

*Listen To The Silence:*  
*Poems About Life With A Physical Disability*  
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## **Introduction and Thanks**

This collection of poems started life as a dream. It is the type of book I've always wanted to read- one that has lots of disabled characters who, while never forgetting their disabilities, know that they also have abilities.

It was a university Creative Writing project that first got me to collect some of these poems into book form. Some were written long after that project, others long before. Yet here they all are, together. Some you may have seen before, as they have featured on my blog, Same Difference.

This is all my original writing- but these poems have been inspired by so many people that listing them all here would take me a week! I thank them all, though, for being themselves and being my friends.

Finally, I must thank my parents, for supporting my writing and everything else.

## **Normal**

Normal, to me, is a strange place to be  
A place I have no wish to see

Normal, to you, is the place where it's true  
That girls wear pink and boys wear blue

Normal, to him, is taking a bus  
To pay a visit to Toys 'R' Us

Normal, to them, is the sight of this ink  
Washing dishes in the kitchen sink

Normal, to them, is the sound of a song  
Normal, to them, is singing along

Normal, to her, is the taste of cooked food  
Normal, to her, is very, very good

Normal, to him, is playing a drum  
Normal, to him, is hugging his mum

Normal, to him, is having a dad  
Normal, to him, is very, very bad

Normal, to her, is loving a girl  
Normal, to her, is taking a whirl

Normal, to him, is loving a boy  
Normal, to him, is playing with a toy

Normal, to some, is a beautiful face  
Normal, to some, is a silent place

Normal, to some, is life in a chair  
Normal, to some, is "Who's going to care?"

After reading this poem, I hope you know  
Why normal is a place where I have no wish to go!

## Acrostic Poem- Disability

**D**o not even bother to look at me

**I**f what you are going to see

**S**tops at my eyes or at my ears

**A**nd if you'll only talk to me to fill my eyes with tears.

**B**e a little sensitive, open up your eyes and see that

**I**nside wheelchairs there are girls who use their wheels to go for whirls.

**L**ook past the sticks and past the chairs

**I**f pets are really guide dogs, please pat them and say "Who cares?"

**T**ry to see the best in us, please, and if you are able to do this with ease,

**Y**ou might just change a life that is far from a breeze.

## **I Speak Silence**

There is so much I want to say  
But I can not, there is no way  
I speak silence.

I want to tell him to take the bus  
I want to tell her to spend more time with us  
But I speak silence.

I want to tell her not to feel bad  
I want to tell him he is the best dad  
But I speak silence.

I want to ask him to play his drums  
I want to tell him to do his sums  
But I speak silence.

I want to ask her when it ends  
I want to tell them they are my friends  
But I speak silence.

I want to tell her to make it blue  
I want to tell him I love him true  
But I speak silence.

I want to tell him it is just a waste of time  
I want to tell her to fix this crime  
But I speak silence.

I want to play the game  
I want to know her name  
But I speak silence.

I want to know how winning feels  
How I would love to move without these wheels  
But I speak silence... no one understands.

There is so much I have to say  
But I can not, there is no way  
I speak silence.

## **Pastoral Poem: A Girl's Reply To A Marriage Proposal**

Can't marry you, can't give you love  
For I am no gift from above  
I can not sing, I can not talk  
I can not move, I can not walk

Can't marry you, can't give you much  
I have nothing to give as such  
From your world I am far away  
You don't need me, that's all I'll say.

Can't marry you, can't kiss your lips  
Can't hold your hand, I have no grip  
Can't marry you, cause I can't play  
Along, what else is there to say?

So that's why I can't marry you  
I love you but what can I do?  
I'll smile in silence all my life  
But I can never be your wife.

## Free Verse: Thinking I Can Read Your Mind

It is a sunny Saturday afternoon in Southall  
I am trying to tell you that I am right next to you  
But you do not answer... not even in the only way you can.  
But I look at you and I only feel sad, because I wish you could answer all the time as You once did, if only with a smile...

I take one look at you as you sit there right next to me  
All I am sure of is that you can hear the people, the little boys  
The ones who are all enjoying the sun...  
I wonder what you think of them as I watch you  
Sitting there more silent than usual  
Hardly smiling, and I think I can read your mind  
I do not think you like the sun  
But they did not even take the time to ask you if you wanted to be in the sun ... and I Wish they had... because to me, it seems unfair that you are not given a choice in These things... but how can I tell them that? I wish I could, but the words are trapped In my heart...

I wonder what you think of the one who stands behind you and treats you like a child  
I find out later that all she really wants from this sunny Saturday afternoon in Southall  
Is something very 'normal'  
Just a letter of reference  
I wonder how they can go to a place like this  
And only want a piece of paper  
When I am only there to see you smile  
To see your mum spend time with you  
Away from all the things that she has to see  
That no parent should.  
But then I realise that they are all the same  
Finding one who is not like that is unusual  
A pleasure when it happens, but one we hardly get.

They leave you alone in an empty room  
My mum is rushing home today  
So I turn to follow them  
But I stop in my tracks... and turn back.  
How can I leave you alone?  
How can they leave you alone?  
I want to tell you where I was yesterday  
I want to see your reaction  
I think if you could, you might smile if you knew that I still go there...  
But you sit there more silent than usual  
And yawn

And finally, I read your mind  
Or at least, I think I do...  
You would rather have been at home  
Than in this place, today  
On this sunny Saturday afternoon in Southall  
But when this thought crosses my mind, I do not feel insulted  
I only wish that you had been given the choice...  
But it's no person's fault that you can not use your voice...

