of 'crazy'
It was common to dissociate
As they tried to discover what happened
Their emotions would dysregulate

Feeling numb and spaced out was quite frightening
In response to these puzzling events
By removing themselves from the problem
They could cope and things weren't so intense

And these people for their own protection
Had retreated inside their own head
With reality being too much to cope with
They created their own world instead

I related to being an observer
I'd look down on myself from above
Detached from the world all around me
And from everything I had once loved

There were several things they had mentioned
Hypervigilance (being jumpy and scared)
Some were isolated from their own family
For real life they felt so ill-prepared

They all went through a period of doubting
As they questioned what they had recalled
Through this period of realization
They had now come to question it all

With prolonged psychological warfare
Some were left with CPTSD
It is something they needed some help with
Which is why they were in therapy

Post traumatic distress can result from
A particularly horrific event
It can leave you with flashbacks and memories
And you're living in daily torment

With complex distress it is different
This is due to repeated exposure
And the long-term effects can be harmful
So from these things, you have to find closure

Words

Sticks and stones may break my bones
But names will never hurt me
Well words cut deep so that's not true
They leave wounds the heart and mind see

Validation

Being bullied is not just a school thing
There are bullies in all walks of life
They don't have to be physically violent
For their cruel words to cut like a knife

Some people need help for past trauma
Things from childhood they've carried too long
They've been silenced, dismissed and forsaken
And some things they have seen were so wrong

If doubted, that really is harmful
They're perceived as mad, even insane
But with this cruel invalidation
They're reliving the trauma again

Now I know if you're not a professional
Some disclosures are hard to conceive
And the things that they're trying to tell you
Are so awful it's hard to believe

With some things you're not able to help them
Like the horrors that they've shared with you
These disclosures can be very shocking
But it doesn't mean that they're not true

There are people out there who can help them
Their GP, Women's Aid for a start
And for men, ManKind's very supportive
They have knowledge they'll gladly impart

At their workplace they should have some recourse
Human resources should offer help
Don't be fobbed off, it all needs reporting
You can't deal with it all by yourself

Schools and colleges all have resources
And they all provide some pastoral care
They can signpost to other departments If
they can't solve the problem right there

Validation is very important
In this safe place their voice can be heard
This is often the beginning of healing
As their feelings they put into words

Something's off

(Part one)

A word that was frequently mentioned
Was something I'd heard of before
About the narcissist and their behaviour
On these courses I'd learn so much more

When you meet them they're ever so charming
And in love you fall head over heels
You feel loved right at last, unaware of their past
Whilst the wolf in sheep's clothing's concealed

'Love-bombing' will start, in pursuit of your heart
Many love-notes or letters and verse
Enjoying the fuss, believing promises of 'us'
Unaware that you're being coerced

You don't know it's a mask they are wearing
They despise their true selves through and through
So, to fill the black hole in their dark empty soul
They'll require the host that is you

You're confused by the way they are acting
You know love shouldn't take this much work
But then you're unnerved by a look on their face
And you watch as the narcissist smirks

And 'gaslighting's' a term you get used to
Now you're doubting the things they have said
You will question your memory quite often
Since the narcissist's messed with your head

With 'gaslighting' you think you've gone crazy
Sheer despair and confusion it brings
You're starting to question, "Am I going mad?"
Whilst they're busy now moving your things

(Part two)

'Devaluing' you is the next thing they do
Never sure if you're in or you're out
They're slowly erasing the essence of you
And you're left with much fear and self-doubt

Then they'll accuse you of the things they are doing
'Projection' it seems is its name
You're lying, you're cheating, you're spending too much
But it's all an elaborate game

For some time you've been walking on eggshells
And attempting to cope with their moods
You're confused and completely bewildered
As discontentment they start to exude

You're starting to watch what you're saying
And attempting to censor each word
They'll be twisted and cruelly distorted
This results in you not being heard

They're two people in one, it's confusing
Never knowing with which you reside
Catching brief glimpses of the horror beneath
Unaware if it's Jekyll or Hyde

And by now you have changed your behaviour
It seems they're not the person you knew
But the sad truth's they never existed
Their whole outlook on life's become skewed

And you must give them all your attention
They're so wonderful, why would you not?
If you don't, they get ever so jealous
And against you they'll stage a boycott

You will pay for ignoring their presence
And the backlash can be quite severe
So you try even harder to please them
As you wonder, how did I get here?

You'll soon notice a pattern repeating
They're enjoying it when you're upset
Now this is just one of the narcissist's cruel traits
And they'll show not one ounce of regret

Don't expect them to care when you're poorly
Grieving or facing a mountain of debt
For these are the times when they care least of all
And your emotional needs they neglect

They will ruin your special occasions
And many other important events
Christmas, your birthday, a promotion or birth
Revealing they're sad malcontents

At home jobs are rarely completed
Most half done, then they're on to the next
Leaving a trail of destruction behind
They then wonder why you're feeling vexed!

There's something that they never told you
This relationship to them is a game
There are rules, but they're constantly changing
Trying to win though will drive you insane

There's a tactic that's called 'future-faking'
"We'll get married just give me some time"
Or "We'll try for a baby the year after next"
All these promises way down the line

They're constantly moving the goalposts
These rules change at the drop of a hat
Very often no rhyme and no reason
This uncertainty has an impact

They will act like emotional vampires
And their need is for power and control
You've already lost all of your sparkle
If you stay, you risk losing your soul

They love feeding off chaos and drama
You try 'grey rock' and 'medium chill'
To avoid them provoking reactions
It is vital you master this skill

Now they want you to get cross and angry
So they'll push you until you erupt
But if you can stay calm and collected
You will find your head's not so messed up

Not reacting to their bad behaviour
Is so hard but you must learn to 'JADE'
Don't Justify, Argue, Defend or Explain
And then into their hands you've not played

So you give this a go for a season
Praying peace with them has been restored
This might work for a while but be cautious
They could act even worse than before

Well, you're lost to them now so completely
You showed love and your endless devotion
Now you're not even sure how you're feeling
As you're numb and devoid of emotions

You stayed though, because you were waiting
For the person you love to return
You're conditioned to think this is normal
'Trauma bonding' you're starting to learn

So now that you're so trauma bonded
Inconsistent behaviour you'll find
They'll be cruel with their words and their actions
Then revert to being loving and kind

Their behaviour will keep you off balance
Is this ride really worth the high cost?
From this rollercoaster of emotions
Now you're desperately trying to jump off

You'll be told you're the one with the problem
You're confused so expect less and less
This addiction you have to the good times
Will ensure to this life you're enmeshed

They will throw you a handful of breadcrumbs
Keep you sweet for a very short time
But quite soon they'll ignore or upset you
And then act as if things are just fine

Another term used was 'word salad'
You'll engage in another mad game
Conversations will just keep repeating
And you feel like you're going insane

They'll confuse you with what they are saying
Random words you find don't make much sense
But they say them with such great conviction
You're left baffled, but daren't take offence

"They love me, I don't think they like me"
'Cognitive dissonance' is what this is named
Where two thoughts in your head are conflicting
When this happens, you think you're to blame

On the outside they're funny and charming
And you feel like you've struck gold with them
But you know it's for show and you're thinking
It will change, but you're not quite sure when

You've spent so long believing excuses
Stress at work makes them act out this way
It's their childhood, could even be something you said
And the reasons could change every day

It could even result in them 'ghosting'
They'll ignore you and then disappear
Now this phase can be very confusing
Then without warning they deign to appear

Now another tactic is called 'hoovering'
You might leave, get your life back on track
And then they'll deploy a variety of schemes
With the intention of luring you back

They will promise the earth to get round you
Agree to therapy, counselling and more
Mediation or perhaps marriage guidance
But be wary, you've heard this before

They can also use 'triangulation'
And invite someone else into the game
With the intention of making you jealous
Which produces a feeling of shame

Your reputation could also be tarnished
As they attempt to destroy your good name
In a bid to control others' opinions of you
This is known as the 'smear campaign'

When the narcissist can no longer control you
They control how other people treat you
These 'flying monkeys' you thought were your friends
Now believe all their scandalous untruths

They will follow the pattern of 'DARVO'
At this process they're now quite rehearsed
Deny, Attack, Reverse, Victim / Offender
The whole process now works in reverse

(Part three)

And then, there's the cruel 'final discard'
It will come like a bolt from the blue
And this phase will reveal all their scheming
When they claim the abuser is you!

