

AUTITUDE!



INFO AND ADVICE!
MOVIES! ART!
AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

WELCOME!

Welcome to the sixth issue of Autitude featuring a wonderful mix of artwork, writing and photography. Autitude continues to be shaped by what matters most to you and is curated and illustrated by Ash Loydon.

Keep your fantastic contributions coming. Whether it's a poem, a written reflection, a cartoon, a blog, photography or example of another creative pursuit, we would love to hear about it. If you have something you would like to share, please get in touch with us at autitude@scottishautism.org.

Although lockdown restrictions are starting to ease, life's not exactly back to normal. A certain amount of virtual communication is here to stay we reckon, so check out the Click and Connect groups and see if anything appeals to you.

To make sure you are updated when the latest edition is released sign up here – thank you

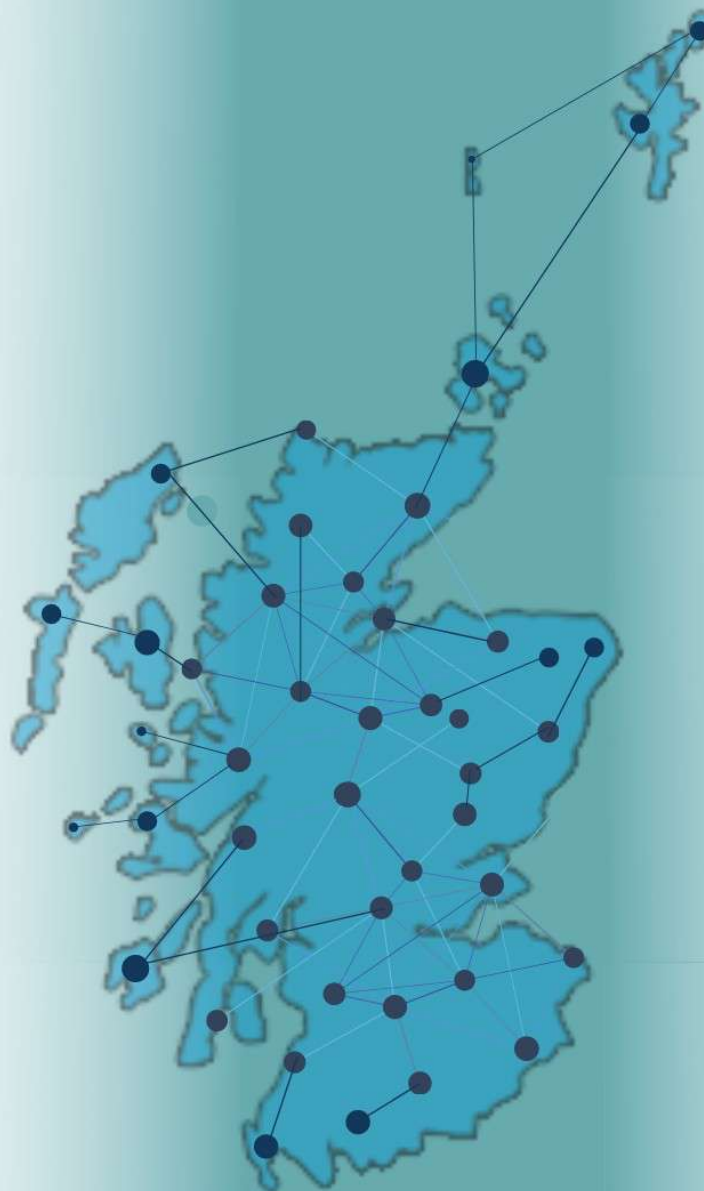
Scottish
autism

WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED

CONTENTS

- 4. Click & Connect Updates.
- 6. Reasonable Adjustment – A series by Lea B.
- 10. Poem by C.D.
- 12. Artitude! Featuring more of our readers creations.
- 24. Gordon Barlow on masking.
- 26. Spectrum Superstars!
- 27. Autism Appreciation Week News.





Scottish
autism
WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED

Click & Connect

Click and Connect allows the autistic community and their families in Scotland to stay connected through the pandemic and beyond.

These groups aim to reduce feelings of loneliness & isolation by providing an opportunity to connect with others online.

Mindful Autism Support Group

Come along to our Mindful Autism Support Group for autistic individuals and family members of autistic people in Scotland. Run by Jonny Drury, the group will take place every Thursday afternoon until 8th July. Each session will run via Zoom and is free to join.

Find out more and sign up to the next session [here](#).

Virtual Art Group

Do you want to explore your creative side? Join our online Art Group taking place every Wednesday until 7th July, from 5pm - 6.30pm.

The Art Group is open to autistic people and their families and aims to bring people together for creative expression in an informal and safe environment. It offers the chance for a mindful break from the day's worries and can help to reduce stress.

Find out more and sign up to the next session [here](#).

Virtual Choir Group

Our Virtual Choir takes place every Thursday until 8th July from 5pm until 6pm. This group is for autistic people and their families in Scotland, and all ages and abilities are welcome!

Numbers will be limited to a maximum of 15 people so sign up quick!

We will learn a range of songs over the sessions. The songs will be chosen by you and you will be able to submit your favourite song or a song that means something to you when you register for the group.

Find out more and sign up to the next session [here](#).

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

(CRAZY ABOUT THE JOB!)

A SERIES BY LEA B.

5. Lady Kiss That Frog

August 2019.



Lady,

How long will you endure in your silence? How long will you leave that man wondering? How long till you gather words from your heart to your lips? I know, some poetic talent there! But: I am just a dog and animals are much less wore down by the complexities of love and attraction, from what I can tell. (You bet, especially since that visit to the vet when I was a couple of months old and, well... Let's just say I fell asleep with it, woke up without it, a curious incident.) Still, I guess I can see some things clearly and the way you two have been circling around each other in the past six months reminds me of a veeery long game of fetch. Sure, I get it, it's your work space and I understand that there's a lot at stake (and then there's Mrs. Henrik, of course). And yet, why to leave this chap, Henrik thinking longer that you're just his next best buddy of a colleague? He might want a new life anyway and with whom better than you? Yes, as you can tell, I'm a fan! Watching *Lassie* made me believe in optimistic turn of events and happy endings.

Barkfully yours,

Bradley, caretaker's (very smart) dog,
The back yard, Charity Towers.



My dear sir,

I hear you. It is good to know that there's at least one person fully believing in this story – thank you. I too feel that the longer this quasi friendship is going on, the more awkward it will be to let Henrik's eyes open to the reality. Right you are. But he has been most of my focus since last November and that is a very serious thing for one like me with autism. That is like... Let's see... Imagine when you wait for your dinner and the plate is already descending! You would never take your eyes off of your owners' hands, wouldn't you? Well, this has been the case for me too when it comes to processing my feelings for Henrik, only in slow motion. For about three-hundred days, so far. