

Paems

WITH PURPOSE

RASA



Renfrewshire Anti Stigma Alliance (RASA)

Tackling mental health stigma and discrimination, and promoting connection and inclusion through poetry.



Welcome FROM RASA

Hi everyone, we are an alliance of statutory, voluntary and community groups who strive to end mental health stigma and discrimination, across Renfrewshire, in a proactive, meaningful and collaborative way. We believe in compassionate communities working together to improve attitudes and create a fairer and more equal society.

We have created this booklet of poems in recognition of the shared wisdom, resilience, creativity and kindness that exists within our communities. It celebrates the individual and collective strength, hope and compassion that occurs within our society.

The selected poems focus on the importance of ‘CONNECTION’ and the difference that it can make to someone’s health, wellbeing and recovery. To begin with, there is a poetic reminder that ending mental health stigma and discrimination is everyone’s business because we are all important and we matter...

ALWAYS!

“The greatest things in life – truth, creativity, imagination, love, kindness, compassion – are already inside us, and they’re all free.”

Label Jars, Not People.

Stigma is defined as a mark of disgrace,
A negative mindset that we have to replace.
It pollutes the core principles of our very humanity
And has no place whatsoever within our society.

It immediately devalues a person's sense of self
By labelling them as different from everyone else.
It's unfair, unnecessary and very unkind
And, it can affect both the body, and the mind.

It can destroy a person's self-esteem
As they lose sight of who they could have been
Because suddenly they are viewed as broken and flawed
And assessed by what feels like the firing squad.

Instead of seeing the person inside
And all the knowledge and skills they provide
A label is created by societal views
Which decades on, we're still trying to diffuse.

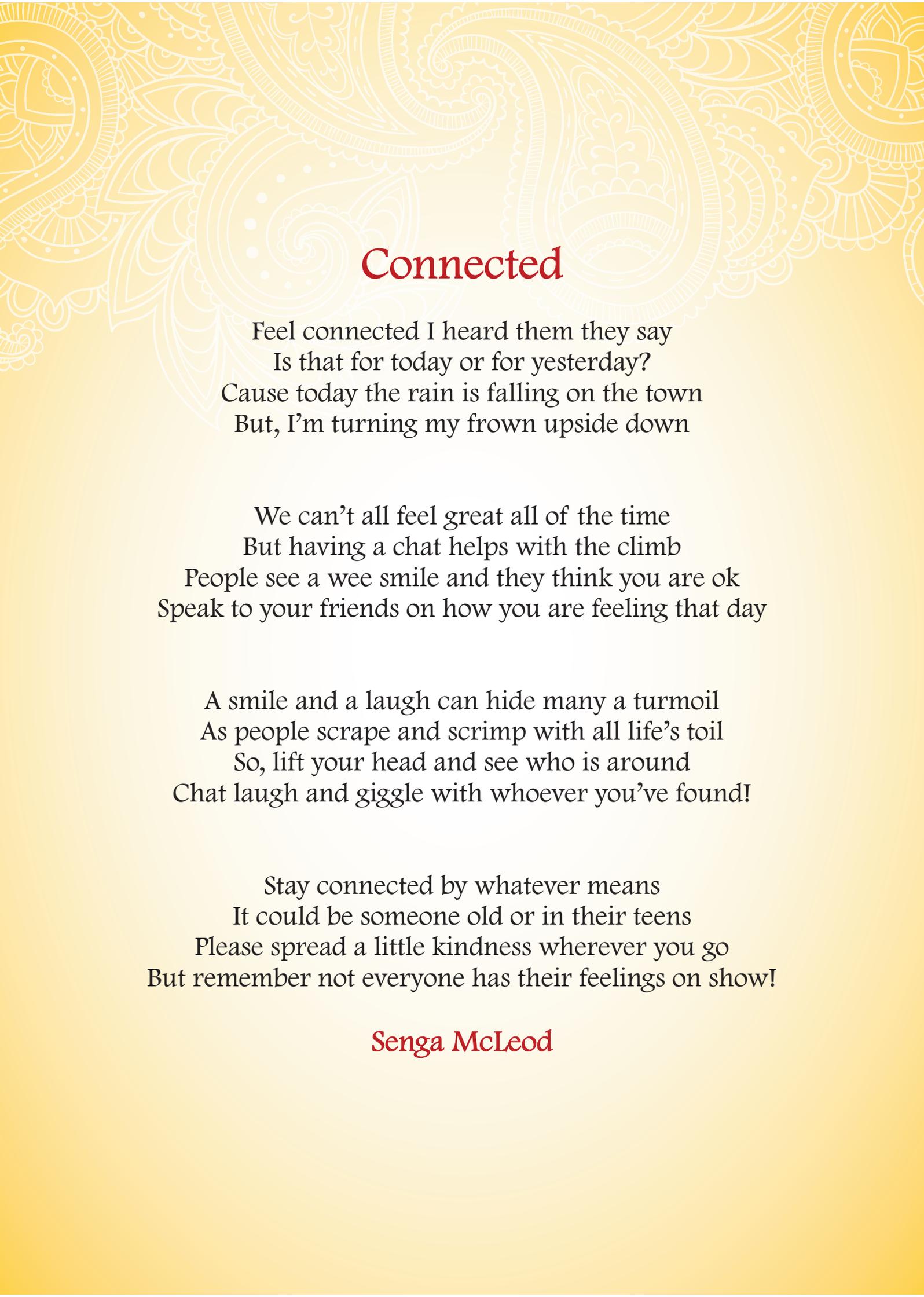
But where there's a will, there will always be a way
To make social change...starting today
By standing up to injustice more and more.
Remember, courage can whisper and not just roar.

There are so many tasks that we can all do
Individually and collectively to make a break-through.
It can be in your home, community or workplace
And be as simple as offering some breathing space.

Suzanne Baines
You Matters Always

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.”





