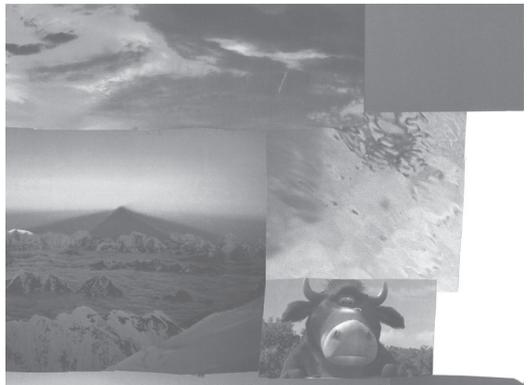
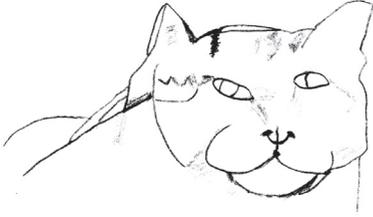
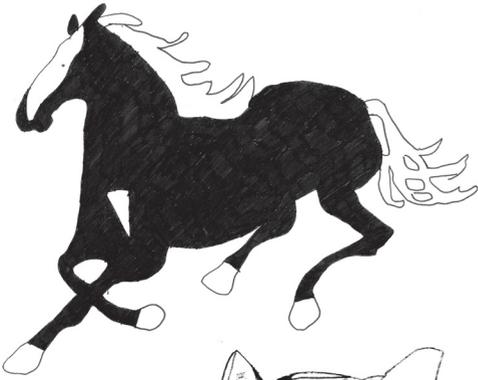




# Ride On

Poetry by young women with  
experience of self-injury



# Introduction

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This booklet was compiled at the end of a series of writing workshops aimed at young women with experience of self injury.

During the workshops, we wrote and shared the poems and pictures that you will find in these pages.

## **Participants commented:**

*"It has been an amazing experience for me, I just hope I can continue writing."*

*"The most enjoyable aspect was reading out the poem I wrote. It felt good to be able to talk to people that understand how I feel"*

*"I was really surprised how easy it has been....what I've been able to produce."*

*"The most useful aspect was all the writing I did and being able to express my feelings in a room full of people without them being shocked."*

These poems are moving, emotional, honest, unswerving and beautiful.

We wanted to share our words and pictures with you and hope that by engaging with this booklet you hear our voices and are inspired to write in a safe environment.

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Some people may find that some of the content makes them feel vulnerable, upset or needing support. If you would like to know more about where to find support, please see the information at the back of this booklet.

Copyright for the original poems belongs to the individual authors 2006.

# Possibilities

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Lisa, Sara, Sarah, Claire, Lorna

I prefer the colour purple  
I prefer reading to watching telly  
I prefer cartoons to grown-up programmes  
I prefer Lincolnshire sausages  
I prefer winter  
I prefer books  
I prefer walking to travelling by train  
I prefer moths to butterflies  
I prefer the full moon  
I prefer dancing  
I prefer order to chaos  
I prefer love to commitment  
I prefer Nirvana to Usher  
I prefer honest anger to dishonest smiles  
I prefer tea to coffee  
I prefer pink and purple to green and brown  
I prefer the magnolia blossoms with a hint of pink to the  
cherry blossoms which are all pink  
I prefer the smell of bread baking to the smell of cat wee

# Untitled

---

Lisa

Their bad advice nagging all around  
The feeling of anger and  
hopelessness rising  
The feeling of wanting to run, to hide, for  
everyone to leave well alone  
Don't want advice, don't want nagging  
Want to prove I can do it on my own  
My way's easier, helps put the Pain at ease  
Hiding, cutting, scratching, its my way  
No one cares, no one understands  
I'm all alone

