

Speak Out e-Zine



Edition No.2 ~

COMPASSION

A collection of art and poetry for survivors by survivors

“Behind all the darkness you are still
a wonderful colourful rainbow” 🌈 💜

~ Sally-Ann



New Beginnings in the Sunrise

Poetry flows out of the colours in the sunset and rests upon the silk cloth waves that the horizon gushes teal and saffron over. Ethereal phrases dip their vowels into the liquid sky and a crest of delicacy serenades the words.

“In this moment, the words softly spoken to my body are as gentle as these waves. I glow like the setting sun, and I’ll continue to glow through the dark.

I am more than the pretty pigments of this sunset: I am divine, I am washed in creativity, kind threads sew my insecurities closed, love has seeped from the slithers of light and absorbed itself into my skin, and I accept myself for all that I am.

I am loved.

I am creative.

I am content.

I am moving forward.

I am waiting for new beginnings in the sunrise.”

*And then she sets, sleeping into dusk
as the moon begins her night shift.*

*The waves continue to be gentle,
forever flowing,*

*because they have their moon to cast
a glittering sheen on their ebbing darkness.*

~ Libby Jenner
taken from their book
“Wings Unfurled”

'Better Days Are Coming'

Somewhere in the distance just out of sight
past all the darkness there is a light,
I know you cannot see it yet, but I promise it is there
one day it will come to you, as if out of nowhere.

I can see it in your eyes how hard everything is
but can say with certainty, it won't always be like this
I know with all my heart better things are coming your way,
the darkness will be lifted and the light will brighten your day.

I know you are exhausted and want to give up the fight,
but you have to keep believing up ahead there is a light,
it is going to bring you to freedom, peace and happiness,
one day in the future, not too far away,
the light will come out of nowhere and drown out all the darkness.

~ Lorna Kimpton

I attended the self-compassion group at Survivors' Network, and what I realised was that the closer I got to self-compassion, the closer I got to myself.

This is some of what self-compassion is for me:

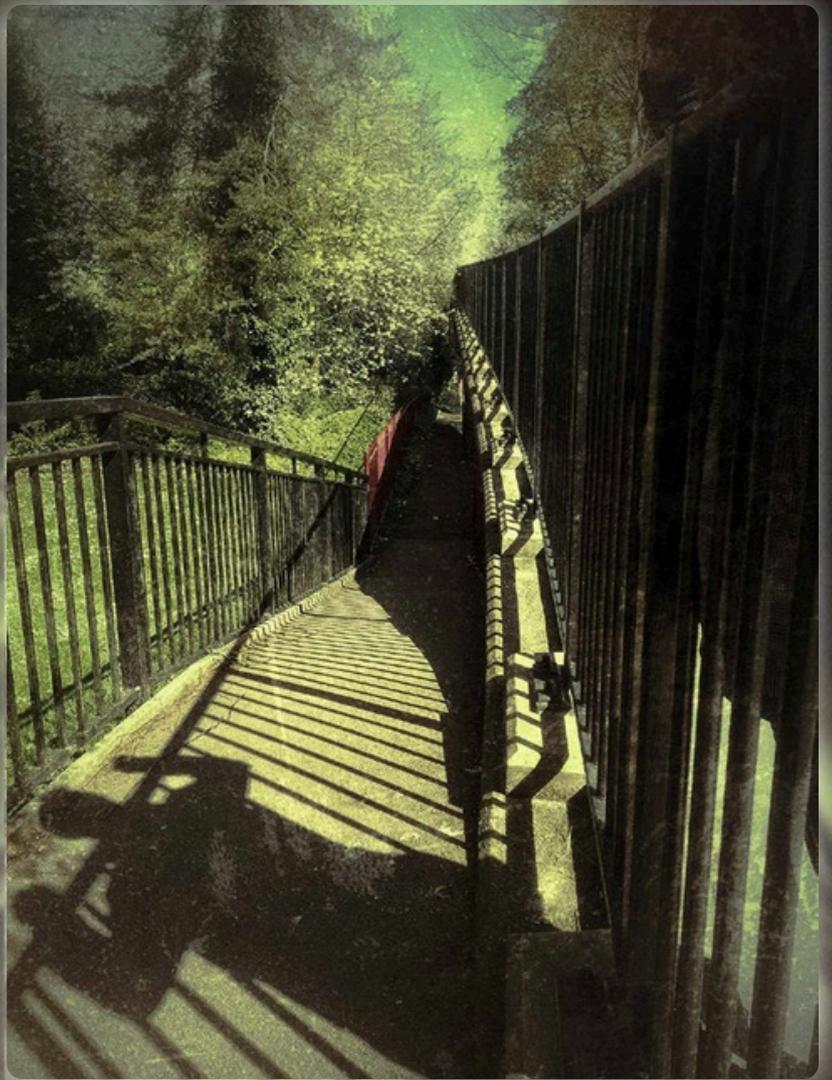
- Softness,
- Gentleness,
- Being kind to myself,
- Finding my pace,
- Not telling myself off,
- Reflecting and learning instead of criticising,
- Enjoying comfort food
 - beans on toast
 - tea and biscuits
 - jacket potatoes
- Blankets and candles,
- Forgiving mistakes,
- Singing badly and not caring,
- Keeping it simple,
- Easy smiles with friends,
- Bare feet on grass,
- Stopping, being, breathing, being,
- Taking a moment to reply...