Connected

Feel connected I heard them they say
Is that for today or for yesterday?
Cause today the rain is falling on the town
But, I'm turning my frown upside down

We can't all feel great all of the time
But having a chat helps with the climb
People see a wee smile and they think you are ok
Speak to your friends on how you are feeling that day

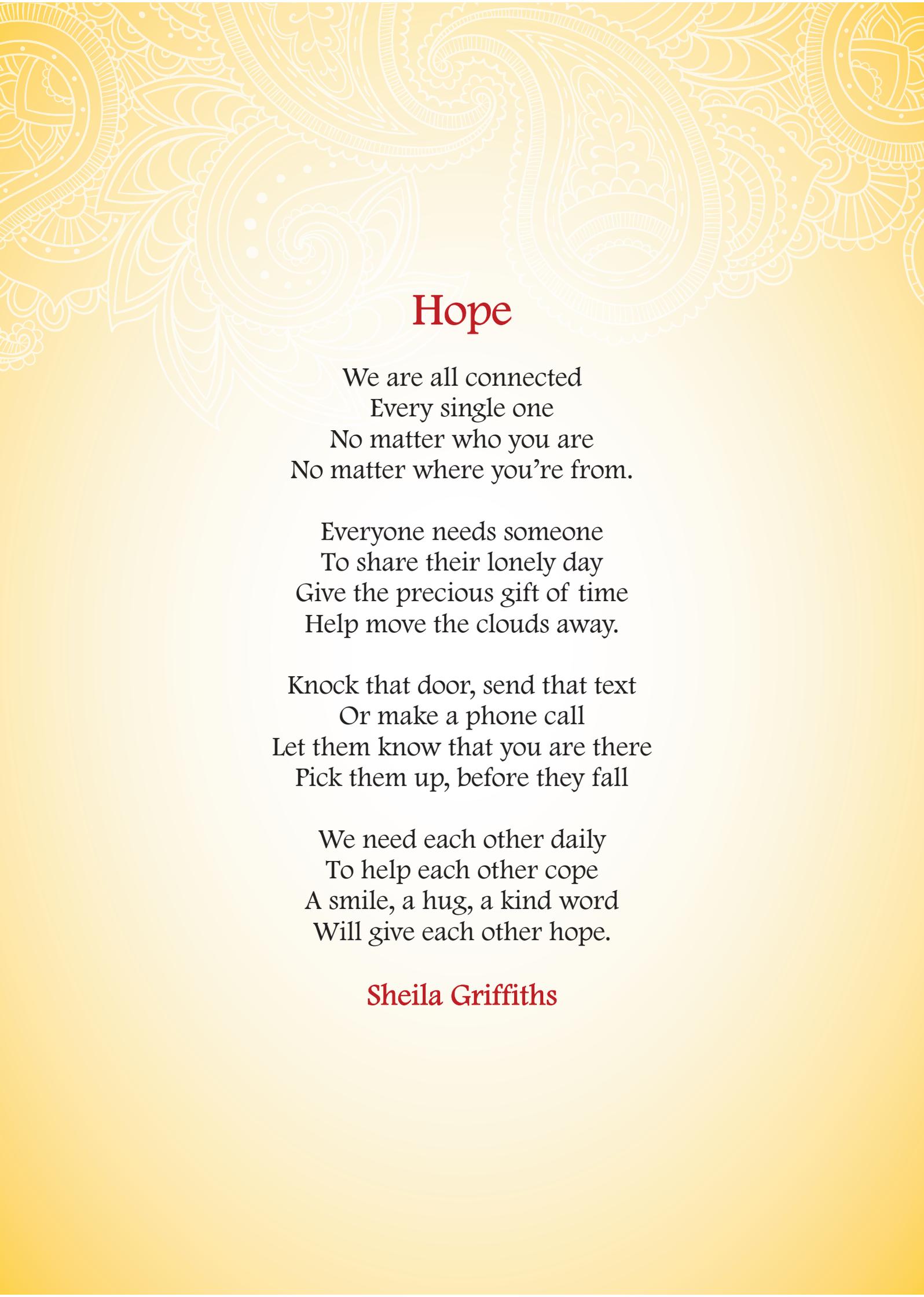
A smile and a laugh can hide many a turmoil
As people scrape and scrimp with all life's toil
So, lift your head and see who is around
Chat laugh and giggle with whoever you've found!

Stay connected by whatever means
It could be someone old or in their teens
Please spread a little kindness wherever you go
But remember not everyone has their feelings on show!

Senga McLeod

“Feeling connected
to each other is a basic
human need.”





Hope

We are all connected
Every single one
No matter who you are
No matter where you're from.

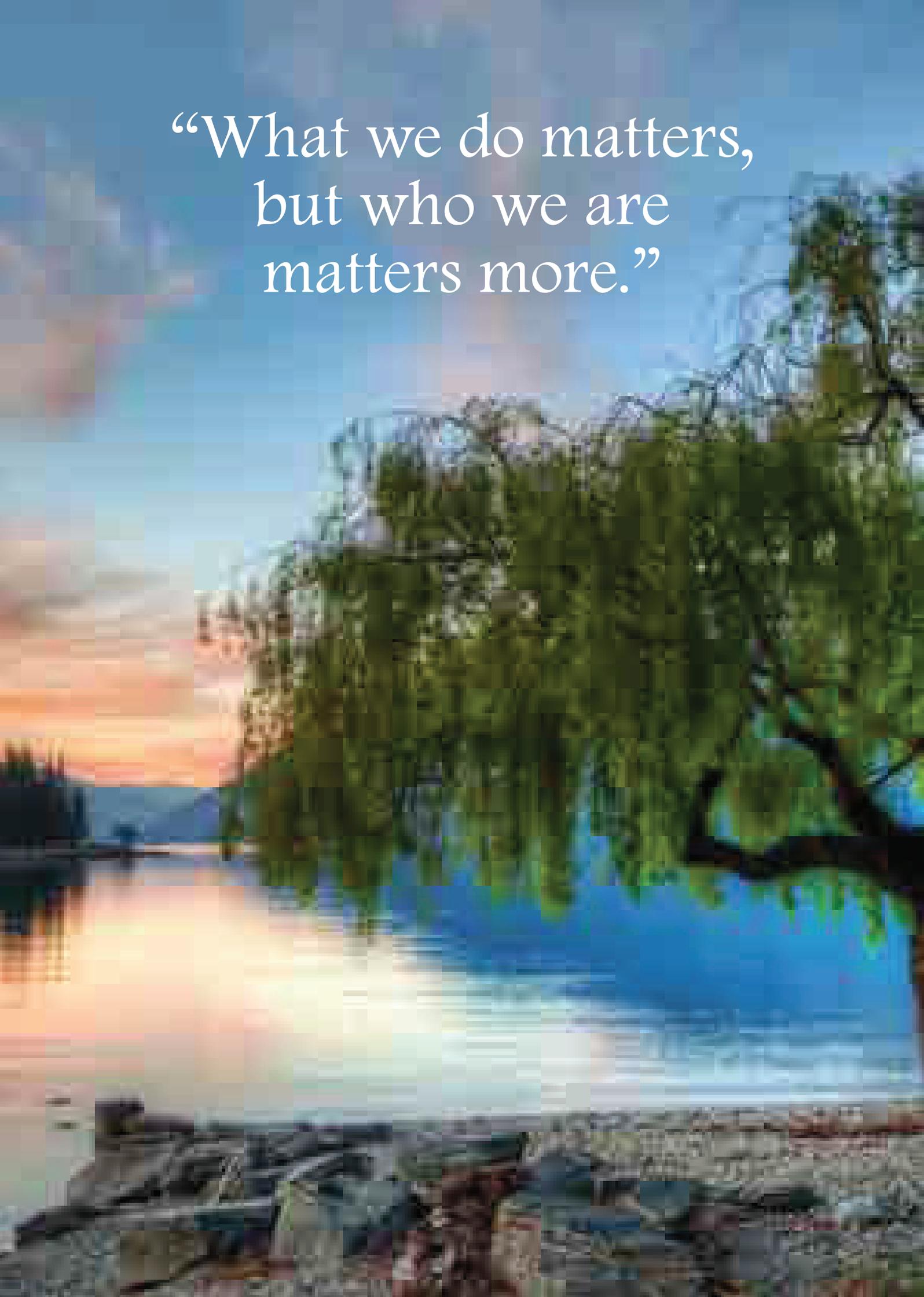
Everyone needs someone
To share their lonely day
Give the precious gift of time
Help move the clouds away.