They announce to the world you're the bully
When you attempt to stick up for yourself
This 'blame-shifting' or so called 'reactive-abuse'
Will wreak havoc with your mental health

If you can, once you leave, go 'no contact'
This will give you much needed headspace
By removing yourself from the drama
All that chaos with peace is replaced

At first, you don't see how this happened
Once you're out though, you see you've been groomed
This slow process of manipulation
Had ensured that the whole thing was doomed

They require new supply when they've drained you
Once they've given their final encore
The cycle repeats in the stages we've seen
As they tell their sob story once more

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (MSG)

Don't be naive. There are difficult times ahead. As the end approaches, people are going to be self-absorbed, money hungry and self-promoting...

Peace

God hasn't given us a spirit of fear
But of power and love and a sound mind
This will give us a peace that we can't understand
And spend most of our lives trying to find

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Girl power

I come from a long line of women
Who are strong and they never gave in
And in spite of their issues or problems
They had faith and a strength deep within

Having said that, we all have those moments
When despair or depression sets in
So reach out get some help and acknowledge
That a new way of life must begin

It's not weak to admit there's a problem
You can't always be upbeat and strong
When you're low it's the best indicator
That you've held it together too long

Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)

But they who wait for the Lord will renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint.

Therapy

(Part one)

The effects of abuse and of trauma
Can have long-lasting effects upon you
You're then anxious, distressed, maybe fearful
Or depressed, what on earth can you do?

I was put on a list for some counselling
For the trauma and its lasting effects
I thought once I had left I'd be flying
But your head finds it hard to forget

It was clear I'd been merely existing
With my mind in a state of confusion
Since adjusting to life on the outside
After leaving that life of delusion

I didn't present with a single event
But a list of a number of things
And once diagnosed with CPTSD
Now my healing would be everything

In the early days I would feel nothing
Just observing myself from above
Not feeling or even reacting
For protection, an act of self-love

I was finally given some counselling
Was beginning to think and to feel
And that's when things came into focus
I could then start to see what was real

For me, quite a while after leaving
Small things would then act as a trigger
I would sweat and was easily startled
Many issues I now had to figure

I needed some help to get through this
Trauma sits in your body and mind
Events in your head are repeating
Things you thought you'd left so far behind

You must get to the root of the trauma
In my healing so keen to advance
I was then offered therapy sessions
Of EMDR, thought I'd give it a chance

Eye Movement Desensitisation
Reprocesses the trauma within
I'd heard good things about this strange process
And I felt my healing could begin

Now the waiting lists can be quite lengthy
But eventually it was my turn
Monthly sessions were run at a clinic
With that process, so much I would learn

After paperwork and an assessment
We discussed moving forward from here
I felt safe and I knew I could do this
And at last, I could face all my fears

The therapist asked me some questions
And though feeling quite distant and numb
Feeling safe, I could look at my issues
And I knew my past I'd overcome

Some use lights on a screen for the process
Others, sounds on some headphones for this
But in my case hand tapping was best though
(It sounds crazy and is often dismissed)

I was asked to go back to a moment
I remembered, that caused me such pain
And by tapping and thinking about it
The feelings I had were reframed

And so when you are having a 'flashback'
You're transported right back to that place
They're often in bright technicolour
Many things you would rather not face

It is physically and mentally draining
All those things that you tried to erase
In the sessions, you process your feelings
Over time your reactions replaced

With an understanding of what happened
You observe and you see the whole thing
It is hard, if you can though, work through it
Peace and hope to your life it can bring

So for years I had written a journal
A place to share how I was feeling
This would help me when writing my poems
Which aided the process of healing

(Part two)

In my sessions I had noticed
That all kinds of things came up
I went right back to my childhood
And would take a closer look

I teased my younger siblings
Looking back now I can see
I upset them and I'm sorry
That wasn't very kind of me

At fourteen I was bullied
Not long after changing schools
It was hard enough adjusting
To a new place and their rules

So when I had some issues
In my adult relationships
It had triggered childhood trauma
Back then, I wasn't well equipped

To recognise what happened
And how this had affected me
So when I found it was repeated
It could be faced through therapy

It came from different sources
All seemed positive at first
But I found in the beginning
That they don't reveal their worst

I had people who would copy
Every single thing I'd wear
With some, I'd let my guard down
And many private things I'd share

Then you'd hear the local gossip
Telling stories new and old
And you'd realise quite quickly
What you shared has been retold

Now betrayal is such a killer
You just lose all sense of trust
And because you wouldn't do it
It can feel much more unjust

Before I started dating
I had hang ups of my own
I didn't have a great self-image
From then the seeds of doubt were sown

Not everyone who bullies
Is a lover, or a friend
It can be bosses or co-workers
Just on whom can you depend?

For Such A Time As This

It could even be much closer
Like a parent or a child
And by speaking out about it
You could find yourself exiled

This can all lead to self-harming
Doing things to ease the pain
By creating a distraction
So you won't feel hurt again

And with some it goes much deeper
They will cut until they bleed
They might hate their own reflection
This can be worrying indeed

Or self-deprecating humour
Could be something that we use
We don't wait for other's comments
A subtle form of self-abuse

For me, it was my eyebrows
I would rub till they were sore
This remains a major issue
And it still needs work for sure

I didn't know it had a name
Just knew my eyebrows were quite bald
And 'trichotillomania'
It seems, is what this thing is called

I also live with 'bruxism'
Where I clench and grind my teeth
I thought these were just habits
But there's so much more beneath

They're all things we use to soothe us
But we're not always aware
That deep down on the inside
We could be lonely, sad or scared

Recovery's a process
One step forward, three steps back
But it's definitely worth it
To get you back on the right track

You begin to notice patterns
You dismissed them in the past
Once they're seen, you can't ignore them
And you can deal with them at last

These red flags can be a warning
And you'll see them more and more
But ignore them at your peril
And bigger things you'll have in store

Recovery from surgery
Is the analogy I'd use
You've been out of it for ages
And you wake up sore and bruised

For Such A Time As This

You slowly start to wake up
The anesthetic's wearing off
Now you're painfully reminded
Of the many years you've lost

But once you're fully conscious
You can start to do the work
All these years, you have been sleeping
In the shadows things have lurked

(Part three)

I found a Christian counsellor
She was the last piece in the puzzle
With my faith now at the centre
I could face those years of trouble

I would recognise behaviours
And as I started to recover
I'd find answers deep within me
And in no amount of lovers

Now I'm not victim blaming
I'm just speaking for myself
To find the reason for my choices
Would mean much more than life itself

I would have a revelation
Because I didn't hold a grudge
I'd forgive things far too quickly
Something I regularly misjudged

I would say that I was sorry
In a bid to keep the peace
Even if it wasn't my fault
In the hope they were appeased

But if people are not sorry
And you forgive them anyway
You're allowing some behaviours
That will inevitably replay

The hardest prison to escape from
Is the one within your mind
But in emerging from its confines
A life of freedom you will find

In speaking to your inner child
You can see how they've been hurt
And if unresolved in adulthood
This can render you inert

And some with childhood trauma
Find their emotions are affected
So, the aim is to control them
Just to keep themselves protected

This process is so harmful
It can stunt emotional growth
If your feelings aren't maturing
This can lead you to self-loathe

And for many they will listen
To the nagging voice within
So, to silence our inner critic
That's where the healing must begin

Now I understand much better
How I came to where I am
And that none of this was wasted
I know it's all in God's great plan

Jeremiah 29:11 (MSG)

*"I have it all planned out- plans to take care of you, not
abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope
for."*

Trauma

You're not crazy, you're living with trauma
In survival mode, you're feeling numb
Either that, or you're constantly edgy
But these feelings you can overcome

You need somewhere to vent all your feelings
Because sometimes we don't even know
We've suppressed how we feel for a while now
It's not easy to simply let go

Validation is very important
Someone knowing just what's in your head
You can say out loud things you've been thinking
And then finally put them to bed

They explain things you just hadn't thought of
Reasons why you've been acting this way
You've been living like this, for some time now
And the same thoughts your head has replayed

There are a number of trauma responses
'Fight' or 'flight' and the one where you 'freeze'
'Friend' and 'fawn', used to diffuse any conflict
And the aim of that is to appease

We'll start with the first on our list here
'Fight' response means exactly just that
You're becoming aggressive or angry
And you're now in defensive combat

'Flight' response means you're running to safety
To escape from the danger you're in
By removing yourself you feel better
And you're not in a crazy tailspin

'Freeze' response is related to trauma
When you can't 'friend' or just run away
You can't move or much less make decisions
You're just trying to keep stress at bay

Now with 'freeze' you are hoping it's working
They'll lose interest and just go away
But some 'flop' as a form of protection
Playing dead could be the only way

As I said 'friend' or 'fawn' are some options
Where you try to keep them on your side
Making friends with them despite the issues
Means by now all your needs are denied

For Such A Time As This

And retreating within is an option
This might work for a very short time
It's conducive to peace and is useful
But make sure that it has a deadline

Keeping busy is also a tactic
To escape from the trauma or fear
Always cleaning or changing the decor
Of a room that's been done twice this year!