~ ANONYMOUS



Sometimes you
can feel trapped
but there's people
who care and can
support you to
break-free

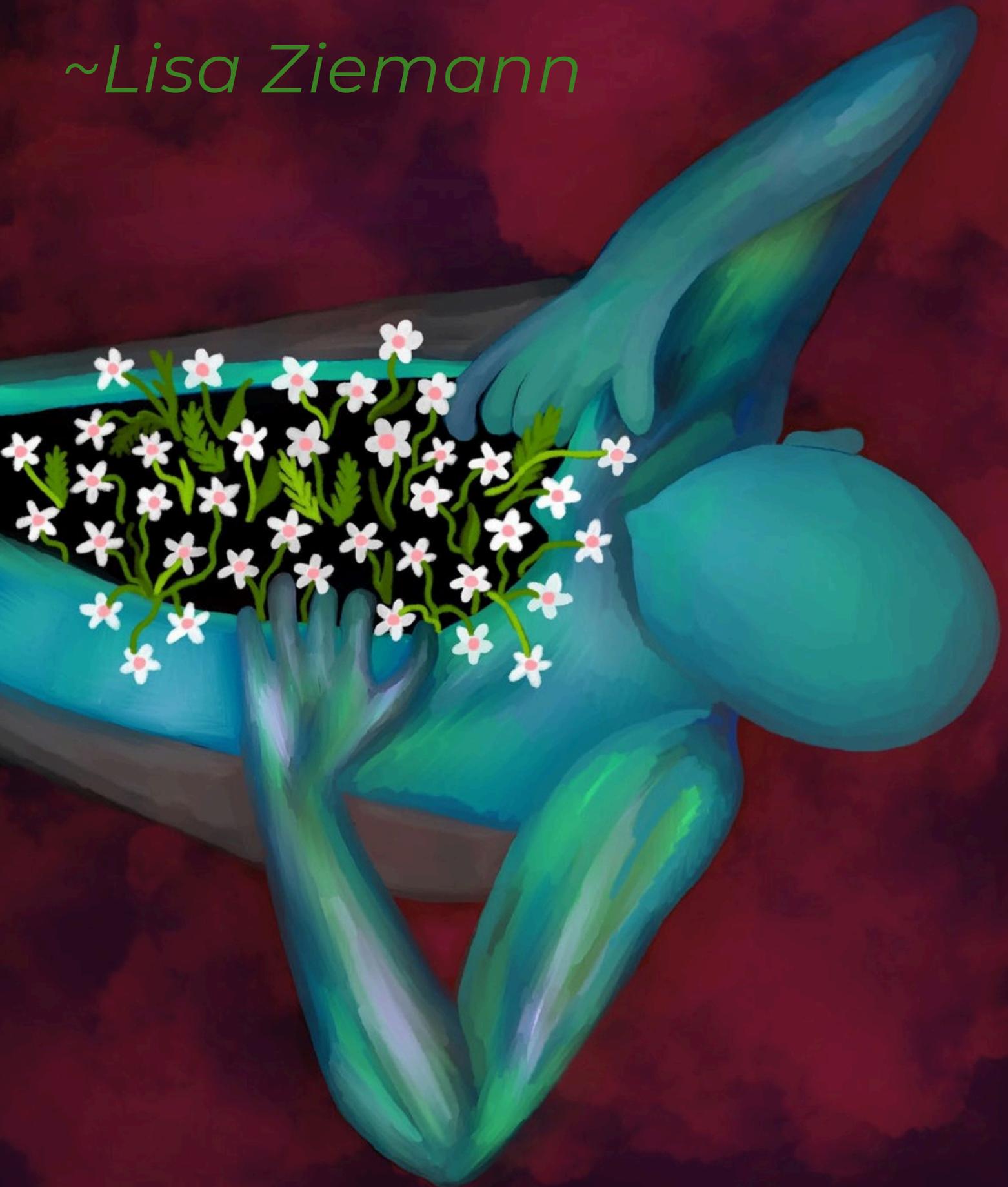
~ Tim Adwick



Keep hold of
the light, it is all
about keeping
going, we are
survivors and we
are warriors so
please keep hold
of the light

*"compassion is to open up a
part of yourself"*

~Lisa Ziemann



Trigger/Content Warnings: mentions of abuse/assault - not directly stated but implied

Letter to my future self

Right now, a pit has been dug, right where everything you knew yourself to be, six-foot dirt tossed out onto official reports and police calls, and now there's not even handfuls to put back into place.

But, at some point, maybe next July or early September, you realise you laugh again, without a cold bitterness seeping into you, that they will never know what it's like. When your friends ask you if you're doing okay, you will mean it when you say 'yes'. By now, the guilt would have lessened and maybe the anger hasn't yet, but it is quieter than it was.

You have danced since, and one night you stopped looking around for who could be there and now you never do. You will walk home with your friends, the sunlight creeping into the day, and when you walk through the front door your kitchen will no longer feel hostile and neither will your bed, because you sleep next to a better man now.

Your sister will tell you that you have finally gained weight back into your hips, and when someone tells you that you see the good in people you no longer see it as a consequence. Maybe you don't stop considering how unfair it is that everyone can be spared the details but the time between those thoughts have grown.

At this point, you would have had to forgive yourself over and over and over again, but now you no longer do, because you finally realise you shouldn't seek forgiveness for loving someone.

You have slowly started to pour love back into yourself, because you offer yourself compassion and kindness in a way that you didn't before. You have learnt to love again, and this time you know what it is, kind and gentle.

You will stop feeling lonely at coffee with your friends. You will be able to sit in silence again and now when you do, you don't think of him.