Knock that door, send that text
Or make a phone call
Let them know that you are there
Pick them up, before they fall

We need each other daily
To help each other cope
A smile, a hug, a kind word
Will give each other hope.

Sheila Griffiths

“What we do matters,
but who we are
matters more.”



Here I am

It took a while but here I am
Once dark but now I see
There's nothing wrong with who I am
I'm good at being me

It took some time to see the truth
To look beyond the trees
To pick yourself back up
When life brought you to your knees

Thick skin grows thicker by the day
We're numb then come to life
Peel back every layer
Words that cut you like a knife

Never, ever doubt yourself
When others will do it for free
Keep on keeping on my love
It's the only way to be

We laugh, we cry, we conquer
We break and fall apart
It doesn't matter in the end
The end is just the start

So, say it in a whisper
Or shout it out real loud
"There's nothing wrong with who I am"
Stand tall my love ~ be proud!

Christine Howie



*“Talk to yourself like
you would to
someone you love.”*

For Anyone Who Needs It.

I know how it feels to completely be alone
Sitting in the bathroom scrolling through your phone
Over 100 contacts but no one to talk to
Not a single person knows what you're going through

You don't want to be a burden
To the ones you love, who care
Don't want to seem attention seeking
So you sit there in despair?

Your mind it starts to trick you
You begin to over think
Every single detail.
An hour gone in a blink

Every single scenario
Has ran across your mind
You've now lost another hour
All perspective left behind

It matters how you talk to yourself
What you say inside your head
It's where you spend the majority of time
In those words that go unsaid

But those words don't go unnoticed
They matter most of all
They're building a foundation
A landing when you fall

Make sure that landing's soft
Be gentle and be kind
Know you're doing your very best
Control what's in your mind.

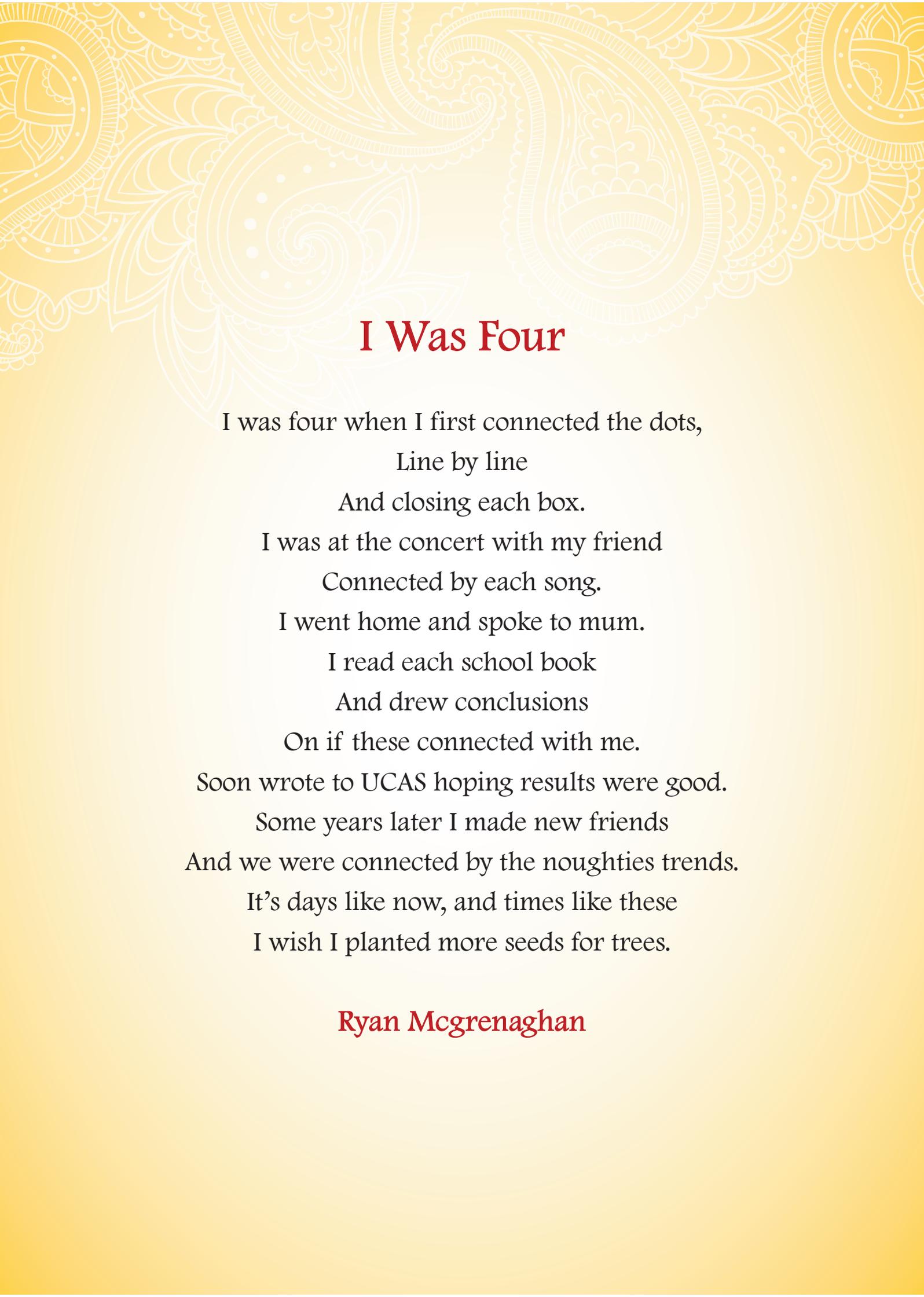
And in those times your minds a whirlwind
A storm your pushing through
Don't live inside the darkness
Find people to talk too

Your light will shine again
Happiness will prevail
Don't sit alone in hopelessness
Drop me a wee mail

Pamela Youngson

A blurred landscape featuring a path leading through a field towards a line of trees. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The background is out of focus, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. Overlaid on the bottom portion of the image is a quote in white serif font.