We do all these things for protection
And we might try them all, each in turn
As we're searching for peace and contentment
This is something for which we all yearn

You won't heal with a couple of sessions
It's a process, so just take your time
It took years to arrive where you are now
Just be patient, you're doing just fine

I'm no expert, they're just observations
Things I've seen on my journey so far
In myself and quite often in others
Our responses can be quite bizarre

It's not a problem

(Part one)

Life's a challenge, there's no doubt about it
We might feel that we're losing control
And resort to a number of vices
To find peace for mind, body and soul

Now sometimes we'll question our choices
Things we did or decisions we made
It can also be things we neglected
Or situations that made us afraid

You might have lost someone dear to you
Since their passing, you find that you're lost
You try everything to fill the gap left
But that could come at such a great cost

Some events in our lives were so shocking
We relive them again and again
And we all have our own way of numbing
Thinking we can escape from the pain

For Such A Time As This

Now, there are the things that we know of
Like alcohol, gambling and drugs
Used to mask our abandonment issues
If from childhood we never felt loved

Drink can cater to everyone's palate
From the strong stuff, to cheap liquid gold
It relaxes or gives you Dutch courage
But it's dangerous if it's taken hold

"Oh, I don't have an issue with gambling
A few bets on my tablet or phone
The odd scratch card or few games of bingo
Won't be losing my family home"

It can start with sweet smelling tobacco
Then from weed other things you might try
This could lead to full class A addiction
You need more, as you're chasing that high

(Part two)

Then there are the things we don't think of
They're just pastimes and not a big deal
Watching porn, going shopping or eating
Are much easier for us to conceal

You can hide watching porn, it's a secret
"They all do it, I'm hardly a sleaze"
Even working long hours for your family
Surely there's no real issue with these?

You think shopping will make you feel better
After all, you deserve a small treat
But retail therapy can be addictive
So, be wise when you're on the high street

It's so easy to buy on a store card
Using credit whilst shopping online
But just paying the minimum payment
You pay twice what it's worth over time!

Some develop an eating disorder
It could be the one thing they control
They might binge, then be sick or try starving
In a desperate bid to feel whole

For Such A Time As This

And for those who dislike their appearance
Plastic surgery can be the cure
But for some, these cosmetic procedures
Aren't the end, they're left craving one more

And some are addicted to caffeine Craving coffee and
energy drinks
But the high that's produced can be dangerous
And further into addiction they sink

And for others addicted to smoking
Nicotine starts affecting their brain
Which produces a warm, relaxed feeling
So they reach for it time and again

Some addictions we don't even notice
Like becoming obsessed with our phone
They provide us with various functions
Being glued to them we are more prone

And online some create a persona
Make a profile that's nothing like them
Too frightened to reveal their own image
From an inferiority complex it stems

And for others who need validation
Social media becomes their best friend
Always checking their likes and the comments
As if on it their life will depend

For some, they'll relax using gaming
And for downtime this can be ideal
But for others, this virtual kingdom
Is a safe place because it's not real

Some enjoy their collections or hobbies
Various interests can all be such fun
But perhaps they're becoming obsessive
If by stuff now their home's over-run!

And some are addicted to poetry
Many verses going round in their head
They must scribble them down onto paper
Before they can climb into bed!

Now it's good to be physically active
Have a sport that we're good at or like
But you know it's a little excessive
If you're the owner of six mountain bikes!

And some are 'adrenaline junkies'
They take risks which then gives them a thrill
Whilst others will push their poor bodies
Using exercise and steroid pills

And then, there are some who are hoarders
Safe at home from the world they escape
Slowly buried beneath their possessions
Like magazines and old videotapes

They can't part with one solitary item
These possessions, a wall of defence
They're attached to their things and not people
And the fallout from this is immense

"On these tablets I feel nice and fuzzy
I've been given them by my GP"
But reliance on prescribed medication
Can for some, be a hard place to be

(Part three)

Or perhaps, it's approval addiction
It's not easy for you to say "No"
But with this unhealthy need for affirmation
People pleasing, you'll have to let go

And some need a constant companion
They're not happy with being alone
Needing company or constantly dating
Or just enjoying the cosy 'friendzone'

While others need a long line of partners
They're obsessed with desires of the flesh
Oh, the thrill of the chase is exciting
But once sated move on to the next

Then others are addicted to thinking
Many thoughts in their mind spinning fast
Leaves them anxious to look to the future
Or depressed if they dwell on the past

This can all lead to full-blown addiction
Aimed at hiding our hurts or mistakes
So we'll use them to keep ourselves busy
Then those feelings we don't have to face

Many things if done in moderation
And if legal! Can help us to chill
But if used as a means of avoidance
They can't do that and they never will

In the past we had video rentals
Choosing films once a week as a treat
But now, with free access to boxsets
A whole series in one night's complete

In the old days, when watching soap operas
And an episode came to an end
You were left with a gripping cliff-hanger
And all week in anticipation you'd spend

The world we now live in is instant
Want our needs met like never before
But by delaying our gratification
We could find we enjoy things much more

I have found on my journey of healing
From some things you just can't run away
I would have to look back to move forward
And trust God would then show me the way

1 Peter 2:11 (NIV)

*Dear friends I urge you...to abstain from sinful desires
which wage war against your soul.*

The process

(Part one)

When I left, that was just the beginning
And I still had a long way to go
It would take quite some time to acknowledge
I was lost, but I didn't yet know

At first, I was numb and felt nothing
I was walking around in a daze
Found the life I'd been living was crazy
It was time to get out of that maze

In the silence, I'd sit there for hours
With no tv, or radio on
Now away from the chaos and drama
From my head though that hadn't yet gone

And then slowly with time I discovered
There were people who wanted to help
I reached out and I took what was offered
I just couldn't do this by myself

For Such A Time As This

I began to recover from shellshock
Had to deal with the things I'd been through
It had felt like a dream I'd been living
And I couldn't believe it was true

Then I started to recognise patterns
As I've said, in both me and in them
I soon realised just what had happened
I'd ignored warnings time and again

I developed a real understanding
And the reason I'd acted this way
As an empath I felt other's feelings
And years later, for this I would pay

(Part two)

And so finding myself was the next step
In the search for who I really am
I would have to go back to my childhood
To discover where this first began

As the eldest, I'd been quite the carer
Now this wasn't a problem at all
More than happy to help other people
But this trait was to be my downfall

And so loving myself was the next step
I'd neglected my own needs too long
I could love other people no problem
But to love myself, now that felt wrong

Setting boundaries, now that was a strange one
This is something I'd not had in place
Saying "No" was an alien concept
And this stage for me was hard to face

All these steps though, would lead me to freedom
A long process I'd have to work through
I had counselling and sessions for trauma
And support from my Advocate too

True forgiveness would be an eye opener
As I hadn't quite known what that meant
Such a difficult part of the process
Many hours on this subject I spent

In some verses I cover this issue
And how I would forgive things too soon
With no change in the others behaviour
On the horizon more problems would loom

I wrote poems to those who have hurt me
And I also wrote some to myself
These would be my most sorrowful verses
But they'd help with my emotional health

And I had to stop chasing perfection
This was hard, as I liked things just so
But I'd have to make some drastic changes
And would have to learn how to let go

(Part three)

Then surrender came next, what a blessing
I could give all my problems to God
After carrying so much for too long now
The relief was quite pleasant but odd!

I found peace and contentment then followed
These were wonderfully worth the long wait
No reliance on people or things now
And revealed not a moment too late

I had always been grateful for blessings
I would list them each night during prayer
At least ten things for which I was thankful
And each one I would proudly declare

Found my purpose through this healing process
As I wrote my whole life down in verse
I've been there, so I get it believe me
I thought life couldn't get any worse

But I always knew God had been with me
And I'd learn from the people I met
Each one had a purpose or lesson
And I've not finished meeting them yet!