## The Room

The room is a special place on a very 'normal' street.  
The outside world doesn't even know it's there.  
But even if they did, I wonder, would they really care?  
The room is always noisy, filled with sounds of stamping feet.  
Feet taking steps, some for the first time.  
Or the feet of parents who have left their children there  
To receive a few hours of her expert care.  
While they have a rest, that for some is so rare,  
That no one has the heart to see it as a crime.

If I tell you the countless reasons why we love the room,  
You might see why we do not care that it rarely meets a broom.  
Yes it may be a place hidden on an otherwise 'normal' street,  
Hidden away from the cruel world, who only laugh because we cannot use our feet,  
But to us it is ours, our room full of toys.  
A room where boys meet girls, and a room where girls meet boys.  
A room where we meet our friends.  
A room where our achievement never ends.

A room where we learn to walk.  
A room where we learn to talk.  
A room where we listen and smile,  
A room where our silence is understood, if only for a while.  
A room full of toys and books.  
A room where you can fall and nobody looks.  
There is a radio there and when it is on,  
We can listen to the news, or the latest hit song.

She painted the walls bright yellow a few years ago.  
Why she chose that colour, none of us will ever know.  
But I am sure she had her reasons.  
The paint has lasted through the seasons.  
Now they are covered with our pictures,  
Which shows you how much she loves us.  
On the windowsill, one of many toys,  
Is a beautifully decorated model bus.

From this room people come and go,  
But not always as they please.

You see many of us have many problems and so,  
For some communication is far from a breeze.  
In this room we know we'll be treated with love.  
In this room we might even be protected by angels from above.  
From each now bright yellow wall,  
The ghosts of childhood moments call.  
For many children, some now grown old,  
That room holds precious memories, of friends and paper stars of gold.

The carpet feels like the sand on a beach  
We stand on it, she gives us toys, or hands, or new goals that we have to stretch to reach.  
The window at the back looks out on her pear tree,  
My favourite memory of the room is the time she gave some pears to me!

The person I describe on these pages  
Is the owner of the room.  
Someone many people will love through the ages.  
The real reason why we love that room where lives are saved,  
The one who understands our silence  
The reason we have never given up and never caved  
Into the pressures of the world outside the room,  
The world where uncontrollable movement is sometimes mistaken for violence.

If the world knew what we do in that room  
They might not see the point.  
They might lock it up, after using a broom  
To sweep up the memories we make as she loosens our each and every joint.

This description of our special room  
Holds a message in disguise  
Next time you, mainstream world, see a room locked away  
Please, take a minute, and stop and simply say,  
What happens here, is it just an isolated room?  
Or would the events that take place in this room make me stop and stare in surprise?

## Acrostic Poem- Inclusion

I have every right to be here in this school  
N ot according to the mainstream, though, they just don't think I'm  
C ool. I wish I could set them straight somehow and let them see  
L et them see just how much knowledge is trapped inside of me.  
U ntil they can see that, none of us have a chance  
S o please, can't you show them, tell them to give us all a second glance?  
I have no one else to ask but you  
O nly you can make my dream come true, so please go out and say  
N o to special education, today and every day!

## One Look At The Chair

"**She** won't be welcomed in this school  
There's very few here who will think that **she** is cool."  
"But..." Said her dad, feeling more than a little sad,  
"Our daughter has got such a brain!  
She knows you won't get far in London if you can't handle rain!"  
But they took one look at the chair  
And they decided that they didn't care  
Is that fair?

"**She** won't be welcomed in this school  
There's very few here who will think that **she** is cool."  
So her parents won't bring her here again  
She stays silent so they don't know how she's handled the pain.  
The teachers took one look at the chair  
And they decided that they didn't care  
Is that fair?

"**She** won't be welcomed in this school  
There's very few here who will think that **she** is cool."  
"How will she go upstairs?"  
"We've no space **here** for these moving chairs!"  
"Well install a lift, then!" Said her dad, trying not to cry.  
"We can't, sir." No one cares. He always gets the same reply.  
After just one look at the chair  
Teachers always decide they just don't care  
Is that fair?

Maybe not but just one look  
Just one look was all it took  
They took one look at her brand new wheels  
And said 'Why bother how **she** feels?'  
After just one look at the chair  
About her perfect test results, well, who has time to care?  
Is that fair?

One look at the chair was all that it took  
For them not to ask her favourite book  
Which is any Harry Potter, just in case **you** care  
But at the school, just one sight of the chair  
Made a class of year elevens stop doing coursework just to stare  
Just for one sight of a chair on wheels

"She doesn't have a voice, why should we care how **she** feels?"  
All this because they took one look at the chair  
Is that fair?

As for the girl in the chair  
She could teach them everything  
In one lesson, but do they care?  
Of course not, they're too busy having  
One look at the chair.  
Is that fair?