“Good People can bring out
the good in other people.”



I Was Four

I was four when I first connected the dots,
Line by line

And closing each box.

I was at the concert with my friend
Connected by each song.

I went home and spoke to mum.

I read each school book

And drew conclusions

On if these connected with me.

Soon wrote to UCAS hoping results were good.

Some years later I made new friends

And we were connected by the noughties trends.

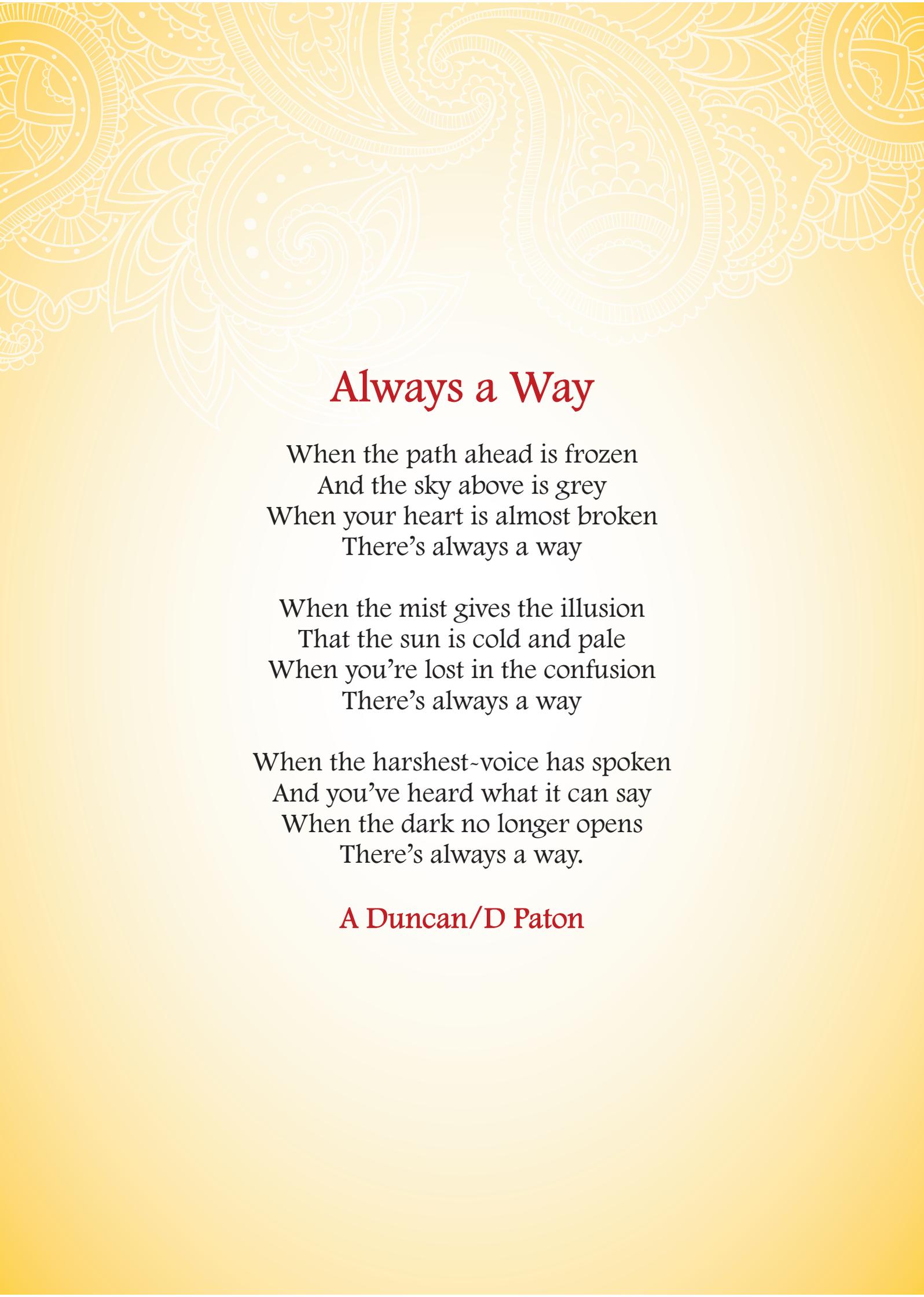
It's days like now, and times like these

I wish I planted more seeds for trees.

Ryan McGrenaghan

“Don’t judge each day by the
harvest you reap, but by the
seeds you plant.”





Always a Way

When the path ahead is frozen
And the sky above is grey
When your heart is almost broken
There's always a way

When the mist gives the illusion
That the sun is cold and pale
When you're lost in the confusion
There's always a way

When the harshest-voice has spoken
And you've heard what it can say
When the dark no longer opens
There's always a way.

A Duncan/D Paton

A vibrant sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with a forest silhouette on the right. The sky is filled with warm, glowing colors of orange, red, and yellow, transitioning into a deep purple and blue at the top. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. The water in the foreground is dark, with the reflection of the sky and the sun. On the right side, the dark silhouette of a forest is visible against the bright sky.

“When something is
too hard, there is always
another way.”

PND and Me

I had this little thing
An illness you can't see
I want to tell you a story
About PND and me.

When my precious baby was
The size of a grain of rice
I thought this would be lovely
How a family would be nice

Then suddenly a fog appeared
It would sometimes come at night
I thought I could get rid of it
I was putting up a fight

People said I should be happy
But what they couldn't see
Was happiness and laughter
Had gone and left me.

I didn't feel any love
When my little baby came
PND was getting me
Life just wasn't the same

All I ever wanted
Was to be a good mum
So why was it so hard
I just felt numb

It took away everything
But only for a while
I wouldn't let it keep
My sparkle and my smile.