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

Do not conform to the pattern of this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Out of the fog

Now you're free so you think, you can brush yourself off
And just simply move on with your life
For so long though, you've been someone's mum or best friend
Or a partner, or husband or wife

Then well-meaning people will give you advice
"Don't look back, do what you want to do "
But the fact is you're numb and feel nothing at all
You're no longer the person you knew

Now you're out of the fog, but you're still feeling lost
And you don't know which way you should turn
So this is the time you must sit yourself down
There are things it's important to learn

You've been so busy caring for everyone else
There's a pattern if only you'd see
That ignoring your wants and your needs for so long
You're no longer who you're meant to be

This insidious behaviour will creep up on you
No idea when it really took hold
But unless you make changes and put yourself first
You'll repeat those behaviours of old

So press into God, for He's always been there
He's been quietly waiting for you
Spend time in His presence however you choose
Let your mind and your spirit renew

Now working on you will be hard it is true
But you're really worth all of that time
And once you have loved and accepted yourself
Then it's finally your time to shine

Isaiah 41:10 (MSG)

"Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you."

In the silence

No constant chat of this and that
You need this time alone
To find out who you really are
It's time that they were known

To find the peace you so deserve
Just sit, don't say a word
And listen to God's voice within
In the silence He'll be heard

You'll rediscover who you are
The you that's rarely seen
As the still small voice then whispers
"Welcome back, where have you been?"

God knows

Quite often in prayer I stayed silent
For my feelings I couldn't find words
But I also found comfort in knowing
In the silence your voice is still heard

He knows what you're thinking already
And He's seen what has happened to you
If you trust Him, He'll make things much better
It's amazing how He pulls you through

Just sitting with Him was much needed
And this wasn't just all about me
I would praise Him because He deserves it
And there's no place I'd rather have been

Psalm 46:10 (NKJV)

"Be still and know that I am God."

Insomnia

Although you're exhausted, you just cannot sleep
And insomnia for me was a struggle
I spent hours in my bed, all alone with my thoughts
Which confused me and left my head muddled

Some therapists teach you to write these things down
This can help get them out of your head
For psychologists say, it is good for your health
You can say things that need to be said

After therapy I would let go and let God
Once surrendered, I'd work on myself
Now I still have to really look after my needs
But I live with improved mental health

Psalm 37:7 (NKJV)

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

Emotions

Although I believed, I am human
And some days were a challenge it's true
I would learn to acknowledge my feelings
That would sometimes come out of the blue

I didn't feel the emotion of anger
For me I was much more frustrated
These feelings presented a challenge
Which I had to make sure were placated

I was frustrated with my limitations
Couldn't do things that I used to do
After all my hard work felt a failure
But these feelings I tried to subdue

In denial I tried to ignore it
"I won't let this condition beat me"
I attempted to push on regardless
But I found this was not meant to be

For Such A Time As This

It's like running a race at full throttle
Halfway through on the verge of collapse
But you press on and give it your best shot
And you do this until you relapse

In the end I would gently go with it
Well, I didn't have much of a choice!
Having burned out, was completely exhausted
Now I listened to my inner voice

Now this was a long drawn out process
I would learn how to deal with my grief
My career never even got started
That sad fact, way beyond my belief

Relationships had to be dealt with
For both marriages I had to grieve
I had lost hopes and dreams for the future
As I said, this was hard to believe

You are told "We are in this together"
And you feel that you're part of a team
But for various reasons that's not so
Sometime things aren't always what they might seem

I would have to learn how to surrender
This was painful and so hard to do
As my plans hadn't come to fruition
With surrender though, came my breakthrough

Not everything will always work out
This was something I misunderstood
But I trust that God knows what He's doing
And He'll work things together for good

Years later I'd use what I'd been through
And I'd share in this book how I feel
In the hope that it helps just one person
To know God's always near and He's real

Romans 8:28 (MSG)

*That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our
lives of love for God, is worked into something good*

.

Rescue mission

I can now see how all of this started
As I took on the role of a mum
And by helping at home with my siblings
It prepared me for what was to come

So, assuming the role of the helper
It became my whole lifetime's ambition
To support with a shoulder to lean on
Which had long been a family tradition

By not working, I felt less than useless
Never feeling that I was enough
As an empath I felt other's feelings
And got far too involved with their stuff

But for people to learn their own lessons
They must work some things out on their own
It builds character, strength and resilience
They won't learn if they're already shown

If you're not careful, you become an enabler
On a mission to rescue and save
And forgiving as mere misdemeanours
All the ways in which people behaved

You can set yourself up for mistreatment
Make excuses, then doubts are dismissed
It is done with the best of intentions
But that's how the red flags can be missed

Finding myself

I lost myself some time ago
Without a backward glance
I just carried on regardless
And I didn't stand a chance

Pre-occupied with helping
And illnesses galore
It left no room for who I was
Or who I'd been before

The favourite colour, food or place
Of everyone I'd known
I took great care to learn them all
Yet didn't know my own

Quite happy giving all of me
I love with all my heart
Then came the time to love myself
But where was I to start?

So now my nest was empty
What on earth was I to do?
No timetables and lists for them
Leaves all this time for you

But when I learnt to love myself
I began to see my worth
Time for me was strange at first
But I found I'd been rebirthed

I guard the peace I found within
It has been a worthwhile quest
This life is so worth living
And I'm ready for what's next

John 14:27 (NKJV)

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you."

The power of a single word

Now loving your neighbour as much as yourself
Is what we're encouraged to do
But it's altered by changing just one single word
And that's something that I never knew

I loved everybody *instead* of myself
Which became a huge issue for me
Giving family and friends nearly all of my time
Codependent is what I would be

Encouraged at brownies to love people first
Also taught I should put myself last
These influences shaped who I was to become
And this started way back in my past

This behaviour ensures you're denying yourself
And ignoring your wants and your needs
Happy to cater to everyone else
With a host of well-meaning good deeds

I learnt late in life to acknowledge my worth
It's ok if I want to say "No"
Now don't get me wrong, it has taken some time
And I still have a long way to go!

Mark 12:31 (MSG)

And loving others as well as you love yourself.

All the clues were there!

I was frequently admitted
To the ward for kidney stuff
But still I failed to notice
I just couldn't do enough

I remember once on discharge
The sister's words were so heartfelt
"I'm so sorry that you're leaving
You really have been such a help!"

I'd walk patients to the toilet
And with some I'd have a chat
Or help others move their pillows
If they wanted to lie flat

When a neighbour had a baby
Was more than glad to give my time
But it left me so exhausted
The midwife thought the child was mine!

Now it's only when I look back
I see how crazy I'd become
A lifetime in the making
But by now the deed was done

A servant heart

I'm not saying you mustn't be helpful
It's important we all play our part
Our communities desperately need those
Who are blessed with a pure servant heart

Just remember sometimes put yourself first
You are precious and you still have needs
You're still able to bless other people
Just include yourself in those good deeds

Mark 12:31 (NIV)

Love your neighbour as yourself.

Who am I?

I've had so many different names
I can't remember who I am!
It started with my birth name
Which is where this thing began

Two would be my husbands names
I had followed that tradition
But over time, that wasn't all
I'd have some more additions

They all hold different memories
Of another time and place
Another change of signature
But still the same old face!

I never felt quite settled
I was left somewhat bemused
The names I liked the best though
Were the ones I got to choose

I needed inspiration
So to find the one for me
I perused the many pages
Of the phone directory

Then there comes your title
Is it Mrs, Ms or Miss?
I'd decide upon my favourite
From the ever-growing list!

No matter which I'd chosen
To declare my identity
Even a double-barrelled surname
They were all still simply me

But I'm reassured with Jesus
That He's always known my name
And no matter which I go by
He will love me just the same

Psalm 139:14 (MSG)

You know me inside out.

It's not you, it's me

In all of my relationships
I had my part to play
I made some dreadful choices
And for that I'd have to pay

Having been mistreated
I lived life now on my terms
But didn't guard my heart enough
And still had so much to learn

Some people that I dated
Weren't completely free
I had no business doing that
As they didn't belong to me

If I felt it wasn't working
And I knew I'd had enough
Not long before it finished
I would have the next lined up

I was constantly surrounded
Always had somebody there
With family and relationships
My life I'd always shared

I hadn't healed from trauma
For which I needed time
CPTSD took hold
As my mental health declined

I thought that I'd be lonely
Doing life all on my own
But with prayer and therapy I found
I needed time alone

I'm responsible for my choices
And I fully take the blame
Some I'm not too proud of
And it led to guilt and shame

I began my healing journey
And took time to work my Steps
I had to look at who I was
High time this was addressed

God has made me realise
I'm enough just being me
He loves me with a perfect love
And for now, that's all I need

For Such A Time As This

I'm enjoying being single
And spending time with me
For the first time in a long time
I'm at peace and living free

Pandora's box

How often have we done things
That we weren't supposed to do?
We think we have the answers
And bite off more than we can chew!

Like Eve in Eden's Garden
She had just one thing to do
Leave the apple well alone
It wasn't meant for you!

The same with Miss Pandora
She was told, "Don't touch the chest"
You'd think it would be simple
But she thought that she knew best

Through curiosity she opened
Out came sickness, greed and hate
No way to put them back now
Silly girl, it's far too late

In life I've opened boxes
I'd no right to even touch
Two other people's partners
Who weren't yet quite free as such

Not every box you open
Will be filled with lovely things
More often your worst nightmare
And such unhappiness it brings

How did I think some choices?
Would then lead to better days
They'd lead to disappointment
In a hundred different ways

But in Pandora's story
It would seem, not all was lost
When she looked once more inside it
She found hope still in the box

For me, my hope is Jesus
And despite the things I've done
I know that I'm forgiven
And I'm glad my heart He's won

Genesis 2:16-17 (NKJV)

"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Job 11:18 (MSG)

*Full of hope, you'll relax, confident again; you'll look
around, sit back and take it easy.*

Moving on

I was grieving the loss of that marriage
All the hopes and the dreams that I had
But I found the real me in the process
The ugly, the good and the bad!

Now, this isn't what I'd signed up for
It's a good job I didn't know then
That the journey would have many detours
And I'd question them time and again

Moving on from the past is a challenge
And this isn't where I thought I'd be
But we all have our own personal journey
To embrace it I found is the key

Looking back though, it's turned out much better
Than anything I could have planned
I don't need to know where God will take me
How He works I just don't understand

But the healing that followed was worth it
Now I see it was all meant to be
I was bent but with God's help not broken
A good life is now waiting for me

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NKJV)

"For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.... Call upon me and I will listen to you.... I will bring you back from captivity."

The journey

Looking for love in all the wrong places
Giving your heart but feeling it's wasted

From the moment you meet
You're keeping them sweet

Soon you're hushing the noise
And tidying away toys

Then shouting and balling
To nasty name-calling

Now they're in control
And you're losing your soul

Knowing you've had enough
And you're grabbing your stuff

But God's ordering your steps
And you're escaping the mess

Then the freedom to choose
Over everything you lose

All this time and still healing
And honouring your feelings

Enjoying the peace
And being released

Now God's in control
He's the lover of your soul

Psalm 37:23 (ASV)

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he
delights in his way.*

All at sea

Your life voyage will have many high points
When you're riding the crest of a wave
In the storms though, be wary of people
Who are drowning that you're trying to save

You might not be best placed to save them
As quite often, you won't be equipped
You must leave it to fully trained experts
Or you'll both find yourselves set adrift

Remember, don't give them your life-vest
You can't help if they sink or they swim
We're responsible for our own actions
There's a chance that they could pull you in

And to some, you should never grant passage
With their sweet talk you're easily lulled
So beware of these silver-tongued lovers
They're the ones drilling holes in the hull!

Just make sure that your boat has a life-raft
You will then have the option to jump
But the timing of this will be vital
Take too long and your boat will be sunk

It takes time and a great deal of effort
To find out where you're meant to be
Since this voyage that you've undertaken
You feel shipwrecked and lost out at sea

Since your boat has been laden with cargo
It's high time it was thrown overboard
For a while now, your boat has been sinking
Your main aim is to safely reach shore

You're allowed to consider your options
When you're lost out at sea in distress
For we're all on our own personal journey
And we don't want a life filled with stress

If the time ever comes in the future
When you're sinking then send up a flare
In the distance you'll notice a lifeboat
And you'll know God has answered your prayer

On some journeys you have to sail solo
Feeling free with the wind in your hair
And healing for me would be like this
A blessed time for much needed self-care

If I'm blessed, I'll find my perfect shipmate
We'll be rowing as part of a team
With our oars in a smooth steady rhythm
We can set off in search of our dreams

Until then, God is in the boat with me
And I trust with Him I'll never drown
He has kept me afloat many times now
When the world and life has knocked me down

Mark 4:38-40 (NKJV)

*"Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?"
Then he rose and rebuked the wind and said to the
sea "Peace be still!" And the wind ceased and there
was a great calm.*

Love

Not everyone's supposed to stay
And share their life with you
Some stay a while and teach you things
Then head off out of view

They give their love for that short time
It's needed for that season
But then completely disappear
And there's no rhyme or reason

Some people just don't make you tick
However nice they are
Say "Thank you, next!" and let them go
Stay friends but from afar!

Your 'tribe' though, will just get you
They will love you as a whole
They're already on your wavelength
And they truly feed your soul

Different kinds of love

Not every ounce of love comes
From the same place to your heart
Some lessons learnt the hard way
And my findings I'll impart

Now sometimes it comes easy
And things fall right into place
Others take a bit of work
But you shouldn't have to chase

Some love remains platonic
A deep love between two friends
It's far less complicated
And this love will rarely end

In some, it's unrequited
And that love is not returned
A love that goes just one way
Often leaves the other spurned

The love we have as children
It's so innocent and sweet
So often with our first love
Others simply can't compete

True love is never wasted
It can transcend time and space
It will happen despite age group
Gender, postcode or your race

And love is not dependent
Upon the genes, or traits we share
The fact that you're not family
Love will neither know nor care

Some people that I dated
Had older children of their own
And with our blended families
Equal love to them was shown

With some friends you are comfy
You don't need to say a word
With just one look they give you
You will know that you've been heard

Sometimes you find a soul friend
You feel you've known them all your life
Not necessarily a partner
And they're not always your wife!

For Such A Time As This

Then there is the precious love
Between a mother and a son
Or a father and a daughter
From day one your heart was won

I truly love both mothers
Of my granddaughters and grandson
They brought those precious babies
And a lifetime full of fun

Love to and from your grandchild
Is a special kind of love
It's from your baby's baby
Which is sent from up above

And then there is a different kind
This love can't be replaced
Your heart had something missing
So your pet filled up that space

Then there are friends who love you
They will make your life complete
But there are many others
In this life still yet to meet

But first comes true acceptance
Of just who we really are
And it's from this act of self-love
We can heal our wounds and scars

Of course, the love we have from Jesus
Is unconditional it's true
It's not dependant on behaviour
You're just loved for being you

Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)

He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

Insignificant

Self-esteem had been such a big issue
Didn't think being me was enough
So I listened to other's opinions
And believed all that critical stuff

An example - If I was out shopping
And then someone had bumped into me
I would be the first one to say sorry
And for years that's the way it would be

Being confident wasn't so easy
I saw that as being big-headed
So I had to change patterns of thinking
As negative thoughts were embedded

But I've learnt that I'm just as important
Though I don't like to take centre stage
I can now put that chapter behind me
And look forward, as I turn the page

Worth

We spend so much time worrying
About what other people might think
You're trying to meet an impossible task
As your sanity's pushed to the brink

You can lose who you are in the process
Change yourself, as you try to fit in
But your worth's not determined by others
It begins as you love what's within

You will find on this journey of healing
That you must love the person you are
You are kind, empathetic and caring
But you too, have your wounds and your scars

Now you didn't deserve to go through this
And yes, some of it was down to them
But some of it's due to your soul wound
And they triggered it time and again

You might have abandonment issues
Or a complete inability to trust
Some will pinpoint your innermost weakness
And to exploit it for them is a must

It's a problem if you don't have boundaries
Being there at the drop of a hat
You're expected to stop what you're doing
Then you're treated just like a doormat

Setting boundaries is something you work on
And at first it seems alien to you
You can still be of help, but on *your* terms
And now *you* choose what *you* want to do

Taking compliments was a big problem
Boy, did I have an issue with that
Being shy, thought I didn't deserve them
Was embarrassed in actual fact

I would learn I can state my own preference
And I didn't just have to make do
I had choices and I should now voice them
Now this took some time to work through!