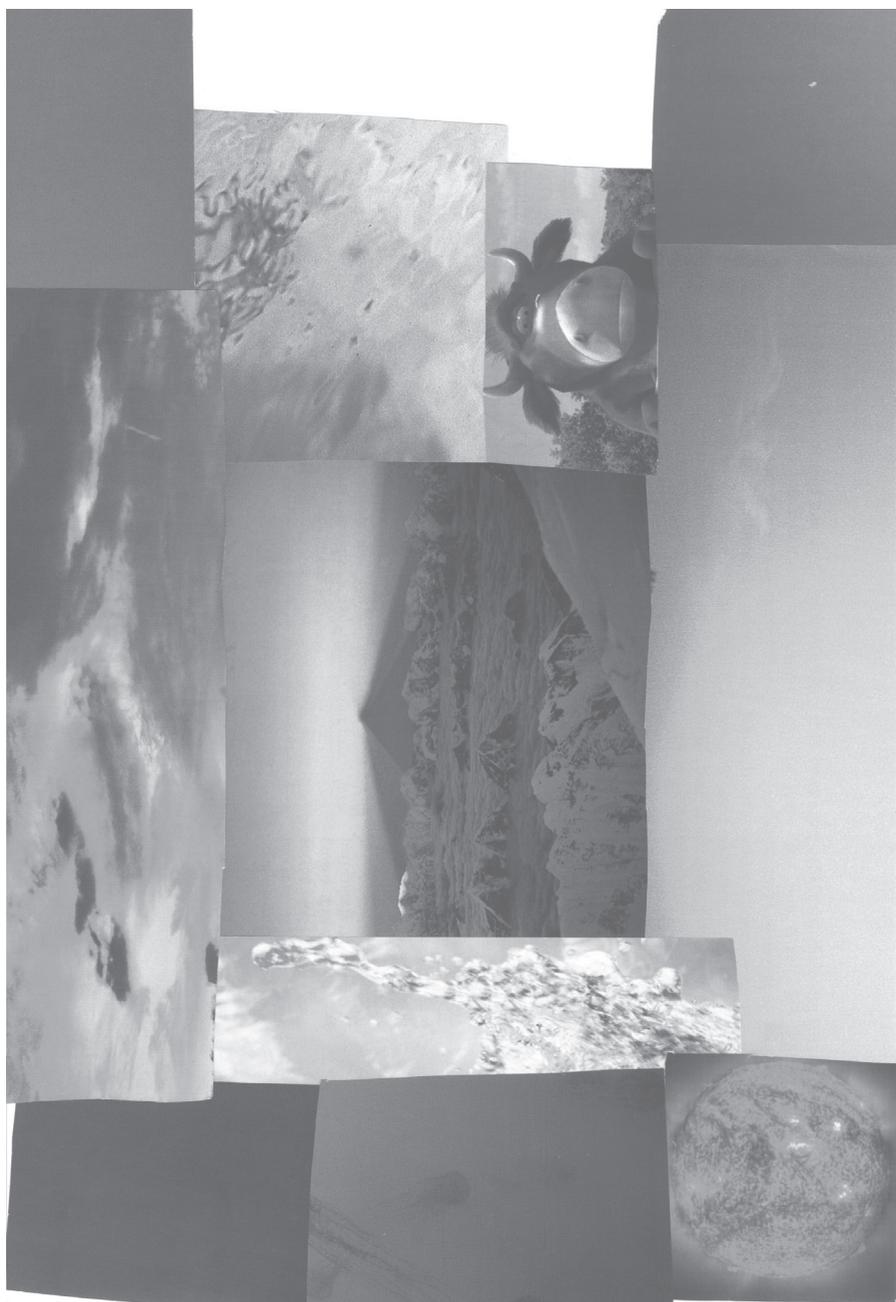


# The Majority of Ignorance

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Sara

As I strode deeper and deeper  
into the world  
The light became dim  
And the sky became a piercing black  
The ground became a pit of tar  
that burned my already cut-up skin  
Attention seeking  
You fell into the same old place  
Startling, painful  
The scary, scary dark  
There are no pictures on the walls  
Just people moving  
Living pieces of art  
Depictions of disapproval on their Neurotypical faces  
But you're way too self-absorbed to notice  
Until later  
When it starts to drag you, sinking into the hateful earth  
If only I could have a wooden heart  
Or at least be secretive and silent  
To a pit of no emotion  
My active mind  
In the doldrums  
Broken, ripped at its already bursting seams  
Though I feel lifeless and wild  
Like they don't exist  
And feel nothing at all  
I'm the only person in this world  
Take me somewhere beautiful.