Is it fair that she's not welcome in this school  
Is it fair that so few would think she's cool  
Is it fair that they base all their lies  
On a chair on wheels, and not the smile that lights her eyes  
Not on how she feels.  
Is it fair that when they take one look at the chair  
They decide straight away that they just don't care  
Is that fair?

Next time a teacher sees a student in a seat on wheels  
I hope they'll stop and see a person, and think of how the person feels.  
Because I promise you there are so many out there  
With so much more to give your schools than just a moving chair.  
Would it be fair  
If everyone took one look at the chair  
And decided straight away that they just didn't care?

If all it takes is installing a lift in your school  
Buy a lift. You will buy so many a priceless gift  
And make them feel so cool  
So go ahead and be the one to change the rule  
Take one look at the **person inside** the chair  
Give them just one smile, to show that you care  
Because, teachers, it's only fair.

We can't drive cars, that may be true  
But we might just get A stars, teachers, it's all up to you  
So let us in, and let us win  
This timeless war, we can't be bothered to fight any more  
Let us try, don't make us cry  
Show us that someone out there really cares  
Show us that not everybody stares  
At countless girls in countless wheelchairs

She may never wear high heels

But all she asks is that you look at her, not at her wheels  
After all she's the girl with enough of a brain  
To know you won't get far in London if you can't handle rain!  
She may not be very bright  
But please let her find out for herself, we all deserve that right.  
Please give her a chance  
She may never participate in Dance  
But please give her a second glance  
Please don't decide that you don't care  
After taking one look at the chair  
Because tell me yourselves, teachers, would that be fair?

## **Special Mothers**

Let me tell you about special mothers  
For they are mothers like no others  
While most children are climbing frames  
Their kids get called cruel names  
They sit in silence watching this  
Which is the opposite of bliss  
Yet still they have to see all this.

Let me tell you about special mothers  
For they are mothers like no others  
While most children are playing games  
Their kids watch from standing frames  
They sit in silence watching this  
Which is the opposite of bliss  
Yet still they have to see all this.

Let me tell you about special mothers  
For they are mothers like no others  
While most children are climbing stairs  
Their kids watch from moving chairs  
They sit in silence watching this  
Which is the opposite of bliss  
Yet still they have to see all this.

Let me tell you about special mothers  
For they are mothers like no others  
While most children go to school  
Their kids are told they're too uncool  
They sit in silence watching this  
Which is the opposite of bliss  
Yet still they have to see all this.

Let me tell you about special mothers  
For they are mothers like no others  
While most girls are wearing high heels  
Their daughters are watching from seats on four wheels  
They sit in silence watching this  
Which is the opposite of bliss  
Yet still they have to see all this.

Let me tell you about special mothers

For they are mothers like no others  
While most boys are kicking footballs  
Their sons are watching through gaps in brick walls  
They sit in silence watching this  
Which is the opposite of bliss  
Yet still they have to see all this.

But the thing about these special mothers  
That really makes them like no others  
Is that while most parents listen for a lie  
These mothers are watching... their children die  
They sit in silence watching this  
Which is the opposite of bliss  
Yet still, they have to see all this.

## Free Verse: Wish You Were Here

The scene in the picture makes me wonder  
Did you do the same thing, once?  
Or want to, wish you could, if you only had the chance?  
Or did you always know that he would give you so much more than just a second glance?  
If only you still had the chance  
To find out...

I stand there, where you should be... sitting, at least  
I think she gave up wishing you could stand, somewhere along the way.  
I stare at the pictures, the ones on her walls... your walls,  
Or they were, in my mind, when it was your house, before it hurt to think of it that way.  
and I stand there with your mum in her front hall... your front hall...

I don't let it show but to me, somewhere, it is still your house, and she is still your mum...  
There was a time when I might have been there with you...  
If I had only made the time then, but now, at least, I do...  
Now I am there for her, with her...

Opening what she still calls your e-mail...  
If only it was... if only you could read it, I'd fill it with jokes...  
But the letters she gets in it now make me want to cry.  
And her phone books, they have been the same, since our numbers filled them in nursery  
school...  
She has kept your friends, as what they were to you  
They are still where you put them in her phone books...

I laugh with your sister...  
Your dad... well the only one that matters, but I never found out what you thought of that...  
What would you think of him now?  
He makes me smile, and I wish I had known him then... when I got to meet you once a week...  
I think you knew him then, but now I'll never know...

Because I sit there with them as they all make me smile...  
I know you could be watching me now...  
But all I can do is wish you were here... there... in that room... with them... because What am I  
doing there without you?  
Only feeling like it is where you should be...

And then I wish I could go back to the time  
Before my time had to change.  
Then I wonder... if we still met there, where we used to meet,  
Would you want to meet me there... or anywhere?

Did you ever want to meet me there?  
Did you wait for the chance, like I did, in that place...  
Or was it just the place you loved  
Just the place you waited for?

Then I wonder again, what you would say, or think, if you saw me now.  
Would you want me to be there?  
Would you want any of us to be there?  
If it was still yours, or even if you could somehow tell her what to do with it...  
What would you say?  
What would you say about any of it?

She tells me something, and I can only wonder if you would like it...  
I can only guess now, and hope, and wish you were here...  
Wish you were here, so I could go there to laugh, to smile, to celebrate with you...  
Not just to sit there and feel like something, some one... is missing...