So I started quite small to begin with
When they asked how did I take my tea
I would say "Oh I'm not really bothered"
Now it's "Strong with no sugar for me"

You adapt to this new way of living
It takes time, but you must do the work
Once you learn though, there's no going back there
You won't settle now you know your worth

Healing

From years of grief and so much pain
You brought me back to life again

You challenged me to go way back
And painful memories I'd unpack

You chose your words with such great care
As I was slowly made aware

Of the damage that was done to me
And with time and work you made me see

By others I'd been cruelly used
Which left my heart, so hurt and bruised

I came to you and bared my soul
And over time I was made whole

Despite the things that had gone wrong
With therapy I became strong

This healing helped to mend my heart
My new life now can finally start

The cage is open, now I'm free
To live the life God meant for me

Psalm 118:5 (ESV)

*Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord
answered me and set me free.*

*(Written for my EMDR therapist. God sent the right
person at the right time.)*

Forgiveness

Forgiveness I found was a blessing
Was a gift that I gave to myself
A balm for my soul that was needed
For my emotional and spiritual health

It doesn't excuse their behaviour
Now it certainly wasn't ok
It just means they no longer control you
And this freedom for you I will pray

Unforgiveness can lead to resentment
It will poison your heart and your soul
This unresolved anger within you
Is then rampant and out of control

It's so easy to hold on to grudges
We can choose to, when all said and done
But if that's how we deal with injustice
Then the issue will just run and run

Now for some, they'll choose retaliation
Want revenge, have to get their own back
But they're harming themselves in the long run
As they wait for the counterattack

To be bitter, frustrated and angry
Has a negative effect on your health
To be free from emotional burdens
Means that you can now work on yourself

But first I would have to acknowledge
The whole process and how I got here
I'd accepted some awful behaviour
Due to ignorance, denial and fear

As I said, I was part of the problem
I forgave at the drop of a hat
Forgiveness is much more of a process
And it doesn't just happen like that

I would try to avoid confrontation
Although this was an impossible feat
I would strive to keep everyone happy
And my own needs would take a back seat

I discovered I had many issues
All these things I had learnt over time
It would then be a process of healing
My emotions, my will and my mind

I would have to dig deep to recover
From the depths of the pit I would climb
And I'd learn I reacted to people
With the knowledge I had at the time

In due time though, I saw things more clearly
And with therapy I could now see
Due to trauma, I'd been too forgiving
And this 'fawn' response had hindered me

Jeremiah 33:6 (CEB)

...but now I will heal and mend them. I will make them whole and bless them with an abundance of peace and security.

Undeserving

Throughout life I have noticed a pattern
Though we all have a right to be loved
There are those who don't think they deserve it
And they feel that they're never enough

As you were

Over time you have built your own prison
Feeling safe as you live behind glass
Means you keep everyone at a distance
And it's worked very well in the past

It is safe and it's of your own making
Your emotions are under control
It's a method of self-preservation
Don't need anyone else to feel whole

Then someone flies under your radar
And you find your defences are breached
It's unnerving and quite unexpected
Since you've kept your heart way beyond reach

They ignite something warm deep inside you
You'd forgotten or never had there
It feels strange, but you secretly like it
And this person, they actually care

So you let them advance very slowly
You're conflicted as this feels so good
In your mind though a battle is raging
You feel happy, but don't think you should

Even though love was there for the taking
And you wanted that lover or friend
You built up those walls as defences
And made sure this love came to an end

Self-sabotage

In you, they have found the real love that they craved
Say you make them feel safe and content
But it soon becomes clear that this isn't the case
And on destroying it now they're intent

They love you but actually hate themselves more
The orphan spirit's deceiving their heart
Destroying the thing they want most in this world
Not content till they've ripped it apart

They know what they're doing but can't help themselves
Been emotionally neglected for too long
Not a feeling they've had for some time, if at all
Now your love and affection feels wrong

Rejection it leaves a deep wound in their soul
Of self-loathing and deep-rooted despair
They're suffering the effects of emotional neglect
And this hurt's something you can't repair

Abandoned by people who should have been there
They don't know who will stay and who'll leave
So they push you away because that's all they know
Then for love and acceptance they grieve

The person you love is now slipping away
And the worst bit? You can't do a thing
So you watch from the side-lines, as they self-destruct
And much heartache and pain it will bring

The only thing left is to give them to God
And detaching with love you must do
You gave them your all and it wasn't enough
Stepping back is now long over-due

Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

My prayer for you

To be loved is all you wanted
And in time I hope you'll see
That it's really worth investing
As it's something we all need

It's more valuable than riches
Longer lasting than any wealth
But by far the hardest lesson
Is to learn to love yourself

So my prayer for you is simple
And I pray to God above
That you live a life of perfect peace
And learn to give and receive love

Worry

Now I trusted God but I still worried
Through the daytime and even in bed
I would think of the worst that could happen
And then run through those things in my head

But the funny thing is, though, about this
That the worst things that happened to me
Were all things that I hadn't seen coming
Situations I couldn't foresee

When I learnt to completely surrender
And released that real need for control
I gained peace and a fresh understanding
Which brought stillness and calm to my soul

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present you requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds.

Surrender

True freedom for me came in stages
By releasing one thing at a time
My whole life I had dutifully carried
Many burdens not meant to be mine

This feeling of complete surrender
Followed many dark nights of the soul
I was slowly becoming unshackled
Whilst learning I'm not in control

Compassion and patience are virtues
As are loyalty, honour and trust
I needed these things for myself now
And through healing, I'd learn to adjust

No longer am I such a fixer
I know God does just fine without me
So I'll leave it to Him in the future
And I'll live my own life and be free

Isaiah 43:18-19 (NKJV)

“Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old Behold, I will do a new thing”.

The life laundry

Have you ever heard of the 'life laundry'?
It became quite the 'in' thing to do
Since leaving, I'd gone through this process
Which I'll share as it might just help you

Your possessions become such a burden
You can feel so weighed down by the mess
All that clutter can be quite oppressive
I had felt this, I have to confess

Now I once read a piece that explains this
You remove old receipts from your purse
And you'll find that your mind is much clearer
So I tried, couldn't make things much worse

Did I really need 10 pairs of trainers?
Umpteen bottles of dry hair shampoo
I found paring things down made life simple
And left much less work for me to do

Luke 12:15 (NLT)

Then he said, "Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own."

Faith

I would work really hard to recover
I deserved more than just to survive
Once I looked at my past and my choices
I could live a good life and would thrive

So, each time I was facing a challenge
In the past I'd be in a blind panic
I would flap and my mind would be racing
You'd describe my behaviour as manic

I'd be ringing my friends and my family
Just to share what I was going through
When I should have been stopping and praying
Saying, "God, I now give this to you"

I learnt over time to surrender
With a challenging text or phone call
I would stop and say "God, could you help me?"
He would know what was best after all!

I thanked God in advance for my blessings
Long before the results I could see
For I knew he was busily working
On the ways that He'd provide for me

In the midst of the trials God was with me
He was faithful, He walked by my side
I had seen how He does things his own way
He's a dab hand at turning the tide!

I have faith that God knows what He's doing
It's not like He's not done it before!
As faith is the substance of things yet unseen
I trust God because He knows the score

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

God's time not mine

God will open some doors as a blessing
Give us all that we prayed for and more
There are others He closes quite firmly
For He knows what is lying in store

I've been guilty of trying to bargain
Grant me this God and then I'll be good
But I'm asking for things that will harm me
They won't bless me and they never could

We can sometimes treat God like a genie
Rub the lamp, think He'll grant us our wish
But the answers aren't foregone conclusions
We expect to cross off our wish list

God works all things for good and our favour
But He has His own concept of time
And I don't need to know how He'll do things
It's so perfect, in His time not mine

Romans 8:28 (MSG)

That's why we can be so sure, that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

Growing

Neglect from a spouse is so hurtful
As can being ignored by your friends
You're invisible, that's how you're feeling
And a negative message it sends

It tells us that we have no value
Insignificant is the emotion we feel
This isn't the truth though, far from it
But we end up believing it's real

What's wrong with me? Why don't they like me?
You're beginning to question yourself
And withdrawing from people around you
Has an impact on your mental health

With some, it's because you've outgrown them
Things in common you have them no more
Perhaps you became a young parent
And for some you have lost your allure

Or perhaps, you're no longer of value
They got bored and they wanted a change
Whether swift or a lengthier process
In the end though, you find you're estranged

But don't be too down, it's a blessing
It was temporary, they weren't meant to stay
Just be grateful for what they have taught you
God has new friends He's sending your way

And with time you become more discerning
Finding who brings the best out in you
You're more choosy, with who's in your friend group
And your character starts to breakthrough

Just remember though how you arrived here
You allowed things you shouldn't have done
But since growing you came to discover
A new chapter for you has begun

Truly blessed

This lockdown for me was a blessing
I have had both the space and the time
A blessed period of introspection
To reflect and myself realign