You have rebuilt yourself over and over and over again, and you will keep doing it. And at some point, you will notice how the pit is filling up again, with shared cigarettes and pub gardens, stress essays, lie ins when you said you'd get up early, starting the gym, wait never mind, brunch dates, long walks that you still consider hikes, card games, new skin-care routines, check-ins, check-outs, on the meds, off the meds, meeting the parents, make-ups after fights, still interrupting but really, really trying not to, wiping away tears that aren't yours, and are yours, teas made by other hands, beach sunsets and club dancing.

And with it all, breathing has become easy again.

~ Tregaskis

“Living will become easy again, I promise.”

Trigger/Content Warnings:
exploring depression, trauma, swear word

What is wrong with me?

...is a question I used to ask myself often. It opened a door to a myriad of complexing and self-deprecating thoughts. It led me down a road that was only paved with hate and disappointment.

Thankfully, I ask this question less these days, but it still crops up now and then.

So, what does it mean now?

I am wholeheartedly prouder of myself now. I can see with a beautiful dose of hindsight how much I have had to overcome.

Overcome is a strange word. It implies you went 'over' something. When instead, there is no 'over', or 'under', there is just through. You cannot go round. You cannot escape your path. So, through you must go. Overcome yes, but came through? Fought till the bitter brutal end? Absofuckinglutely. I like myself more now. Never thought I'd say that and mean it. Sometimes however, I don't like how I let people treat me.

I question... Have I come this far, learnt this much, healed from all I have, to allow new whims of ways people can hurt me?

I think I need to be a little softer on myself.

I love people. I care deeply and it comes naturally. So, in turn, I can sometimes be left wide open for people to hurt me. So, I get hurt, but not because I am weak and endure the sharp knives of people's own trauma because I just let them, but I believe people are good and are trying.

I refuse to give up on people. I refuse to let the worst ways they work be what defines them. There have been people who haven't given up on me in the past. And they are my most prized possessions. So I may get a little hurt, but I am strong and I see past the ways the world made you cold.