It took a long time
To finally be free
Of this hidden illness
To get back to being me

I got my life back
And so will you
Ask your friends and family
To help you see it through

So carry on, keep going!
Just you wait and see
I promise that one day
PND will set YOU free

Rosey Adams

“Vulnerability is not about winning, and it’s not about losing. It’s about having the courage to show up and be seen.”



In Good Company

A place that's safe, honest and true
Where I can be me and you can be you
Find your tribe, then you'll know
The people who will help you grow

Your circle may be small and tight
And that's ok, that's alright
Whoever they are, they are enough
To make you feel all wrapped in love

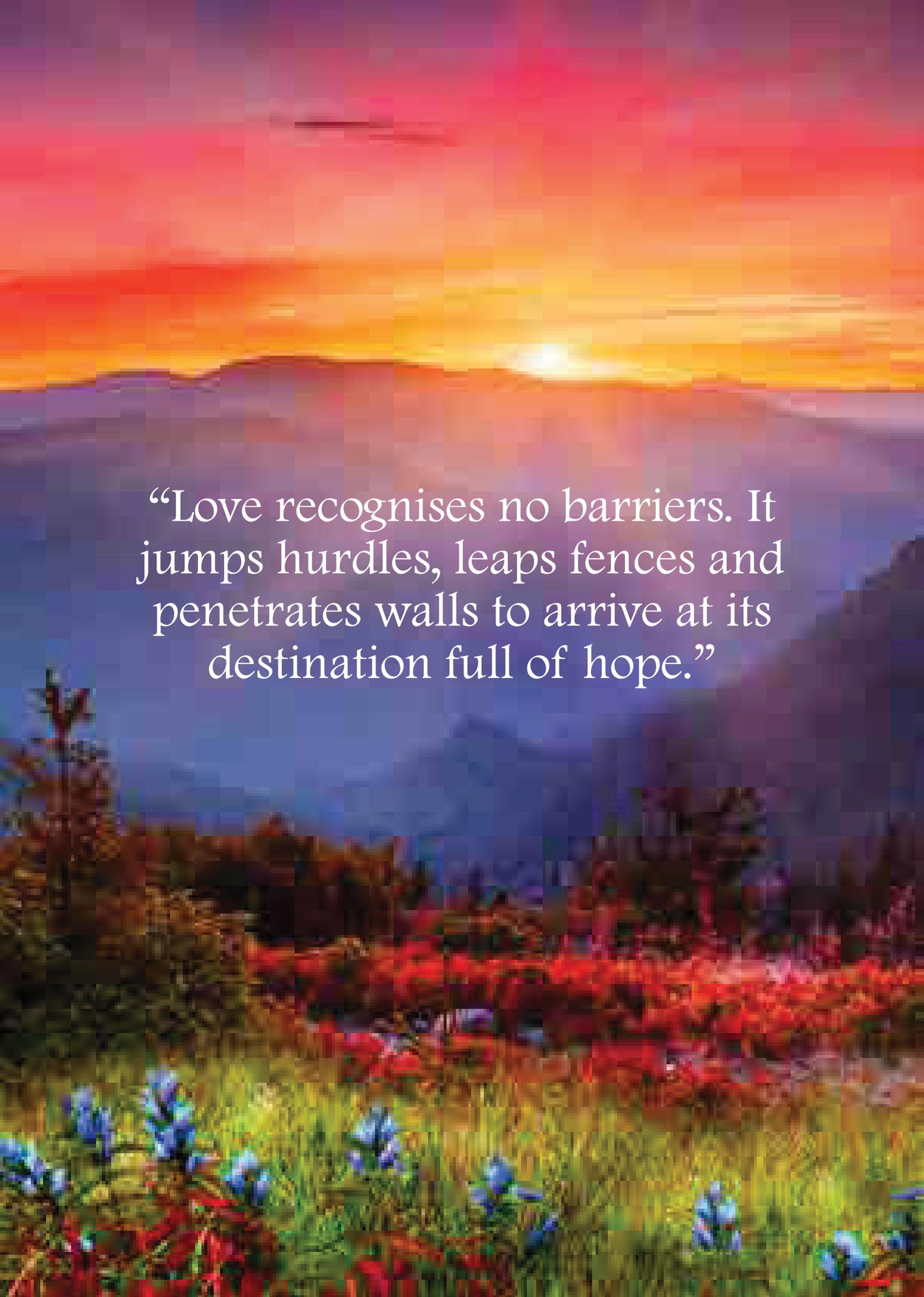
Open your arms, stretch them wide
The world is yours, no need to hide
No man is an island, no woman alone
Find your people, then you're home

Each of us, all shapes and sizes
Many masks, many guises
No one minding where you've been
You've made it now, you are seen

Belonging is to truly matter
So, tell your troubles, enjoy the patter
No judgement here in this 'hood
Just pass the wine and share the food

Community is what you make it
Just be yourself
No need to fake it

Christine Howie

A scenic landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with vibrant colors of orange, red, and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon. In the foreground, there is a field of colorful flowers, including red and blue blooms. The background shows a range of mountains under a hazy sky.

“Love recognises no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences and penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.”

Connection Is Important

I don't feel connected
Couldn't feel more alone
I'm trying so hard
But I don't know where I'm going

Everything is dark and empty
No one is around
How can you be connected
When all you get is a frown

There needs to be more awareness
More acceptance and love
Maybe then more people
Will reach out without the
Fear of being judged

Connection is important
It could save lives and more
Why don't you be that person
That opens the door

Take time to listen
To be there and see
That the person in front of you
Is real and just me

Mentally Ill
Or mentally well
I'm still a person
Who needs connection as well

Michaela Burns

“Vulnerability is the
birthplace of creativity,
innovation and change.”