It came as I finished my sessions
With my trauma appointments now done
I wanted a permanent record
To document how far I'd come

Something happened when I started writing
I have found that for me it just flows
Unlike form-filling, emails and letters
It's not so with my poems and prose

So what have I gained from the process,
From my poems that turned into a book?
I have found it's been very cathartic
And addressed things I'd long over-looked

For Such A Time As This

I have seen just how God will put people
In your life at the right time and place
He can also use you to help others
As you show them His mercy and grace

I believe that we meet for a reason
It's not luck and won't happen by chance
They can help us to learn a life lesson
And then on to the next stage advance

We have influence in our own setting
And the places we go every day
Try to live your life as an example
You don't know who you'll meet on the way

You don't have to be famous or clever
To be successful in this precious life
But the way we behave really matters
Even when in the midst of our strife

God made us all wonderfully different
No two of us ever the same
We all have our gifts and our talents
And we're all running in our own lane

It's an honour to share my life story
Though it's not all been laughter and bliss
I've been blessed and the journey's not over
I thank God I am safe and I'm His

The least, last and lost

At times we need help from a neighbour
Through the years, we've experienced lack
But remember when things are improving
That's the time you must give it all back

And not always back where it came from
But you'll know when the timing is right
You'll encounter a person who needs you
Maybe someone who's lost all their fight

You received, now you must pay it forward
We're all blessed with our time or our skills
It could also be sharing our income
Helping someone who's struggling with bills

I've been blessed by a number of people
For those things, I just can't count the cost
So be sure I will always endeavour
To be there for the least, last and lost

Matthew 25:45 (NKJV)

"I say to you, whatever you did not do for one the least of these, you did not do for me."

Beauty for ashes

I've been planted for this season
Where I am, to write this book
But I have to say it isn't
How I thought my life would look

Ever since I was quite little
I'd had dreams and big ideas
But my, it's been a journey
As I ventured to get here

So my therapy had ended
And I found I had the time
To pull it all together
And get it all out of my mind

Your head can carry all sorts
Mine was full to overflow
But by talking and now writing
It has found a place to go

Processing my feelings
After years of being numb
Believe me was a full-time job
But now that work is done

Some things will never leave me
They all made me who I am
But now I have that knowledge
I'll move on as best I can

I feel I've come full circle
With the optimism of youth
But learning from the lessons
And accepting some home truths

To think that God had known this
Even before my life began
He gave beauty for my ashes
As He worked his perfect plan

Isaiah 61 1:3 (MSG)

*To care for the needs of all who mourn in Zion, give them
bouquets of roses instead of ashes.*

Hope

I've been on quite a journey
But I wouldn't change a thing
My hope in Jesus showed me
After winter comes the spring

Nahum 1:7 (NIV)

*The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He
cares for those who trust in him...*

Contentment

Now I live in a place of contentment
Geographically and in my head
I'm at peace with the person I am now
And look forward to what lies ahead

More than enough

I don't need someone else to complete me
I am more than enough on my own
If the time comes to meet my life partner
I now trust it's by God I'll be shown

Purpose

We all have a reason to be here
It's no accident or a mistake
Each of us has our own story
And the best of this life we should make

For some 'doing life' is so easy
It seems things just drop into their lap
But for others, it's not quite that simple
They'll encounter so many mishaps

These experiences are never wasted
They will make you who you're meant to be
For God has a plan and a purpose
That you're not always willing to see

With free will then we follow our own path
This quite often though leads us astray
But the lessons we learn on that journey
Are not wasted, they're with us to stay

We can use them to help other people
Who are going through things just like us
They feel safe with you, knowing you've been there
And their intimate thoughts they entrust

I believe we can use what we've been through
I bear witness and I'm in no doubt
From the safety of where we are standing
We can reach in and pull others out

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Gratitude

I learnt to be so thankful
For everything life brings
From life defining moments
To the simplest of things

The comfiest of pillows
A son for whom to care
Food within my cupboards
And a God who's always there

Alternatives to issues
Like a bath in which to clean
Our clothes and our essentials
Having no washing machine

Learning to be frugal
Every day of every year
Using skills with which to make
A silk purse from a sow's ear!

For Such A Time As This

Being very careful
And not using things at will
Diverting birthday money
Just to pay the next gas bill

For having a huge garden
In which my son could play
And counting all my blessings
Each and every single day

Appreciating small things
Like a warm and cosy bed
Efficient forms of heating
And a roof over my head

Without words

Looking back now at my second marriage
More specifically our wedding day
I'll share something for which I am grateful
And meant more to me than words can say

Now my aunt had been ill for a while now
Had no speech, or much movement at all
She was loved by her own close-knit family
And great memories with her I recalled

With no option she lived in a care home
She had visits from family each day
With no speech it was often a challenge
To hear what she wanted to say

So a few weeks before we got married
This is where all the plotting began
As my aunt would be missing the wedding
My soul-sister and I hatched a plan

For Such A Time As This

I woke up on the day of my wedding
So excited for our special day
With my soul-sister acting as chauffer
I got showered then we got on our way

The first thing on the list was my make-up
It was only a short drive from home
And from there, my hair-dressers appointment
For my hair to be curled and backcombed!

Then we raced home to eat and get ready
And she laced me into my new dress
Made from cream lace, all sparkly and strapless
I just loved it, I have to confess

This time round, it was floor length and gorgeous
And I wasn't about to give birth!
My new shoes had a brooch-like diamante
I'd paid less than they were actually worth!

Then we walked down the path to her Clio
She had draped a beige fleece on the seat
I got in and she wrapped it around me
Now the preparation was complete

As we drove the short journey we chatted
It was bright with the warm autumn sun
We had less than an hour to the service
But in life some things have to be done

We arrived and by now I was nervous
She unwrapped me, I stepped from the car
We held hands as we entered the building
Now the walk to the room wasn't far

We signed in and walked down together
Then I saw my aunt sat in her chair
And that look I'll remember forever
A moment so blessed and so rare

As I walked down the ramp I was crying
I had tried to fight back all my tears
Then we hugged, that's a moment I'll treasure
It erased the last couple of years

Her sister, my aunt was there also
Bless her, she was in on the surprise
She'd gone early to get my aunt ready
And the reason she now realised

We had photos and savoured the moment
And I guess, it could seem quite absurd
But that visit would show me quite clearly
Just how much we can say without words

It's the little things

It's a text just to ask how you're doing
Or a call to arrange a lunch date
A posy of flowers from the garden
Or a message if you're running late

It's a hug when you desperately need one
Or a card they just popped in the post
It's a visit when you're feeling poorly
Or just knowing how you like your toast

It's just sitting there with you in silence
Or just knowing you need time alone
A kind word when you're feeling discouraged
Or just checking you safely got home

It is sometimes, the smallest of gestures
From seemingly insignificant things
That can make us feel cared for and special
And a feeling of warmth they can bring

Providence

I'm thankful for provision
And I always did believe
He's my Jehovah Jireh
And good things I would receive

Despite the many years though
That the locust may have eaten
I'd have neither fear nor doubt
With God I'm never beaten

Whatever had been taken
I just knew would be restored
And I watched in awe and wonder
As his love on me He poured

It wasn't just possessions
That had been returned to me
But self-love and acceptance
And a mind that was set free

Joel 2:25-26 (NKJV)

"So, I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten... You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied...."

Treasure

My three grandchildren are precious
And I love them all the same
They are all uniquely special
And just how I will explain

They're eleven, nine and six now
Truly nothing could compare
They each have their own character
Even different coloured hair!