~ Liv Amber Rose,
taken from their book "Lover Girl"



**"Compassion starts within,
forgive yourself,
you survived!"**

~ Foxypan

Trigger/Content Warnings:
mention of perpetrator, emotions after trauma

🌻❤️✨ Wild & Free ✨❤️🌻

I'm grieving a past version of myself.
Longing to be the person I was,
Before I met the person who changed everything,

Who made that version of me vanish as if she never existed.

As if she never wandered the earth so wild and free that even the
wolves began to dance with her.

As if she never laughed so loud that the birds joined in.

As if she never felt so deeply on every level to mirror the ocean.

That woman is no more.

That woman is now a caged animal.

Although she rid of her captor, he still controls her every move.

Stagnant. Still. Timid. Scared to trust.

But she believes, and she knows, she will set herself free.

Wild and free.

You are brave

You are strong

You are amazing

You are powerful

Your voice matters

Stay hopeful

"Transmute your pain into something wonderful, that can help,
uplift and inspire others.

I stand in solidarity with you on your journey, and I believe you."

~ V

Trigger/Content Warnings:
abusers, domestic and sexual abuse, trauma therapy

To all you abusers, haters
You liars and you fakers
Thank you.

Thanks for making me strong,
Thanks for helping me see where I didn't belong.

Thanks for the domestic abuse it made it much
easier to cut you loose.
The narcissistics, the emotional and sexual
abusers I see you all too,
Again thank you.

After so many many hours of practice
I hold no hate, no anger, nor malice.

You helped me become the queen of my mental
health, helped me see and believe in myself.

I've acquired such a strong resilience, quit all of
the abusive coping mechanisms I used to numb my
existence.
Without any assistance.

I learnt some of life's hardest lessons,
Spent the last 3 yrs of my life having trauma
informed therapy sessions.
Changed everything.

I'm no longer in survival mode,
I've worked on myself, forgiven myself.
You see I have compassion for myself, I no longer
blame myself.
I was not at fault.

I'm surviving, somewhat thriving.
Life finally feels exciting.
Good or bad, happy or sad whatever impact you had
on my life,

I wish you well.

~ Kat Burton



Stay Sweet Acid Baby



Trigger/Content Warnings: mention of trauma

With the help of specialised teams
I hope one day to follow my dreams
To feel genuine happiness without a fake smile
To say I'm fine and mean it although this may take a while
I am so thankful for the team at Survive
They have taught me how to feel my feelings & that it's ok to thrive
Sure it will take time but that is ok
It's about one step in front of the other & that self love will show you
the way
So whatever your trauma know you're not alone
For no matter how little it may seem you too have shown
That you're not a victim but survivor instead
It's time to follow your heart and get out of your head
The team at Survive will be there to take your call
They can teach you to feel, to ground yourself when you feel you may
fall
So take your time and let survive help you through
As nobody deserves happiness after trauma more than you.

~ Jay L

“Being a survivor myself I can understand how hard it is to not only live through but live with such Trauma. One thing that helped me was knowing I was not alone. Learning that not everyone will turn me away if I need help. It's also ok to allow yourself to feel your emotions as it's ok not to be ok & to let that mask slip to show your vulnerable side. Survive especially in my local area helped me realise this & helped me understand that I should love myself & it was ok to say no & demand to be heard as it isn't selfish to take care of yourself as well as you may do with others. Remember how far you have come. You are here. You are ok & you are enough but more importantly you're not a victim you're a survivor so stand tall & be proud of the survivor you are.”

The place we go to survive.

Inspired by my mum. My best friend.

"You must go somewhere in your mind when life gets too much."

A place you visit for a moment, that lets you breathe.

Picture it. Just allow yourself to be there.

I am stood on the quiet end of Brighton and Hove seafront, towards the Hove lagoon. I used to live along that shore. It is peaceful and the world stops there. Nothing can hurt me there. Nothing can get to me there.

I am looking out upon the pebbly beach and out on to the ocean.

The sun is setting, and it is a winter's night. Not too cold to comfortably stand but enough for a cosy chill.

The world cannot hurt me here. I am home.

So when things get too much, when I feel restless and my mind races a million terrible thoughts and my stomach drops with each earth shattering revelation, and my body starts to not feel like my own again, I will come here, to my little part of the sea. Where it is calm and the occasional dog walker lets their dog loose and they run up to me so show me their toy, to then run off again following their owner.