# I Remember...

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**Sarah**

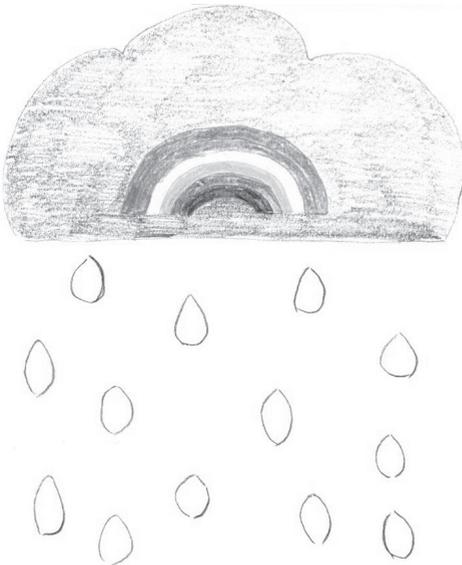
I remember locking myself away  
I needed the space, the escape  
But still to feel safe and contained  
I didn't want to cause trouble  
It was my only option my only means  
of survival  
I fought desperately for it to be a secret  
I knew they'd stop it  
I was almost relieved when they found out  
Maybe someone could stop me needing  
my escape  
They tried to help, they couldn't  
At least I knew they didn't all hate me  
Their opinions of me were shattered  
They knew I had lied and betrayed  
They couldn't work out how I had kept it  
secret for so long  
I wish they'd never found out  
I wish they'd left me with me to cope  
with me, with my escape  
I wish I'd never shattered their hopes, dreams,  
their aspirations for me  
I wish I could have kept the dream of  
who I was going to be  
I dream of that person I would have  
been now  
What I'd of been like  
What I'd be doing  
Maybe if they hadn't found out I could  
have been that person  
I still hold some secrets  
My power over them  
My revenge for them finding out  
How dare they  
They shattered the dreams  
I wish that were true  
I wish it weren't my fault

# Untitled

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Sarah

The only thing you can do is listen  
But the message keeps on changing and  
contradicting the previous statement  
Mend my life  
I won't change  
What should you do?  
Which message is the one to respond to?  
How can you step back and see the  
whole picture  
Don't zoom in and see each raindrop  
crashing to the earth  
View the whole atmosphere  
The cycle of water  
Bear the big picture in mind when each  
raindrop is sliding down the window pane  
Each raindrop has a story of its own  
But the stories don't make sense unless  
you can see the cycle that lay before  
and will probably come again.



# Avoncliffe School

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Sara

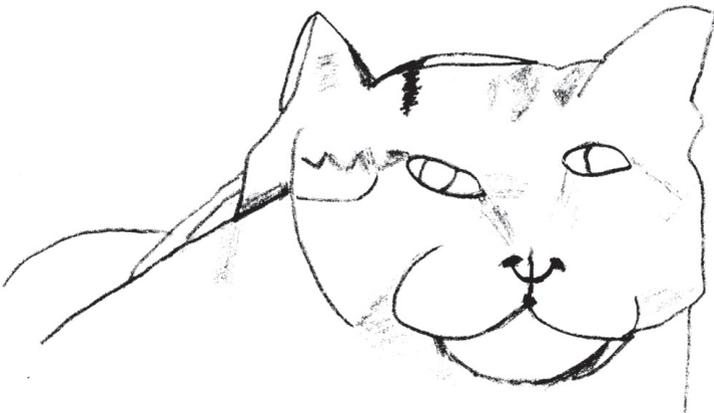
I don't want to leave this place  
It's become a part of me  
Now they're sending me out the gates  
in a big white school bus  
I don't want to say goodbye  
I remember all the times we had together  
We all accepted one another  
I met some of my best friends in life here  
I never wanted to leave  
I remember my friend Tony  
who used to repeat what you said in a  
computer generated voice  
I remember Andy Robins, and his grave  
obsession with padlocks  
My best friend Neil Black  
who used to do breaststroke as he walked  
And there was Aaron Oaks  
who put his hand over his mouth when he talked  
They squabbled over swings in the  
playground  
They all wanted the same one  
There would be David Liam Price,  
an undercover cop from Cuba  
Micheal Trinity was a psychic detective  
who pretended to be blind  
Everyone would scream  
When they didn't know the time  
John Cooper  
He used to eat things from the bins  
He used to enjoy  
smudging lipstick on his face  
Abdul Hussein  
used to scream at Mark Burton's face  
Mark Burton liked to copy birds  
and go 'Hum, Hum'  
I'll miss this place forever  
It'll always be a part of me  
This was our island  
Where no one ever told us to change.

# Untitled

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Lisa

I remember the trust I used to  
have in you  
I remember all the laughs we  
used to have, all the teasing and  
the play fights  
I remember all the arguments you  
and mum used to have and  
I remember what you did  
I remember the things you said to  
me and I remember thinking, why me,  
we were cousins, friends, weren't we?  
As I think back on it now, twelve  
years later, it feels like a dream



# Adult v Child

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Sarah

There was a new voice  
The adult within that was battling with your child  
Which was the strongest?  
Who would you choose to listen to?  
Where had this new voice come from?  
It's always been there  
But you had hidden it  
Blocked it from earshot  
You wanted to be the child  
And just have his voice speak out  
That was the real one  
The one that still needed hearing  
The adult wanted to be heard  
But the child was not ready for he had not yet been heard