In their own ways they're so clever
Caring, funny, kind and brave
And it feeds my soul just knowing
On my heart their names engraved

Every one of them's a treasure
They've more value than pure gold
And I knew that once created
God would surely break the mould

Matthew 6:21 (MSG)

The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

Remember

The things that I'm planning on leaving
Are not found in a safe or account
And they all have more value believe me
Than a sum or financial amount

You can't put a price on your memories
They're so personal between you and them
And they're gifts that will just keep on giving
You can think of them time and again

I missed you so much during lockdown
But I used my time writing this book
A collection of things I've experienced
When you're older you might want to look

I enjoyed making your memory boxes
Reminiscing about things we have done
The places we've been on our travels
What a blessing, we've had so much fun

For Such A Time As This

I don't expect you to learn from my lessons
You'll make life choices all of your own
I'm just sharing some parts of my story
So you won't feel so daft or alone

No matter what happens don't give up
You learn so much when you persevere
It will strengthen your character, trust me
If, to life's basic rules you adhere

Don't be sad if your plans don't quite work out
What's meant for you will sure find a way
They just might not be in your best interest
For that reason, God keeps them at bay

Jubilee

In the Old Testament book it is written
Back in Leviticus as I recall
Is the reference to something quite fitting
And it spoke to me loudest of all

It is found in the twenty fifth chapter
I believe that it starts in verse nine
It refers to a number of blessings
And to me, they all came as a sign

In April last year, I turned fifty
I considered it my jubilee
And whilst reading this part of the Bible
I felt it was written for me

There are a number of interesting features
It's considered a year when you rest
And a time for releasing the captives
That's the reference that I liked the best

For Such A Time As This

Things returned that were previously taken
And the cancelling or payment of debts
Since divorce, all these things I'd been blessed with
And I know God's not finished just yet

Leviticus 25:9-55

(As stated above)

Perseverance

Our suffering isn't wasted
For it leads to perseverance
And this will strengthen character
Without our interference

And by going through this process
It provides us all with hope
Which has a lasting impact
On our ability to cope

Romans 5:3-5 (NIV)

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame..

For such a time as this

The problems that I've had in life
Have never gone to waste
Through trials and tribulations
I've been covered by God's grace

Through years of lack as I look back
I had my share of woes
But soon I would discover
Sometimes, that's the way it goes

Ill-health it came some time ago
This too would be a blessing
God knew the life He had for me
And how I'd learn my lessons

Unprecedented times we're in
The future we don't know
God often uses times like these
To give us chance to grow

I trusted in God's plans for me
I never had a doubt
Through times of pain within the pit
He always pulled me out

I saw how God blessed Esther's life
That's when I understood
Whilst saving loo roll in the past
He'd used that for my good!

Through prayer and praise for endless days
My past I can't dismiss
I thank the Lord that I was born
For such a time as this

Esther 4:14 (ESV)

"...and who knows? Whether you have not come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?"

The helper

Holy Spirit is known as the helper
He has helped me so much in this book
I would listen to what He was saying
As this ministry I undertook

Now before I sat down at my laptop
I would pray that my hand He would guide
To work through me to help other people
And then by His suggestions abide

I would say, “Holy Spirit, please help me”
Find the words that I need from the start
Help me speak to each one of its readers
So my words will take root in their hearts

John 14:26 (MSG)

“However, the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything.”

Just ask

If today you have lived by some new rules
And you've put away things of the past
Then let me be perfectly honest
You can make all those new habits last

It's not easy, I know that, but listen
If repeating those habits of old
They won't help you now where you're going
Moving on means you have to be bold

It's not weak if you need help to do it
There's support but you might need to ask
Having tried for too long on your own now
That has been such an almighty task

For a time, you might need medication
Biologically things could have changed
But please speak to your GP about this
And they'll see just what can be arranged

For Such A Time As This

Talking therapies are very useful
But I found it must be the right one
You'll be baring your soul to this person
Many things that you thought were long gone

So reach out and get help if you need it
There's a life out there waiting for you
Real freedom is there for the taking
For yourself, it's the least you can do

Thank you

Dear Lord, I want to thank you
For the life you've given me
I've been blessed beyond all measure
I'm now where I'm meant to be

Freedom

I'd been sitting on my gifting
And I never even knew
That I had this book within me
It just shows what God can do

If this speaks to just one person
And for their prison it's the key
Then nothing has been wasted
If someone else is living free

Transition

Endings are often beginnings
As you move from the old to the new
It is painful but trust in the process
There's a life out there waiting for you

Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)

*"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.
See I am doing a new thing! I am making a way in the
desert and streams in the wasteland."*

The Crushing

I have found that in the crushing
And the refining in the fire
That it made me more resilient
And God knew it was required

To bring out the anointing
That was deep inside of me
To share my whole life story
And to set the captives free

Epilogue

Once victim, survivor, now thriver
I've been freed from guilt, shame and self-doubt
Hope my story can be proof to others
From this bondage there is a way out

Acknowledgements

First, I'd like to thank my parents
For their unwavering support
Since I left, we became closer
Especially when we went to court

And an even bigger thank you
Goes to my one and only son
He has been the inspiration
For everything I've ever done

And to my darling grandchildren
I couldn't fail to mention them
They all make my life worth living
And bless me, time and time again

And I'd like to thank the mummies
Of my grandchildren you see
They're a huge part of my story
And if you knew them you'd agree

Next, I'd like to thank my husbands
With whom I shared my solemn vows
Because without that life experience
I wouldn't be who I'm right now

And to my extended family
For all their help throughout the years
They have listened to my problems
And helped to wipe away my tears

And to all the friends who helped me
In so many different ways
And the agencies I worked with
Who gave me hope for better days

And I have to thank the strangers
I know we didn't meet by chance
God placed them there to help me
It wasn't merely happenstance

And I'd like to thank my dear friend
Him being grammatically adept
Taught me there's no need for commas
After every single breath!

For Such A Time As This

And my friend who helped with tech stuff
Both with my lap-top and pc
As I had no clue with layout
He was there to support me

And I'm grateful for the people
Who had faith and hope in me
Their financial contributions
Made this a possibility

But by far the biggest thank you
Goes to God for being there
He has been right there beside me
And with Him all my fears I've shared

Appendix

Bibliophile - A person who loves or collects books.
(www.dictionary.cambridge.org)

Codependency - Involves sacrificing one's personal needs to try to meet the needs of others.
(www.goodtherapy.org)

Coercive control - Emotional abuse uses negative feelings like fear, guilt and shame to control another person. Common tactics include insults, threats, coercion and criticism.
(www.goodtherapy.org)

Cognitive distortions - Are irrational, inflated thoughts or beliefs that distort a person's perception of reality, usually in a negative way. They can take a serious toll on one's mental health, leading to increased stress, depression and anxiety.
(www.goodtherapy.org)

Complex PTSD - (Post-traumatic stress disorder) - Caused by repeated exposure to traumatic events as a child or an adult.
(www.nhs.uk)

DWP - Department for Work and Pensions.

For Such A Time As This

Fibromyalgia - Is a long term condition that causes widespread pain of the body, extreme tiredness, issues with mental processes such as problems with memory and concentration. ('fibro fog')
(www.nhs.uk)

Jehovah Jireh - Means "the Lord will provide"
(www.christianity.com)

Malcontent - A person who is not satisfied with the way things are; who complains a lot and is unreasonable and difficult to deal with.
(www.dictionary.cambridge.org)

M.E. - (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) - Is a long term condition with fatigue being the main symptom.
(www.nhs.uk)

Narcissistic abuse - Happens when a person with narcissism or narcissistic personality disorder uses another person as a source of validation, self-esteem or as a way to get their needs met. It can lead to abuse and neglect of the other person.
(www.goodtherapy.org)

Ornithophobia - A fear of birds.
(www.dictionary.cambridge.org)

PTSD - (Post-traumatic stress disorder) - Is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events.
(www.nhs.uk)

Trichotillomania - Is a body focused compulsive and harmful self-grooming behaviour, involving powerful compulsions to pull hair from ones' body. The most common sites are the scalp, eyebrows and eyelashes.
(www.goodtherapy.org)

Twelve Step Programmes - Consist of a set of uniform steps that attempt to support individuals who wish to address a variety of addictions and behavioural concerns.
(www.goodtherapy.org)

References

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(Stanford University)

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire,

Registered Charity No. 261622

www.alanonuk.org.uk

Women's Aid, Registered Charity No. 1054154

www.womensaid.org.uk

Kenny Rogers, 'The Gambler '

(Written by Don Schlitz, United Artists 1978)

ManKind Initiative, Registered Charity No. 1089547

www.mankind.org.uk

Bible references used in full or part, taken from:

(ASV) American Standard Version

(CEB) The Common English Bible

(ESV) English Standard Version

(GNT) Good News Translation

(MSG) The Message Version

(NIV) New International Version

(NKJV) New King James Version

Other resources:

Alcoholics Anonymous, www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 226745

Co-Dependants Anonymous, www.coda.org

EMDR Association UK, www.emdrassociation.org.uk

Fibromyalgia Action UK, www.fmauk.org

Registered Charity No. 1042582

ME Association, www.meassociation.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 801279

Refuge, www.refuge.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 277424

(24-hour) National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Pat Craven, Living With The Dominator, 2008: A book about

The Freedom Programme, help@freedomprogramme.co.uk

Restored, www.restored-uk.org

Registered Charity No.1136774

Salford Survivor Project, www.thesurvivorproject.co.uk

Registered Charity 117911