This is where my world stops. This is where my mind can rest.

Where do you visit... when the world, your thoughts, get all too much?

~ Liv Amber Rose
taken from their book "Lover Girl"

The artwork submitted is inspired by Kintsukuroi (“golden repair”), the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with powdered gold. Titled ‘cracked porcelain’, it reflects on my journey towards healing.

When I first embarked on this journey, I mourned the old version of myself, the one who was free of trauma and triggers. I missed her.

Now deeper into my healing journey, I realise that my experiences and my efforts to heal from them have crafted the woman I am today; a woman who is so much more than she used to be, a woman who is stronger, more resilient, and kinder to herself. It is not without these ‘cracks’ that I would have had the opportunity to become this new version of myself that I am so honoured to know.

Learning to treat myself with kindness and compassion is one of the lessons I am most grateful for. While the journey of a survivor is painful in ways you cannot describe, there will come a day where the fight will end, and you will glow. With time, attention and patience, cracks can be mended. When dusted with gold, they become a beautiful part of your history, your journey of life.

~ gaiana-milane



gaiana
milane



Stay Sweet Acid Baby

'To Little Me, From Me'

I know you feel like everything people say and do
to you diminishes your worth,
And everything suggests you are never good
enough,
But one day I hope you can see,
That I am so proud of you and grateful for
everything you have done for you and for me.

You should have been playing and enjoying life,
But instead you were overwhelmed with troubles
and strife,
As much as you wanted to, you never gave up,
And look at you now, all grown up.

I know that it has been really, really tough,
But I can assure you, you have done enough,
So you have my permission to go and rest,
Knowing you have done your absolute best.
So, Little Me, go and enjoy your life without any
fear,
Knowing I have got it from here,
With all of my love, pride and gratitude,
Go and live your life the way you never could.

~ Lorna Kimpton

Interwoven Threads

**Sit with me, she whispered,
Help me gather the strength to take my footsteps onwards, out of these tangled
webs.**

**Rest in downy softness my sweet one, take each breath, inhale the kindness,
listen with compassion.**

**For each petal you shed in doubt, a new one shall flourish,
When your body is surrounded by swirling darkness,
The light is there besides you, fighting the battles inside that plague the mind
into uncertainty.**

**I witness your search for answers,
For clarity,
To unlock the secrets of the past,
Sometimes, it is not in our dimension to understand all that was.
The interwoven threads that bind are inherently strong,
They may seem inseparable, a part of you deeply entwined from shadows of
stories given,
It is not a flaw to have been bound by silence, for a fearful heart takes time to
heal,**