## **Payback**

First, you put my mum through hell during my birth  
Then, you thought you could pay her back  
Said you wanted to improve my life on Earth.

Can your payback buy back my mother's hopes and dreams?  
I've got news for you, it's impossible, as easy as it seems

Can your payback buy me new arms and legs  
Ones that work? Thanks to you, mine don't, and never will.  
Can your payback buy me a voice, to use when my mother begs  
To know what I would say to her, while I spend all my time lying still?

All your payback can do is buy me a moving chair  
And a few hours with someone who is paid to care.  
Guess what? All they really do to me is stare  
Or sit around telling the world that my life is so unfair.

Your payback can't buy me the friendship  
Of those who are paid to care  
It can't buy arms, legs or a voice that works  
And you can't pay me back for the pain of a stare.

You can never pay my parents back  
Enough to buy a son  
You see, there's no way back from Heaven  
Even if I wanted one...

So, you see, you ruined my life  
A life that didn't even last  
Even money can't buy it back  
Now my life is in the past

The payback you gave to my mother  
Can't give her what she really wants  
So what is the point of your payback?  
You tell me, what am I going to do with plants?

## **I Wish**

I wish you could be me  
For just a little while  
I wish you could see  
Just what it's like to see you smile...

I wish you could walk  
A step in anyone's shoes  
I wish you could talk  
Just enough to choose...

I wish you could eat ice cream  
I wish you could eat cake  
I wish I could ask you if there was any truth in my childhood dream  
I only wish to have a conversation with you, for goodness' sake!

Sometimes I wish we could fight  
For that's what most friends do  
Most would wonder if my head is right...  
But I want to have a reason to be angry with you!

I wish you could watch the TV  
As they give some credit to you  
I wish you could tell me  
What exactly did you do?

But all these are wishes that can never come true...  
For you can't use your voice...  
So I wish all my wishes in silence  
And in this I have no choice...

## **The Concept Of Normality**

The kids who are different  
Have something to say to  
Every member of what we like to call the 'mainstream' world

Can you look past our wheelchairs?  
Our walkers, our white sticks?  
Not at them, but please look at us  
Can you do that for us?  
Everywhere we go,  
People only see what they want to see  
That is, the wheelchairs, the walkers, the white sticks, not us.

Our dream is to be accepted by the world  
For more than just that

Not as wheelchair users, guide dog owners  
Or 'the one with the walking frame'  
Remember, if you will take the time, that we are people too  
Maybe, just maybe, we have hearts  
And maybe, just maybe, they will be broken by your cruel words  
Let me know if you meet normality walking down the street  
It doesn't exist in our minds  
Though we know that, being members of the mainstream,  
You might not agree

## **The Kids Who Are Different**

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids not allowed to get A's  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not meet your gaze

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not wear high heels  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who sit in seats on wheels

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids whose lives have not been a breeze  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids with the dreadful disease

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not go to school  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who are so very cool

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will never sing along  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will never dance to a favourite song

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not kick a football  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will professionally... fall

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who own guide dogs  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will never have their own sprogs

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not hug their mums  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not do sums

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not use Yahoo! chat

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not stroke a pet cat

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not lift a pen  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not use MSN.

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who do not have a sister  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will never play Twister

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who can not run for miles  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who express themselves with smiles

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will never do art  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who are so very smart

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids whose silence never ends  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who are my very best friends

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will never drive cars  
Raise your glasses to the kids who were different  
To the kids who have now turned into stars

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who have never used the Internet  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids we must never forget

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who are the only ones  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who are daughters and sons

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different  
To the kids who will never read books  
Raise your glasses to the kids who are different

To the kids who never get loving looks

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different

To the kids who can not return a sign of love

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different

To the kids who are gifts from above

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different

To the kids who have never had a phone call

Raise your glasses to the kids who are different

To show them that, really, they are not that different at all!

## **Can You Do It For Me?**

I can not kick a ball  
Can you kick one for me?  
I can not run a stall  
At a fair, can you run one for me?

I can not take the bus  
Can you take one for me?  
I can not make a fuss  
Of a child, can you spoil one for me?

I can not run around  
Can you do it for me?  
I can not sit on the ground  
In a field, can you do it for me?

I can not wear high heels  
Can you wear some for me?  
My seat is on wheels  
Not on legs, can you push it for me?

I can not sing a song  
Can you sing it for me?  
I can not learn to drive along  
A road, can you learn it for me?

I can not draw a straight line  
Can you draw it for me?  
I can not use this pen, though it's mine  
Can you use it for me?

I can not play a drum  
Can you play it for me?  
I can not hug my mum  
So, my friend, can you hug yours for me?

I can not walk down the street  
Can you walk one for me?  
I can not make use of my feet  
They don't move, can you use yours for me?

I can not take care of my sister  
Can you take care of yours for me?  
I can not play a game of Twister, which is why

You should play one for me.

I can not sweep my front yard

Can you sweep yours for me?

I can not write a card

It's Mother's Day, can you write one to your mum, for me?

I can not read a book, so can not pray

Can you read it to me?

I can not have a look

At accounts, can you check them for me?

I can not love my best friend

Say you love yours, if you do, for me.

My life came to an end

Too soon, please, live yours to the full, just 'cause you can, for me.

