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...

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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.

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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.

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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…

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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...

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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