**You are no longer encumbered by spinning strands –
Your voice has broken each layer, one by one,**

**In truth,
Through darkness,
With courage.**

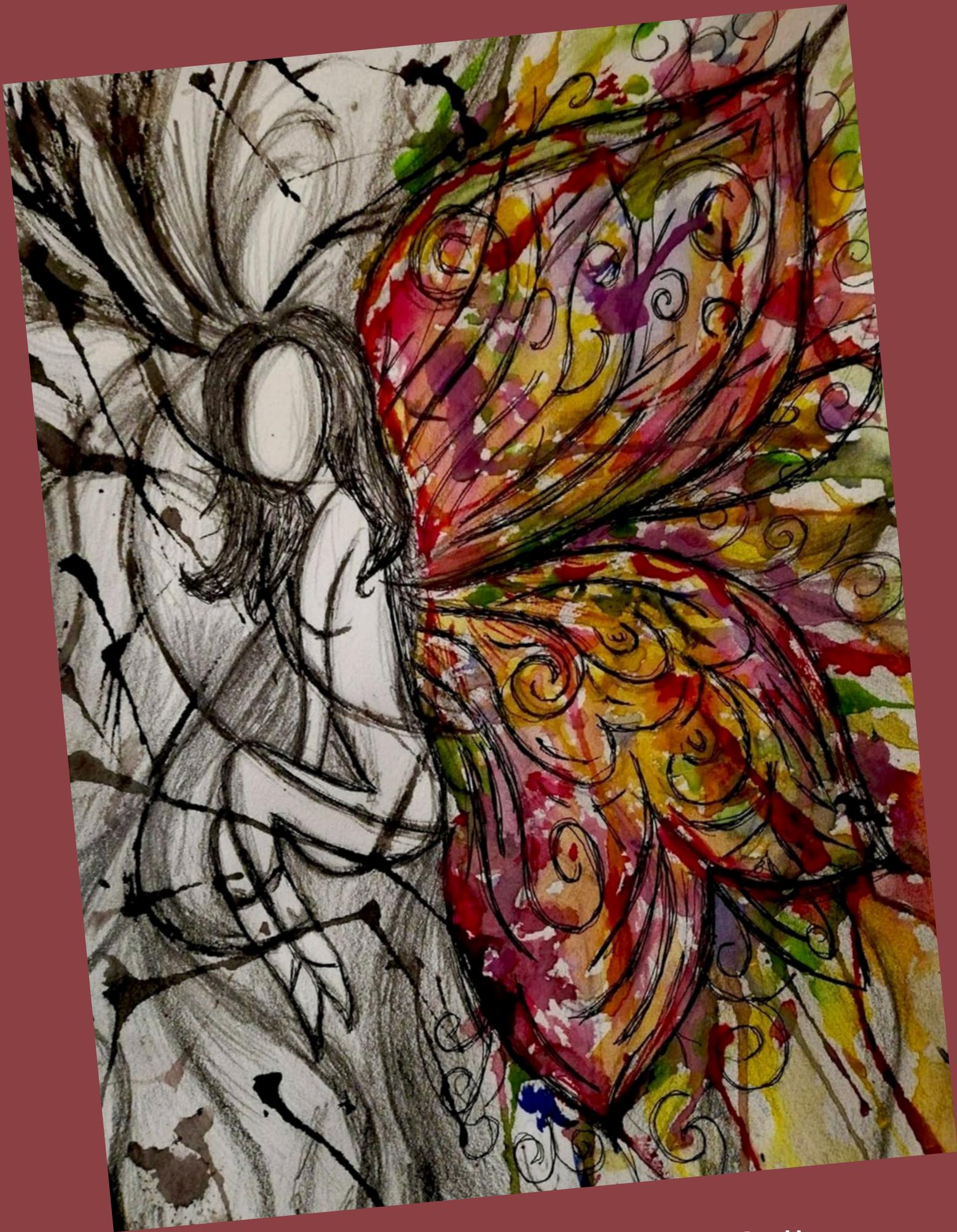
**You have given colour to the fabric adorned upon you and shone the beacon for
others,
In times of weariness, allow these thoughts to resonate with tenderness.**

Your life holds special value, an important place in this world.

**Far and wide, there are many who stand with you.
You may ponder who will carry you through, but know this –
It has always been you.**

**“Holding compassion for yourself
is not failure or weakness, it is
witness to your strength
for all you have survived.
You are your own hero!”**

**~ © Written by Elizabeth Shane – CSA Survivor
taken from their book “Behind the Mask”
Available at: www.elizabethshane.com**



~ Sally-Ann



compassion [kəm'pæʃ.ən] *noun*

a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a wish to help them

As someone prone to talking badly to myself I've found this Cambridge dictionary definition for compassion helpful and am managing to change my thinking by reciting it over my dark thoughts.

5 years ago I finally spoke out and got some help. On my journey nature is my safe place where I can be with my thoughts and warm my heart with greenery and water. This background image is of Black Down, the highest point in Sussex where you can see three counties merge.

A huge step for me was reporting with help from Survivors Network, again changing my internal narrative from powerless to having a helpful action plan. It's been quite a journey of ups and downs but I can say with honesty that I actually feel comfortable inside my body and can quieten the voice in my mind. I also trust that everything's actually going to be ok. It had been many years since I felt it was safe to hope again. You can survive and even thrive.

Thank you Survivors Network for all your assistance and letting me edit the second edition of Speak Out.

And thank you to everyone who submitted a piece of themselves though art or words. It's been a privilege to work with your content and share your journey into compassion.



~ Sienna-Marie

The Speak Out newsletter was first printed in 1990 when Survivor's Network was set up by a group of survivors of childhood sexual abuse. There are over 100 issues of Speak Out in our archive!

We have revived this amazing project transforming it into an online zine dedicated to showcasing the art, poetry, messages of love, support and solidarity of survivors in our community. If you would like to contribute to our upcoming quarterly editions, you can submit content on our website or get in touch with sara@survivorsnetwork.org.uk.

Our next edition is BRAVERY!