## Listen To The Silence

Please listen to my language, if you can  
It sounds nothing like yours, though I'm still a man.  
It's not the language of love, of a cat or of a dog  
It's a language called silence, and no, I am not a frog!

I'm a girl like any other  
With a bright smile for my mother.  
My electric wheelchair is my new toy  
Sitting in it, my eyes light up with pure joy.

Do you notice the joy in my eyes, as I drive my brand new wheels  
Does the thought fill you with surprise, that right now I understand how passing a driving test  
feels?  
Or can you understand the truth in my smile  
At the thought that now I can drive, even if it is only at one mile  
A minute?

Our speed limits are worse than yours by far  
Oh, how I wish I could have your sports car!  
Or, even better, I long for your feet  
Wheels, you see, are no use in snow or sleet!

But enough about my chair  
Lovely as it is, I've more to say, much more to share.  
Five thirty five on BBC1  
*Neighbours* theme tune blares out as I wait for my fun.

With a light in my eyes and a smile on my face  
Ramsay Street is a beautiful place!  
Closely followed by Summer Bay  
Six PM? It's time for *Home and Away*

Turn off the TV, for there's homework to be done  
I'm just like you, and I don't always find it fun  
So I put it away, cause I long for a detention  
Please stop laughing, for I hate special attention.

Next day I'm wheeled into English class  
The only one I know I'm going to pass!  
The girl on the other side of the room  
Does she know I'm watching her, or that my heart's going BOOM  
In the process?

Does she understand my silent smile?  
Or only see my chair and long to run a mile?  
Does she understand the strength of my love  
Or does she think she's far above

The boy in the electric chair  
Who's life is just so unfair  
Unfair it is, but you can change  
That when you understand that we're not strange

We speak a different language, but then who does not  
A written vocabulary we haven't got  
But we understand yours, maybe better than you do  
We answer your questions with smiles of friendship true.

Please stop and take the time to read my face  
I'll take you to a beautiful place  
Comfort me with words when you see that I'm in pain  
You might just make me smile once again.

Return a smile to share my joy  
Tell me that you love me and make me feel like a boy  
Not a stranger from a foreign land  
Please, listen to the silence, and try to understand.

I'm just like you  
It may be strange but still it's true.  
I'm not a stranger from a foreign land  
Please, listen to the silence, and try to understand.

## **A Walk Through My World**

How can you tell me we're stupid?  
And say in our eyes the sun cannot shine?  
If you'll just take me by the hand, I'll walk you through my world,  
I'll show you some things that might make you change your mind.

Do you see the young girl  
In the seat on four wheels?  
She's dreaming of wearing  
Your old high heeled shoes.  
In her eyes, you'll see a smile  
And forever by her side  
Is the mother who longs to see her walk a mile.  
They'll break and you'll throw them away  
While she wishes that she may  
Walk just one mile in your old high heeled shoes.

So how can you tell me we're stupid?  
And say in our eyes the sun cannot shine?  
If you'll just take me by the hand, I'll walk you through my world,  
I'll show you some things that might make you change your mind.

Do you see the young boy  
Who sits silently on the seat  
In a crowded classroom, he sits all alone  
Dreaming of having their feet.  
In his eyes you'll see a smile  
For he has done his homework  
Inside his own head, he's just a teenage boy  
But the teachers think he knows nothing  
So they treat him like a forgotten toy.

How can you tell me we're stupid?  
And say in our eyes the sun cannot shine?  
If you'll just take me by the hand, I'll walk you through my world,  
I'll show you some things that might make you change your mind.

Do you see the young girl  
Who has just left her wheelchair  
She'll struggle to walk to the end of the room  
Many will watch her, but too few will care.  
She's walking to pick up her exam results  
An A star in year ten.  
In Maths no less, look closer and then,

In her eyes you'll see a smile  
For she knows that though she cannot fly  
She's passed with flying colours,  
With a whole year to spare.

So how can you tell me we're stupid?  
And say in our eyes the sun cannot shine?  
If you'll just take me by the hand, I'll walk you through my world,  
I'll show you some things that might make you change your mind.

Do you see the young girl  
In her brand new wheelchair  
She reads Harry Potter  
When she has some time to spare.  
In winter when it's cold  
She dreams of holding gold  
But she's telling her own story  
To a world that might not care.

How can you tell me we're stupid?  
And say in our eyes the sun cannot shine?  
If you'll just take me by the hand, I'll walk you through my world,  
I'll show you some things that might make you change your mind.

Do you see the mother  
Holding her young son's picture  
In her eyes you'll see a smile  
As she remembers him wheeling his mile.  
Her dreams for him were cut cruelly short  
For someone one day did not care.  
He spent his life in an old moving chair,  
While she became his voice.  
He told her just what to say, dreamed of saying it himself  
But he couldn't speak your language  
And so he had no choice.

They are just like you and me,  
I know this and so they're my friends.  
They can never leave these chairs  
But they can understand,  
Every little thing you do,  
And they feel a love that never ends.

Do you still think we are stupid,  
Think in our eyes the sun can't shine?  
You've helped me walk you through my world

But have I changed your mind?

## The Other Side

A three year old girl went into a classroom  
She doesn't know how she got there  
She only knows that she didn't step inside... at least... not alone.

