

The Recovery Position

Written on the occasion of Volition Away Day 'Whose Recovery Is It Anyway?' at the Carriageworks, Leeds, Thursday 24th January 2008

They used to make carriages here
For long journeys over uncertain roads,
But today we are making a vehicle
For a journey of the soul,
Ending with a sense of hope and self-esteem,
A long winding road up the side of a mountain,
In darkness and fog, shifting sands, sticky mud,
Dreaming of an oasis of calm
On a Caribbean summer's day,
A rainbow after the storm,
A journey but not a final destination.
To lose that skin that clung
Like burnt plastic marking me.
Now I am wrapped in this new skin,
Lightly.

The system itself is in recovery
From darker days and archaic ways of working.
"All change! Access all areas!
Risk!
Release!
Realisation!"

[1st voice:] "But I don't want to change!

*Recovery is b*ll*cks!
I'll lose my family and home,
My friends, my situation and my soul!"*

*[2nd voice:] "But for me, alone, isolated in my home
this new way means I'll breathe again.*

*This is my illness, I can zip it up,
And put it away on a shelf.
I can do more than get by.*

It comes down to control

Recovery is the whole person.
Being the person I want to be.
Making it crazy! Yippee!
A light that streams
To the end of the tunnel
From a gap in the clouds,
As if a ray of hope from somewhere else.

*'And they danced to the light of the moon, the moon!
And they danced to the light of the moon!'*

We have travelled this landscape
As huge as sky, as small as splitting seed.
We can see some sun on the greyest day.
We are like bulbs under the earth pushing up,
Even when no-one's watching,
Have run the gamut
From babbling brook to Mount Vesuvius.

Compiled by Tom Halloran and Terry Simpson of Leeds Survivors Poetry from words and images provided by conference participants.