Missing Connection

Communication is fantastic like never before
We can talk to the world, show off and say more
Yet huge pockets of silence are the places we seek
Why do humans go too far, then completely retreat

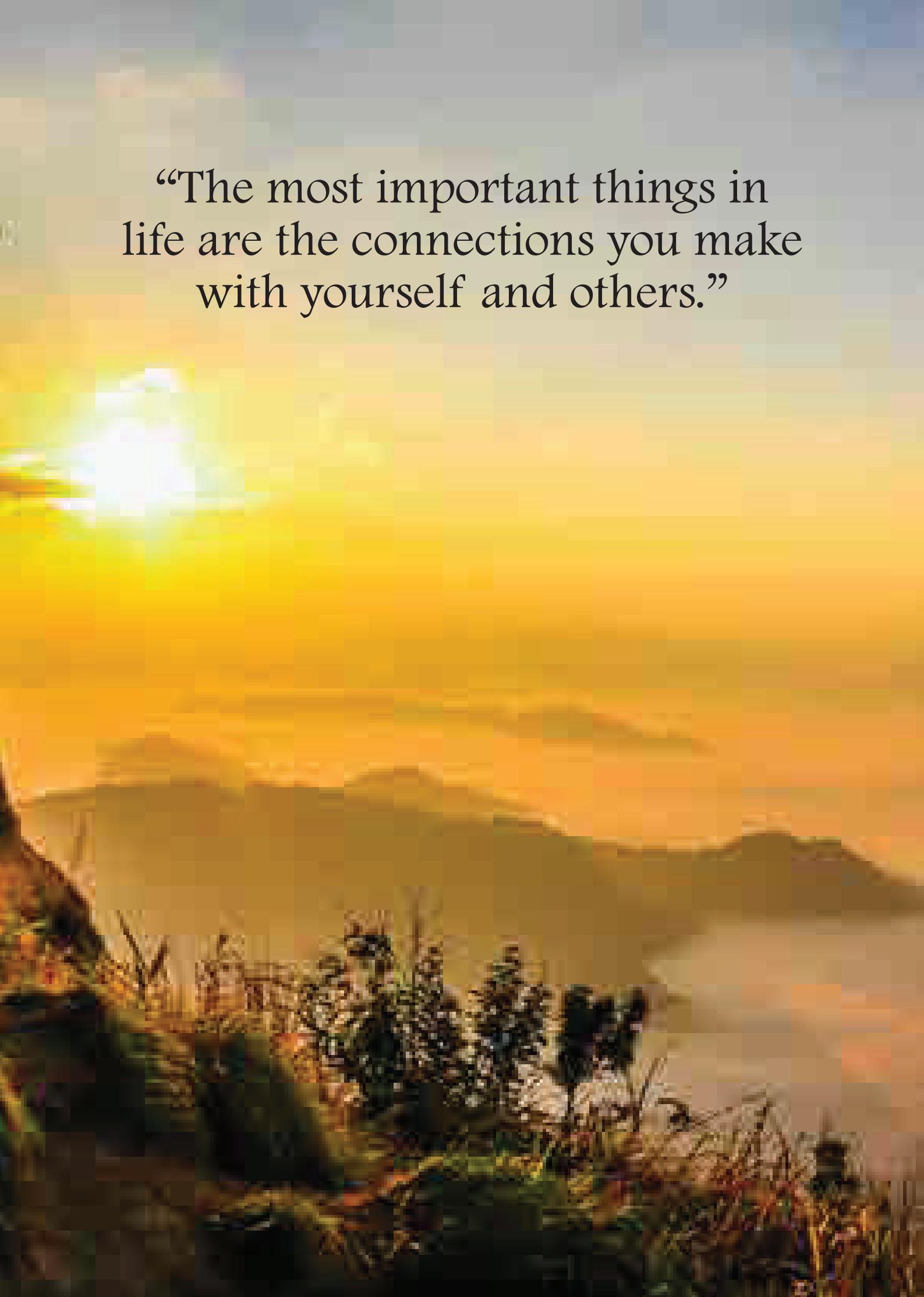
Deftness is missing
People, their feelings,
care, and their trust
Forgetting the wonders,
And a depth there, that lasts

Connection brings clarity, to think and surmise
A haven to react
In that shuddering silence
You are left with a void
Our souls need fed
Belief seems bled

In a balanced abyss
Love is complete
Reach far out to others
Connection is neat

Elise Kelly

“The most important things in life are the connections you make with yourself and others.”



Connected Communities

C is for the **COMPASSION** within a community
Which in turn can create a strong sense of unity

O is for the **OPTIMISM** to create opportunities
For increased autonomy within our communities

N is for the **NUMEROUS** ways we work together
To make positive change, whatever the weather

N is for also **NEVER** giving up on each other
As we salve our wounds and start to recover

E is for the **ENDLESS** acts of human kindness
Which are beneficial and truly timeless

C is for the **COMPANIONSHIP** during a time of crisis
Which is immeasurable...in fact it's priceless

T is for **TAKING THE TIME** to care
About people, and their health and welfare

E is for **EVERYTHING** we do and share
To reconnect, reminisce, rebuild and repair

D is for our **DECIDING** to be part of the solution
By making a valuable contribution.

Suzanne Baines
You Matter Always



“We don’t have to do it
all alone, we were never
meant to.”

Abuse...

He was brought into this world
In a happy home

He soon got sold
Where's it's dark and cold
He was held from person to person
He was sold from home to home

He gets fed once a day
And then pushed away
kicked until no movement
He lay still and scared

He doesn't get held, he gets the belt
He gets chained outside
And left in the rain

Somebody sees him
Torn and fray
They take the dog and drive away
He's happy now he's all ok

If you see a dog
Or any animal in fact
Please take notice of their lack
Their lack of food
Their lack of love
The lack of everything, all above