That's another thing she knows... she was never alone  
That classroom was one place where  
There were very few who did not care

So she went into that classroom  
She met two people... on a register.  
You see, they couldn't answer...

\*\*\*

Two short years later and her parents began the fight  
To give her the right... to leave that classroom  
At the time, they all thought she wanted to win...

It was a slow war  
Every battle was celebrated when they won... by her parents, that is.  
As for the child?

She sat in the new classroom  
On the other side of London... on the other side of life  
And she cried bitter tears... because she missed her friends.

Her parents faced more battles in those first few years  
Each one they won.  
And each time... they expected her to smile.

And so, she hid her tears  
She never cried for her real friends again... not for years and years and years.  
But like a country song, they were always on her mind... she never meant to be unkind...  
So sometimes, if she was lucky, she would pass them in the street and smile...

But she had been taken away  
Out of their world... out of her world.  
She had been taken to the other side of London... to the other side of life.

And the other side of life did strange things to her, as it is known to do.  
She remembered the homework, forgot the Learning Support.  
She remembered the deadline... she forgot the war.

She watched, from a distance, as her friends fought the same battles.  
She smiled, from a distance, when they won.  
As she had never doubted that they would, because... but from a distance... she never doubted that they could.

\*\*\*

As they grew, they fought the same battles, they won the same wars.  
They all moved to the other side of London... to the other side of life.  
And, because they let it win, this other side of life...  
Times changed... they no longer even passed in the street.  
But they remained at the back of her mind... because, you see, she never meant to be unkind...

But she had been taken away  
Out of their world... out of her world.  
She had been taken to the other side of London... to the other side of life.

\*\*\*

She always meant to pick up the phone and call  
But as the other side of life had made her do, she was rushing out, the day the card landed on the floor of her front hall...  
She went to that street, where she used to meet her friends...  
Met someone they all knew... someone who brought them back to the front of her mind...  
because, you see, she never meant to be unkind...  
But she never did make that call...

\*\*\*

She was sitting on her bed on the other side of London... worrying about the other side of life...  
When the call came... the call that brought her back to her own world...  
The call that is the reason she is where she is today...

You see, that call told her... that while one of her friends was lying sick in bed...  
The other was dead...

\*\*\*

One recovered... but was never quite the same...  
And the other, well, now no one will ever forget his name...  
Because their friend, who always had them on her mind...  
Their friend, who never meant to be unkind...

She still lives on the other side of London  
She still lives on the other side of life...  
But now, every once in a while...  
She picks up the phone and makes the call...

She thinks of her friends and allows herself to smile...  
And now, every once in a while... a card still lands in her front hall...

They call her away from the other side of London...  
They call her away from the other side of life...  
The difference is that now, she listens.  
Now, she goes.  
But now, it is too late...

So, as you reach the end of this story, take their friend's advice.  
Don't wait.  
If you move to the other side of London, if you move to the other side of life...  
Don't forget your real friends  
Remember that real friendship never really ends  
But if, for five minutes, they should move to the back of your mind  
Remind yourself that you never meant to be unkind  
Then smile, pick up the phone and make the call...  
Or put the card that brings them back into your life... through the letterbox that leads to their  
front hall...

## **She is**

To you  
She is  
A mouth to feed  
A form to fill  
A file to read  
The one sitting still  
In a filled bed, or a chair on wheels.  
You would never believe that she longs to wear high heels...

She is your statistic  
Your percentage  
Your number  
Your target  
Your aim  
Your nine o'clock  
You are just objective...  
To you... she is just an object.

To us  
She is  
The daughter of who we dreamed  
The baby girl who screamed  
The much loved sister  
Whose only fault is that  
She can't play Had! Or Twister  
The treasured friend  
Whose love will never end.  
The much loved wife  
Who promised love for life.  
The favourite aunt  
Who gave the favourite potted plant.  
The mother like no other  
Who loved one son and then his brother.

She is a member of our family  
A part of our lives  
We know her feelings, her hopes and her dreams.  
We know her favourite colour, song and football teams.  
To us... she is... a person.

## **Nothing But A Number**

'Normal' is the number of people who can walk  
Those who don't walk on their toes.

'Normal' is the number of people who can talk  
Those who breathe through their own nose.

'Normal' are the number who use the spoken word  
Not those who sign, point or smile.

'Normal' are the number who believe in God, world's Lord  
Not those who can't run a mile.

'Normal' is the number of people who can hear  
Not those who are born with one missing ear.

'Normal' is the number of people who can see  
'Normal' is right, or so they tell me.

'Normal' is the number of people who can stand  
Not those born in what others call a strange land.

'Normal' is the number of girls who wear high heels  
Not those who watch with jealousy from seats on four wheels.

'Normal' is the number of boys who kick footballs  
Not those who watch with jealousy through small holes in big brick walls.

'Normal' is the number of adults who can drive  
'Normal' is the number of babies who survive.

They've been told more are 'normal' than those who are not  
That's all that makes them think they have some things we haven't got.  
But this 'normal' is only a number, you see  
I'm as 'normal' as you, and you're as 'normal' as me!

## **I'm Still A Person**

I'm not deaf, I just can't hear  
I'm not blind, I just can't see  
Can't do things you take for granted  
But I'm still a person, there's more to me.