# Child

---

Sarah

Please validate me, hear me, say its ok to feel like this  
Please give me a cuddle and make it all better  
I don't like my life like this  
I want it to change  
I really want it to be taken away  
and be given a pain-free life in exchange  
I am trapped inside a bubble  
The bubble makes me invisible  
No-one can hear me  
Witness the pain I'm in  
If only the bubble would burst  
Then I could be relaxed and saved from my hell  
I long for the bubble to burst  
I'm begging to be saved  
But time has ticked on  
The bubble is getting stronger while the child  
gets weaker  
Unless the bubble is burst, the child will  
suffocate and die under all the pain and turmoil  
All because no-one has managed to burst the  
bubble

## Difference to my life

---

**Sarah**

Power  
Control  
Freedom  
Friend  
Mine, mine, mine



## Plain Black

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**Lorna**

Reliable, grounding, sensible  
Lacking sense  
twirling, whirling, never knowing  
Permission to shine  
To travel  
Single, double, triple





# Pokémon Master (The Amazing Pokémon Journey)

---

Sara

I've got the world at my fingertips  
When I put you in a Poké ball  
The story starts  
But it never ends  
I climb up mountains with you  
Me, Houndoom, Dragonite and Riachu  
I cross uncrossable forests with you  
You're my dream come true  
As we traipse through the desert  
Sandslashe's sandstorm  
Blinding us  
But it never holds us back  
We'll get every badge  
In every Pokémon land  
We'll gain every Hidden Machine  
Our hearts will take us through our journey  
Each day is a new beginning  
We capture some  
As some grow and evolve  
My Zigzagoon, now a Linoone  
I'll teach you kick-ass moves  
The Pokémon world  
The sun and its sky  
As we cross Hoenn, Johto and Kanto  
In the ice cold rain  
Kyogre's drizzle  
Groudon's drought  
Suicune's hurricane  
We'll catch 'em all  
Whatever the weather  
We'll make it through  
I'm the Pokémon Master in every way.

# Untitled

---

**Sarah**

Each one of us alone  
Came here with our own agendas  
Each with different hopes and fears  
We've become united each time  
Yet between we've again become  
each one of us alone

We've shared our stories, our feelings  
opened ourselves up  
exposed ourselves to potential danger, potential support  
we've discovered new things about each other  
been given the honour to glimpse one  
another's lives  
and now we have reached the end of this  
stage of the journey

For me it has been a journey of discovery  
learning about myself  
digging out ability I didn't know was there  
I've found a way to express myself  
A tool to help people understand  
I hope it doesn't fade

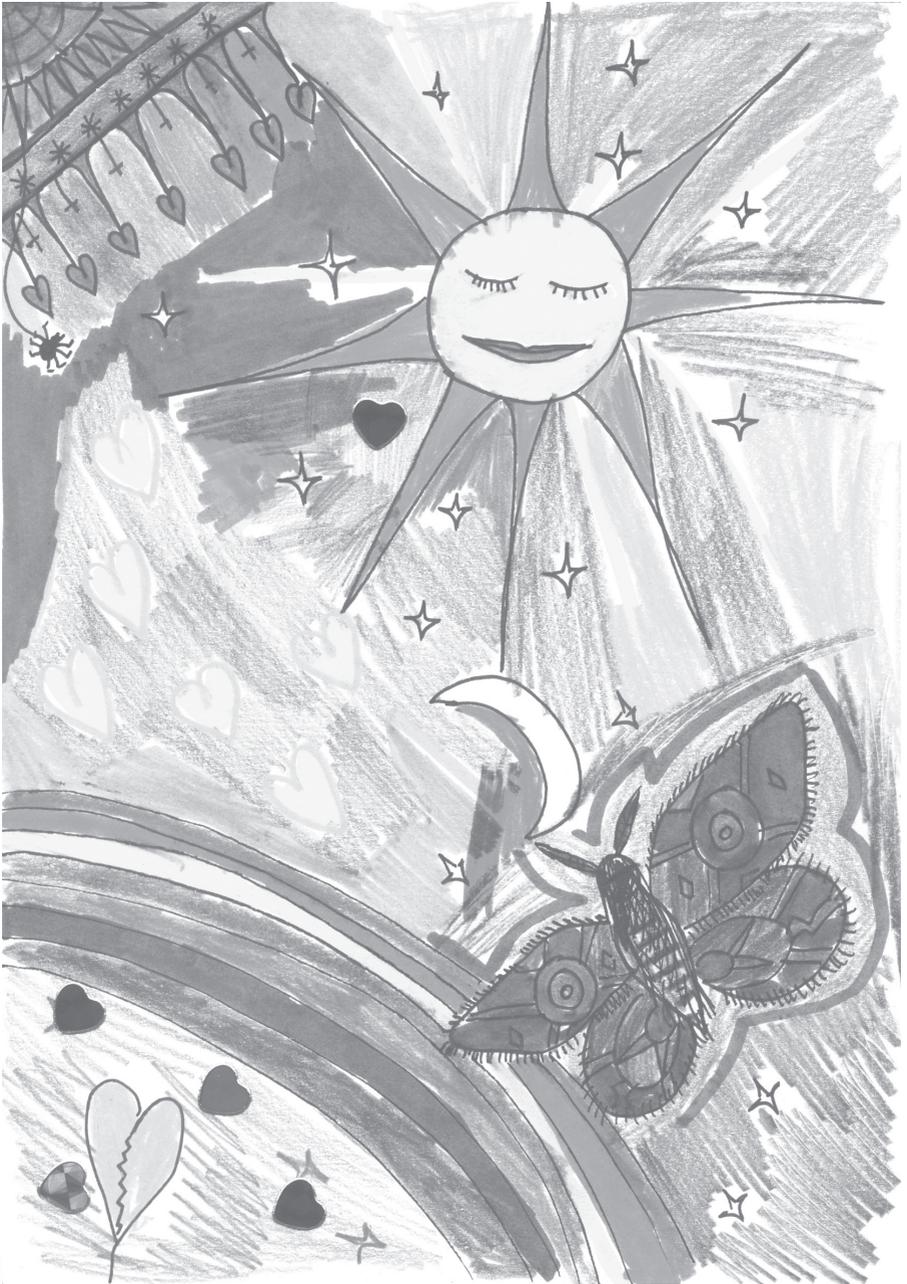
Now we are at the conclusion  
It is time to choose our paths  
The routes we wish to take  
It is up to us to choose what part this  
experience will have in our lives  
For we are once again  
Each one of us alone