Abuse is sad
It tortures me
That all they need
is somewhere nice to be

Rachel Andrea Pollock, Age 15

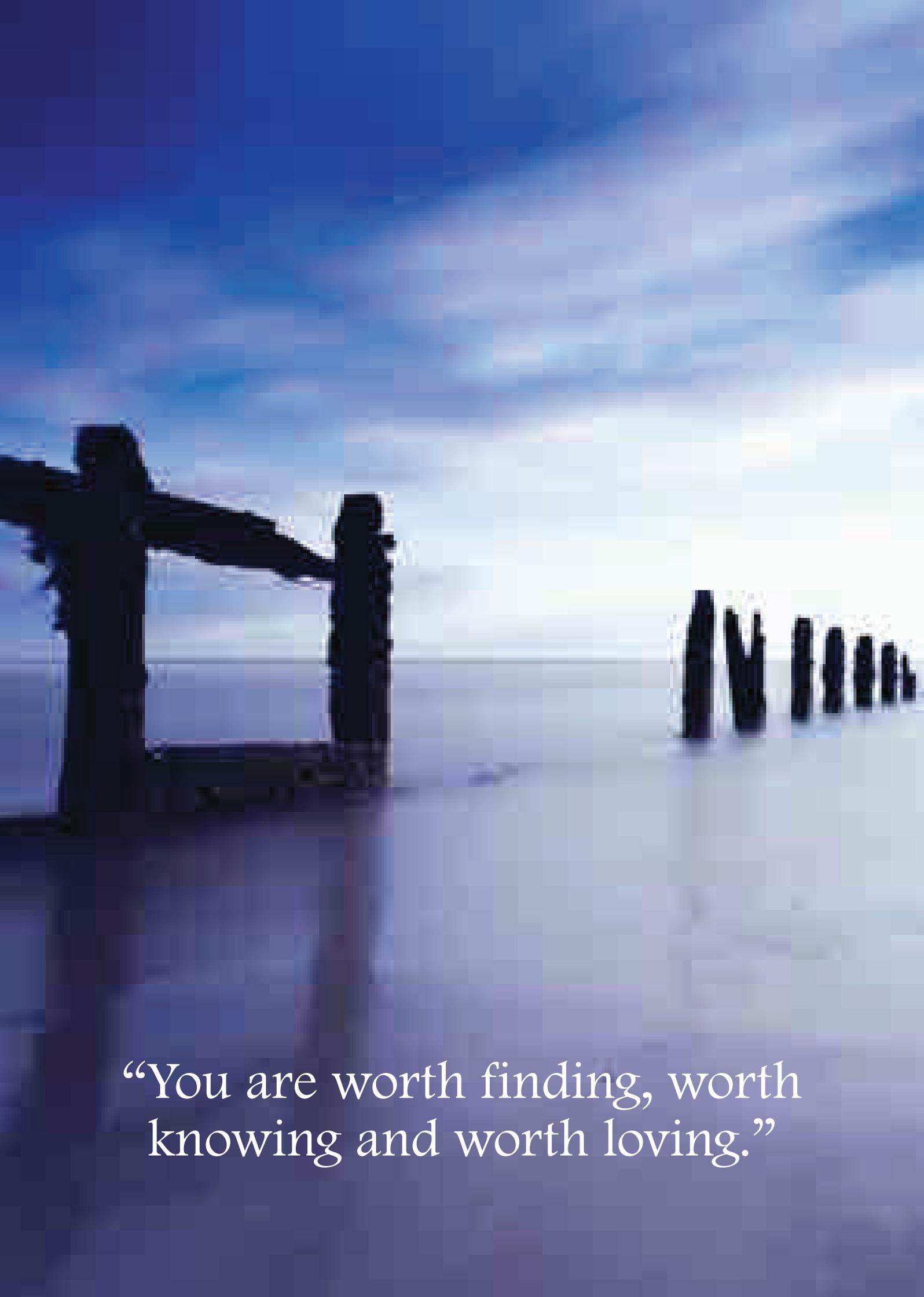


“Do not wait for leaders, do it
alone, person~to~person.”

You Are Not Your Age

You are not your, age
Nor the size of clothes you wear,
You are not weight,
Or the colour of your hair,
You are not your name,
Or the dimples in your cheeks,
You are all books you read,
And all the words you speak,
You are your croaky morning voice,
And the smiles you try to hide,
You're the sweetness in your laughter,
And every tear you've cried,
You're the songs you sing so loudly,
When you know you're all alone,
You're the places that you've been to,
And the one that you call home,
You're the things that you believe in,
And, the people that you love,
You're the photos in your bedroom,
And the future you dream of,
You're made of so much beauty,
But it seems that you forgot,
When you decided that you were defined,
By all things you're not.

Jessica Gunn



“You are worth finding, worth knowing and worth loving.”

Sometimes

Sometimes, I would wake wondering what the point was
to my day

Every day was the same, it seemed I was fading away

So dull and so dark would this feeling ever end?

Well that's what I thought till I met my best friend

The long nights talking, how she made me smile

She brightened up my days giving me reason to get up and
go out for a while

Amongst people "LIKE ME" how I label it so

But to look at me, the pain I feel you would never know

I hide it well because what difference would it make

I just kept quiet for everyone's sake!!!

But, with goods friends, family and just the chance to talk

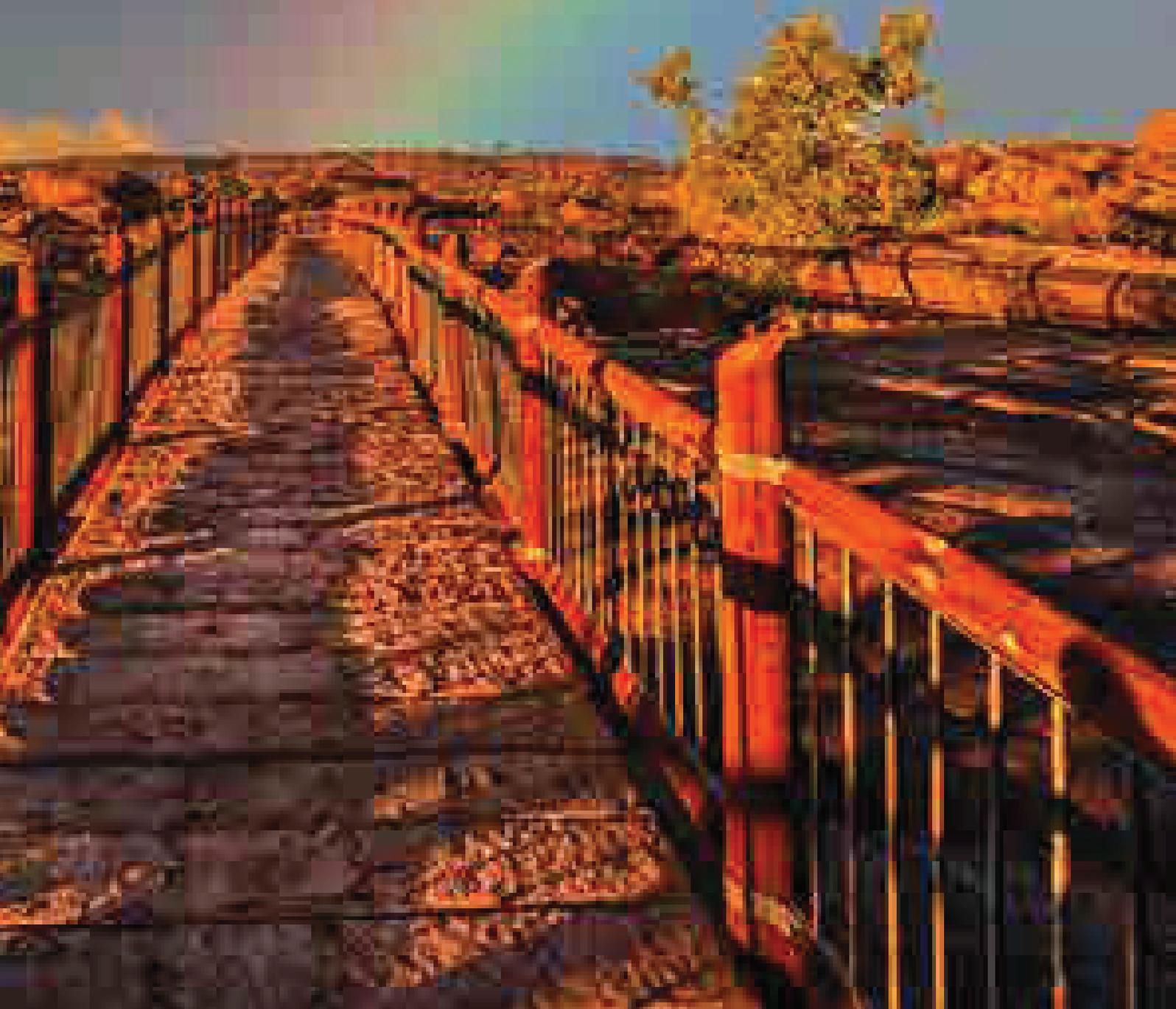
I have taken the courage to do this walk

