



These poems are some of the winning entries into the South Warwickshire User Forum (Mental Health) Poetry Competition 2008.

South Warwickshire User Forum (SWUF) is a voluntary organisation which is controlled and run by users and survivors of mental health services. It ensures that users and survivors are involved in the planning, provision and evaluation of mental health services.

SWUF campaigns for equal opportunities for mental health service users and survivors and is currently involved in a Coventry & Warwickshire-wide anti-stigma project.

If you'd like to find out more about South Warwickshire User Forum, you can:

1. Log on to our website: www.swuf.org.uk
2. Telephone us on 01926 334257
3. Email us at sue@swuf.org.uk or grahamlacey@swuf.org.uk
4. Visit us above the Mid Warwickshire Mind Resource Cafe, 19b High Street, Leamington Spa CV3 3AW



Poems on the theme of Emotional Healing and Recovery

From Black to Grey to White

The colours inside my brain
Are changing
From Black to Grey to White
It's alright –
I no longer fear the light
Breaking through my unwashed window
Or the hollow in the bed
The stark reminder
Of the numbest days
Spent in a paralysed haze
The colours inside my brain are changing
From Black to Grey to White

Shelley Groves

Duel with Depression

I have to tame him.

I have to allow him
to lazily breathe
through my lungs.

I have to follow him,
across fields of bone
into red-eyed night.

I have to name him
so he becomes small
as a fledgling.

I have to believe
spring will come
and he won't eat my life.

I have to be patient
when stone-hours
fall on my eyes.

I have to know
he will leave and will not
come again for a while.

I have to choose
to live through fire
and survive burns.

I have to write him,
nail him in sentences
chain him with words,

tame him.

Cathy Whittaker

Win, Win, Win

I have got my body armour
A charmer
Going to stop being a self
harmer
I am going to start eating
This illness I will start beating
Mix with people
Pleasant and greetfull
Leaps and bounds
Health found
Success in your story
You have turned out adoringly
Was you like this before
Tremendous keep it up more
More

Dominic Muldrew

New Beginning

Each day there's a new beginning or
though it could
Have started last night each and
every moment is like
Like too bright
Every new beginning is like you win-
ning
Or maybe just
Grinning that's alright.
Each moment is now before and
onward
And every moment is a miracle
Where do you put it?
All
Forward March

David Clinton

Shattered Glass

Shattered glass, shattered life
High mood will you be my wife
Trudging roads that seem to lead
To years in which I will be freed

From shackles fastened to the
mind
Nulling my vision, making blind
The inner eye of mind's percep-
tion
Freeing constraints of connection

Moods, which would seem to me
to be
A mental lock without a key
Bruise my brain year after year
In cacophony of hope and fear

Riotous feelings, intense fears
And mood swings blent with bit-
ter tears
I have not cried because I feel
Beyond it, when will I be healed?

Feelings of ecstatic fear
Confuse the mind when youth's
dry tears
Bleed bloodless, blood but not
blood.
Staining these words, red salty
flood.

Christ, my saviour, come and
save
Me from this wasteland that you
gave
To that, that, by sorely testing me

I long to find the hidden rose
Of Mary, whom I sense and froze
In ecstasy that did not last
I long for days like this that
passed

Memory torments me in my lei-
sure
With images of former pleasures
But I can never sense again
Those glories that with madness
came

The illness is a complex maze
Which threatens to make me lose
my way
But rituals are born with which I
cope
With thoughts that almost make
me choke

Mentally, though tired with the
ceaseless task
Of resisting thoughts like splin-
tered glass
My fractured mind seems made
of steel
Its liberation is my appeal

Jonathan Ratcliffe