# Untitled

---

**Lisa**

We'll have to say goodbye for now  
But I hope it won't be for long  
The friends I've made, the laughs  
I've had, I'll miss it all a lot  
I can't believe this day has come,  
the time has gone so fast  
I want to say before I cry, bye-bye  
and I hope to see you all again real soon.



## Extract from Ride On II

---

Claire Williamson

I have found my way  
to the other side of the world

everything I have clung to  
has been turned on its head

like a flipped egg-timer  
sand flows back into my body  
and slowly I fill with a grounded security  
completely unfamiliar to me.

I remember so many things  
breaking a horse in  
getting back on again and again

galloping bareback from the paddock  
laughing with my brother in Summer rain.

I remember about riding  
about living.

I hadn't forgotten  
I'd only forgotten  
to take hold of the reins.

So now I ride on  
and if you want to  
you can come too.





# Comes the Dawn

---

Lisa, Sara, Sarah, Claire, Lorna

Comes the dawn  
Doesn't mean everything starts again  
And company doesn't mean security  
But today's friends  
Bring light and reflection  
As you sit together at a table  
Sharing water, wine and time  
Knowing tomorrow is too uncertain for plans  
I don't want it ever  
To be that way for me  
I always try to make things happen  
So it all goes my way  
Life can be so crap  
And you learn that  
Promises are made to be held  
Longing and loss can live in your soul  
This is the life  
That you really can endure  
The nightmare  
The dark, scary, bleakness  
That feels like it'll never end  
For look, here  
Comes the dawn.



**Ride On Creative Writing Workshops** were organised as a partnership between Poetry Can and Bristol Crisis Service for Women.

**Poetry Can** was established in March 1995 as a registered charity aiming to encourage as many people as possible within the Bristol and Bath areas to get involved in poetry activity.

Website: <http://www.poetrycan.co.uk/>

**Bristol Crisis Service for Women (BCSW)** provides support and information to women and young people who self-injure.

Our helpline, for women and girls, is open Friday and Saturday from 9pm – 12.30 am and Sundays from 6pm – 9pm, Telephone 0117 9251119. Calls via Get Connected on 0808 808 4994 (open 1pm-11pm every day) are free to young women under the age of 19.

The Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90 offer 24 hour support.

BCSW produces regular newsletters for young women between the ages of 16 and 25 who have experience of self injury. We also hold regular monthly workshops for young women who are interested in campaigning and raising awareness on the issue of self-injury and young people. If you are interested in joining the mailing list for the newsletter or you want to know more about the young women's workshops, please contact the office on 0117 9279600 or email [lorna.bcsw@btconnect.com](mailto:lorna.bcsw@btconnect.com).

Website: <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/BCSW/>

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