

Turning The Circle and Seeing Again

by Christopher Newell

**A short poetic reflection on a Life Story
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To live a hidden life where voices come and go and some stay unwanted;
To not know why you feel the way you do and wonder whether you are the only one;
To linger on lonely hills, wet and cold, shivering with the temptations inside your head;
To say cheerily, hello to your congregation and preaching love and grace whilst knowing, knowing how dark and deep your darkness is.
To live a life of secret lies, of terrors in the night when in the day your
Christian priesthood speaks of eternal, loving truth.
To finally see your world collapsing all around and a gloomy forest night embrace you in its grasp.
To be rescued, to be saved but not in a Christian way and yet, yes, in a Christian way.
To find myself at last in hospital, sectioned, stripped seemingly of who I am and who I was and who I will be.
To feel a loss of self, a loss of being, being a priest, being a father, being a partner, being strong.
To see my nightmares, real and vivid, overwhelm my dreams, distant and fading.
To be alone, alone, alone.

THAT IS HARD, SO VERY HARD

To slowly, gradually, beautifully discover friends, discover I am not alone and no longer hidden.
To find in others, all manner of others, some who call themselves professionals,
Some who are called patients, service users, survivors, carers,
All who call themselves human,
Wisdom and compassion, solidarity and abiding faith and heart and gracefulness.
To discover in my naked weakness, a strength I never knew, in my broken mind, a healing I hardly dreamt of
at all.
To reveal in my dis-ability an ability, in my illness a truth, in my fear, a hope, in my life, a new life, in my
voices, a conversation, amongst my friends, support and space for me to be revealed.
To know that with others I journey, uncertainly, sometimes scarily, often fearfully, always lovingly to
destinations unknown but in the most exciting way.
To understand my Recovery as a lifelong process in which my past and my present and my future will be
partners and not enemies, will ensure my times
Of light, my times of dark, my grey times and my times of colour will be shared
With others who will support me as I may support them.
To find my lost things, my self as partner, father, priest and friend.
To return to my hospital, sometimes still as patient, service survivor, whatever you may call.
More often, as a priest once more, a professional, a human being, above all a human being.
To share the task of breaking down distinctions, of challenging the stigma of being ourselves.
To be together, to be together, to be together.
To turn the circle and see again.

THAT IS GOOD, SO VERY GOOD