



A New Me

Examples of creative expressions

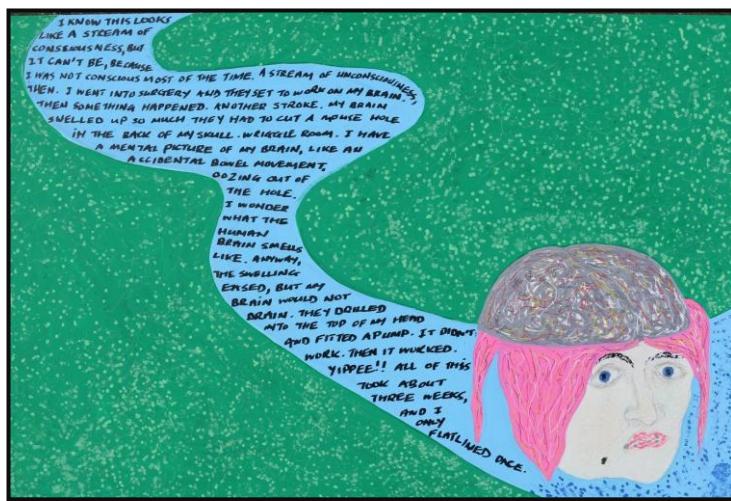
During ABI Week 2017, we're encouraging people to express how their brain injury has changed their lives and futures, creating 'a new me' in the process, through creative mediums such as art, poetry, song, film...anything goes! It could even be a letter to your brain injury (see below).

Whatever you create, it will be important to provide some context in the form of some accompanying text explaining how your brain injury and how it has changed you.

Here are some examples of creative means of expressing the impact of brain injury. But remember: anything goes!

Artwork

- **Billy**



"Oblivion is the second in a series of five pieces describing my 'Journey' from the first moment of my brain injury to the present day and my membership of Headway.

The head and face are based on a 19th-Century surgical diagram. Look closely and you can see glitter in the exposed brain. The head is floating down a 'stream of unconsciousness'.

"The handwritten words describe what was happening to me, most of which I was totally unaware. So the painting is called *Oblivion* because I was oblivious to everything around me, but it was also when I came closest to death, closest to oblivion."

- Tosh



Tosh is inspired by Bruce Lee. He said:
“Bruce Lee controls his body through his
mind. It's about being calm and controlled.”

“I have painted Mount Everest in the
background as it's my goal to climb it again.”

Pottery

Some groups are fortunate to have a variety of volunteers or therapists come into the centres to do art work with brain injury survivors. The following two examples are self portraits created at Headway East London with the help of a ceramicist. While such expertise may not be available to all, we hope these examples provide some inspiration.



An open letter to your brain injury

Will wanted to find a way to express his anger and frustrations about what had happened to him. He wanted to tell his brain injury that it would never beat him.

To achieve this, Will drafted a letter to his brain injury:

Dear Traumatic Brain Injury,

I do not know where you came from, or why, but I never want to see or hear from you ever again. You nearly beat me, but I am still here.

You have taken the last three years from me, but I am still fighting you, and standing tall.

I will never understand how close I came to losing everything, but even you giving me a glimpse of it was scary enough.

I would like to thank you though, Traumatic Brain Injury, for making me realise – and appreciate – what is truly important in life.

You nearly took everything from me, Traumatic Brain Injury, but you did not take Amy, or my family.

My wonderful fiancée – who at the start of my traumatic brain injury journey was my girlfriend – and has now agreed to marry me later this year (for which I still have no idea why, nor do I have any idea why she has stood by me throughout all of this) but that just shows the mark of her, or how lucky I am.

I doubt I would be here today writing this to you, Traumatic Brain Injury, if it was not for her, so I truly owe her everything.

Traumatic Brain Injury, you have given me depth, compassion, appreciation and strength, which I never thought I would discover – I just wish you could have done it in an easier way!

All of those months in hospital beds or rehabilitation units with nurses' and doctors' faces passing by like flickering ships in the night.

With family and friends sat by my bedside, not knowing what was going to happen to me.

All of those moments of doubt, of lost hope.

I never want to revisit those days again, Traumatic Brain Injury.

I never want to put my loved ones through anything like that ever again, Traumatic Brain Injury.

But it is too easy to be angry at you, Traumatic Brain Injury.

So instead, I would like to thank you, Traumatic Brain Injury.

Thank you, Traumatic Brain Injury, for delivering pride.

For delivering accomplishment, and achievement.

For delivering strength, and courage.

But mostly, for delivering Amy.

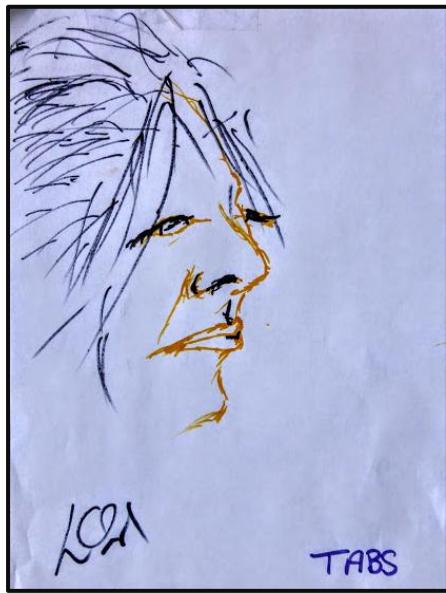
For as long as she is in my life, you will never defeat me, Traumatic Brain Injury.

Poetry

Back to here and now, Scarlett William

*The head injury is a
Reminder of your past.
Loudly
It speaks of past wanting
To be forgotten to wake
And think to help yourself
Be in the present
Live in the present
Talk in the present
The head injury helps
Because you are in the present
Dealing with your past choices
But relationships in your heart
(Or not) help in every way.
It doesn't help to be wistful
You have to deal with your shortcomings now
(The head injury brings you back to the here
and now)
How can I speak to him
When I don't recognise him
I'd know things if we talked
Say hi
Be in the present
Live in the present
Talk in the present*

Drawings



"I try to show thorough my art how I feel when I look at things. I try to show an object how I think it comes across," said Lee Oakland.

"Painting and drawing keep my head organised now. It gives me a sense of wellbeing."

Need advice? Contact James Coxon, Press and Campaigns Manager, on press.manager@headway.org.uk or 0115 947 1901, or for website or social media queries, contact Andrew Taylor on website@headway.org.uk or 0115 947 1903.

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