I'm not dumb, I just can't talk  
Not drunk, I swear, I really can't walk  
At least not the way you do  
But I'm still a person, just like you.

I can walk well but need this white stick  
I need this wheelchair but I'm not thick!  
I'm not just the girl with the walking frame  
I'm a person like you and I do have a name.

Not that you'll be told it, for I doubt that you'd care  
That's my pet, my best friend, not just a guide dog, please don't stare  
Please don't think I don't want to sit in the sun  
There's nothing I want more, it looks like such fun!

Please don't think I like my seat on four wheels  
I'd love your car, and I long for high heels  
I can't hold a pen, but how I wish I could  
By me your every move's understood

I dream of walking down the street  
I dream of standing on my own two feet  
I dream of hearing the sound  
I dream of sitting on the ground.

But I can't, really can't help myself, you see  
So can you please try not to insult me?  
I am a human being too  
Not an alien, or an animal, but a person, just like you.

## **What Is Disability? Haiku**

Disability  
Is just the ability  
NOT to do something.

## **I Speak Sign Language**

I may not hear a single sound  
My world may seem quiet for miles around  
Your verbal speech is no use to me  
But I have a language of my own, you see.

Subtitles are on when I watch the telly  
I won't even blink at your rumbling belly!  
You may look twice at what I call speech  
But for me it keeps your world just within reach.

I call it Sign Language, there are no other names  
To those who can hear, it just looks like fun 'n' games  
But it's so much more for its speakers  
We have words for everything, from buses to beakers.

Communication, you see, doesn't have to be spoken  
Sign Language fixed a volume switch that started out broken.  
We even have a dictionary  
Filled with pictures though it may be.

My world may seem silent and lonely to you  
But thanks to my language, that's just not true  
My language started small, but grew  
I speak Sign Language, can I teach it to you?

## **I Can Read Braille!**

I cannot see, my world is forever dark  
I can't tell you how many holes there are in that tree bark  
If I took a driving test, I would be sure to fail  
But I can read Braille.

My pet is a guide dog  
Yesterday I tripped over a passing frog  
While on a nature trail  
But the good news is, I can read Braille.

I walk with a white stick, but not because I limp  
I can't tell the difference between a prawn and a shrimp  
Today I knocked over a milk-filled pail  
But I can read Braille.

I don't have an account with Hotmail  
Last week in a garden, I stepped on a snail  
Like everyone else, there are things I can't do  
But I bet *you* can't read Braille, can you?

## **In My Heaven**

In my Heaven there are no wheelchairs  
In my Heaven everyone takes the stairs  
In my Heaven there is no need for lifts  
In my Heaven all have movement, the most priceless of gifts.

In my Heaven there are no white sticks  
In my Heaven there are no guide dogs  
In my Heaven there is no Braille  
In my Heaven there is no excuse to fail.

In my Heaven there is no Sign Language  
In my Heaven no one needs a hearing aid  
In my Heaven we all hear the spoken word  
In my Heaven we all understand exactly what is said.

In my Heaven we all drive cars  
In my Heaven we are all sports stars  
In my Heaven we all run free  
For in my Heaven there is no disability!

## **My Only Crime**

My only crime is that I can't see  
I can't watch as you steal from me  
My only crime is that I can't hear  
I can't hear you calling me 'deaf'

My only crime is that I need this chair  
I can't get up and run down the stairs  
My only crime is that I can't walk  
I can't turn and run from your cruel stares

My only crime is that I can't talk  
I can't answer your cruel insults  
My only crime is one I can't help  
I can't change my 'crime' even if I try

Your crime is that you laugh at me  
You can't understand that it hurts  
You can't understand that I can understand  
But I'm trying to tell you that I do

The difference is that you can change your crime  
You can stop what you're doing, and it won't even take time  
I'm asking you to stop right here, right now  
Stop your crime, change your life... and mine.

## **The Girl In High Heels**

The boy of my dreams is in love with a girl who wears high heels  
I sit and watch him smile at her from my seat on rubber wheels.  
She wears them everywhere she goes, to the park, the shops or school  
If only I could wear them too, maybe then he'd think I'm cool.

The boy of my dreams is in love with a girl who drives a fast car  
They ride around with the top down, staring at the stars.  
She drives as fast as she can go without breaking the rules  
If only I could drive as well, maybe then he'd think I'm cool.

The boy of my dreams is in love with a girl with a very loud voice  
I know that I should be happy for him, for in love he has made his choice.  
If only I could speak at all, he might know how I feel  
But how can I make him see that my silent love is real?

For the boy of my dreams is in love with a girl who wears high heels  
And I can only watch her walk from my seat on rubber wheels.  
No matter where I am, in the park, the shops or school  
I'll never even take a step... why would he think I was cool?

