


'Awake' poetry showing a mental health struggle

Retired Edinburgh man Alan Ormiston has published a series of poems reflecting a loved one's struggle with their mental health.

'Awake' reflects love, pain and ultimately hope.

For those whose lives are in darkness, beset by pain, there is always a road to the light. There are those who will listen, and a future in which the pain will lessen, where happiness awaits.

The top portion of the book cover features a dark red background with a silhouette of a dove in flight. Below the dove is a glowing sun or moon, and a large, stylized apple is positioned to the left of the sun. The entire scene is set against a backdrop of horizontal lines, possibly representing a horizon or a sky.

AWAKE

In Poetry

Our Mental Health

Love the Conversation

A. J. Ormiston



The poems were written over time as a form of journal whilst he waited in cars and cafés outside appointments and a theme emerged around perspectives and conversations.

Alan will be donating the proceeds to Mental Health charities [Thistle Foundation](#) and [Penumbra](#).

He told The Edinburgh Reporter of the inspiration behind his poems: “The poems in the book reflect conversations, thoughts and perspectives as a loved one struggled with their mental health and were written whilst I waited in cars and cafes outside appointments.

“Writing was also therapeutic for me and I completed 17 structured poems which were designed for young adults but would resonate with anyone and passes on the message ‘Stay strong, talk about it and don’t bottle it in.

“My aim is to raise awareness of mental health issues but the book is not necessarily enjoyable reading although the last poem. ‘Awake’ will hopefully provide an uplifting finish.

“I hope by sharing the poems it will help anyone who is going through a difficult time, and those who love & care for them. It is about hope and staying strong.

“All the money I receive through sales of the book will be split between the charities Penumbra and Thistle Foundation, who were there to provide support when it was most needed, but it’s not just about raising money, it’s about trying to help others and I would love it if it does that.

“The book is available to order as a [hard copy or alternatively as an ibook](#) which I am delighted about because it takes a few days for a delivery and sometimes you don’t have a few days.

“ Probably what I want to highlight is best summed up in the Foreword of the book.

“ You say everything is OK and hide the painful truth. You feel lost, your world is falling apart. Dark thought and urges overwhelm you. You are struggling through the day and night.

“There is not a precious moment to lose. Don’t be afraid to say you are not OK. You have such a kind heart, be kind on yourself too.

Talk to someone now, tell them your story. They will listen and not judge you. Hold onto the belief it will get better and stay strong.”

Alan kindly shared one of his poems with us:

A Leap of Faith –

“I cannot face talking about myself – I want to dull the pain
– Not sit with another stranger – Tell my story again.

“I cannot trust myself – I have heard it all before – Maybe I
will just miss my bus – Walk past the open door.

“It’s something we can do – If only we could do more – Take
you to appointments – Watch you walk through the door.

“Wait in cafes, on street corners – Be there to see you leave

– Know that you have been there – No need for stories, we believe.

“You need to learn to trust, hope – Take a leap of faith – Bonds you build, words of wisdom – Will help to keep you safe

“Choices – You could run and hide – But stranger things have happened – Open up, step inside.”

Alan lives in Edinburgh and worked for forty years in the financial services industry before retiring in 2018.

The Thistle Foundation is an Edinburgh-based charity supporting people with long term health conditions and disabilities to live life on their terms.

Penumbra is one of Scotland’s largest mental health charities who work to promote mental health and wellbeing for all, prevent mental ill health for people who are ‘at risk’, and to support people with mental health problems.