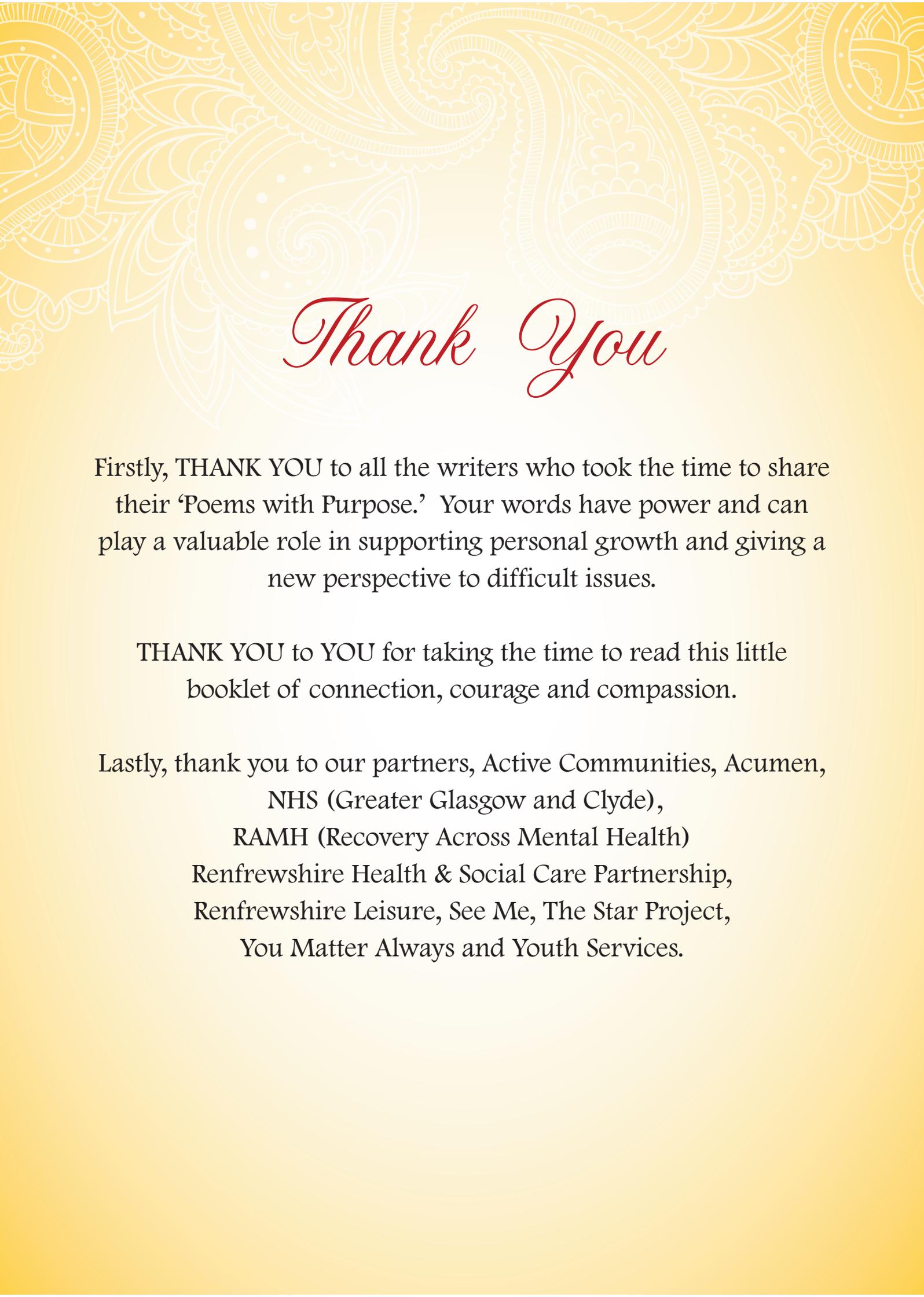
I do it not only for me but to all who feel this pain

And send this message "NEVER GIVE UP" as there is always a
reason to SMILE AGAIN!!!

Holly Rodger, Age 14 then and 16 now

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”





Thank You

Firstly, THANK YOU to all the writers who took the time to share their 'Poems with Purpose.' Your words have power and can play a valuable role in supporting personal growth and giving a new perspective to difficult issues.

THANK YOU to YOU for taking the time to read this little booklet of connection, courage and compassion.

Lastly, thank you to our partners, Active Communities, Acumen, NHS (Greater Glasgow and Clyde), RAMH (Recovery Across Mental Health) Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership, Renfrewshire Leisure, See Me, The Star Project, You Matter Always and Youth Services.

**PLEASE REMEMBER HOW IMPORTANT YOU ARE AND
HOW MUCH YOU MATTER... ALWAYS!**

If you are struggling there are organisations, in addition to your GP, that can help. If you are in crisis or experiencing distress and need to speak to someone, you might find the following numbers helpful.

Useful Contacts

Breathing Space: 0800 838 587

Childline Scotland: 0800 1111

First Crisis: 0800 221 8929

NHS 24: 111

NHS Inform: 0800 224 488

Samaritans: 116 123

Our Wish For You

When you are sad
We wish you joy.
When you are in darkness
We wish you light.
When you feel frightened
We wish you courage.
When you are down
We wish you hope.
When you feel overwhelmed
We wish you peace.
When you feel lost
We wish you strength.
Above all, we wish you
Love, light and happiness.

RASA and You Matter Always



**You Matter
Always**