## **The (DisAbleD) Twelve Days Of Christmas**

On the first day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
One Christmas card, written in Braille, cause I can't see.  
On the second day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Two hearing aids, one for each ear, music to me!  
On the third day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Three copies of the British Sign Language Dictionary.  
On the fourth day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Four standing frames, now you just think, how tall I'll be!  
On the fifth day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Five copies of *All About Me*, on DVD, thanks BBC!  
On the sixth day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Six chairs on wheels, all holding dolls, all called Becky.  
On the seventh day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Seven audiobooks, telling the tale, of a wizard called Harry.  
On the eighth day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Eight pairs of shoes, velcro, of course, thankfully lace-free!  
On the ninth day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Nine voice boxes, now I can talk, you can't stop me!  
On the tenth day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Ten Boccia balls, five red, five blue, Paralympics, wait and see!  
On the eleventh day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Eleven wheelchairs, fast enough to race, who needs cars? Not me!  
On the twelfth day of Christmas, I found under the tree,  
Twelve copies of *Disability Now*, large print, of course, easy to see!

## **Frosty The Snowman**

Frosty the snowman,  
Had everything but feet  
A carrot pipe,  
Black button nose,  
And a snowy four-wheeled seat.  
Frosty the snowman  
Is a fairy tale they say  
He was made of snow  
But the children know  
How he came to life one day.  
There must have been some magic in that  
Old bike light they found  
For when they placed it on a wheel  
The seat it moved around.  
Then Frosty the snowman  
Was alive as he could be  
And the children say  
He could laugh and play  
Just the same as you and me.  
Whizz whizz!  
Look at that wheelchair go  
Whizz whizz!  
Over the hills of snow.  
Frosty the snowman knew  
The sun was hot that day  
So he said  
“Let’s use these wheels  
Now before they melt away”  
Down to the village  
With a broomstick in his hand  
Whizzing here and there all  
Around the square saying  
Catch me if you can  
He led them down the streets of town  
Right to the traffic cop  
And he only paused a moment when  
He heard him holler “Stop!”  
For Frosty the snowman  
Had to hurry on his way  
But he waved goodbye saying  
“Don’t you cry

I'll be back again some day"

Whizz whizz!

Look at that wheelchair go

Whizz whizz!

Over the hills of snow.

## **Jingle Wheels**

Dashing through the snow  
In jingling chairs on wheels,  
Over the fields we go,  
With many excited squeals.

Bells on our wheels ring,  
Making spirits bright  
What fun it is to race and sing  
A Christmas song tonight.

Jingle wheels, jingle wheels,  
We don't need high heels  
Oh what fun it is to ride  
In jingling chairs on wheels.

Now the ground is white  
And nothing else is wrong,  
Take your friends tonight  
And sing this racing song

Just get a bell or two  
And some wheelchairs of high speed  
Hitch the bells to the wheels,  
And then you take the lead.

Jingle wheels, jingle wheels,  
We don't need high heels,  
Oh what fun it is to ride  
In jingling chairs on wheels.

## **All I Want For Christmas Is My Own Two Feet**

Everybody stops and stares at me  
For both my feet are gone  
As you can see  
I don't know just who  
To blame for this catastrophe!  
But my one wish on Christmas Eve,  
Is as plain as it could be!

All I want for Christmas is my own two feet,  
My own two feet,  
See my own two feet!

Oh if I could only have my own two feet  
Then I could wish you Merry Christmas.

It seems so long since I could say  
Let's go outside and run and play  
Oh how happy I would be  
If only I could run and play

All I want for Christmas is my own two feet,  
My own two feet,  
See my own two feet!

Oh if I could only have my own two feet  
Then I could wish you Merry Christmas.

## **Hello, I'm A Wheelchair**

Hello, I'm a wheelchair  
And my name is Becky  
At least, that's the name of  
The girl who steers me.

As she wheels me down the street,  
She dreams of standing on her feet.  
The look on her face you don't see.  
You're too busy looking at me.

She gives you a smile so true  
But you don't see that, do you?  
The smile on her face you don't see.  
You're too busy looking at me.

Hello, I'm a wheelchair  
And I'm steered by Becky  
A girl who'd so much rather  
Be climbing a tall tree.

So when you meet my best friend,  
Look closer, and you'll see  
Without her, where would I be?  
Parked in a garage, that's where, watching you climb a tree.

When you see me and Becky,  
There's one thing you don't see  
I couldn't move without her,  
Any more than she could move without me!

## **I Know A Person In A Wheelchair Who...**

I know a person in a wheelchair who has a lovely smile  
I know a person in a wheelchair who longs to run a mile  
I know a person in a wheelchair who's a Paralympic star  
I know a person in a wheelchair who's as clever as you are.

I know a person in a wheelchair whose favourite colour's red  
I know a person in a wheelchair who has trouble going to bed  
I know a person in a wheelchair who watches *Home and Away*  
I know a person in a wheelchair who laughs every single day.

I know a person in a wheelchair who loves going to school  
I know a person in a wheelchair who's really, really cool  
I know a person in a wheelchair who's a friend so very true  
I know a person in a wheelchair who's an awful lot like you!

## **On The Inside, Looking Out**

My mind is on the inside, looking out  
I'd love to tell you what I'm thinking about.  
But my voice is on the inside, looking out  
I can smile but I can't speak  
Even that may take a week!

My thoughts are on the inside, looking out  
How I wish I could have my shout!  
I agree with what you say,  
But I can't tell you so, there's no way.

I'm lost in my thoughts, trapped to be precise  
Trapped in my own silent world, and it's not very nice!  
I have thoughts and feelings, and while they may not show  
There's something I want you to know.

My voice, my thoughts, the feelings I'd love to tell you about  
Are all on the inside, looking out.

*The End*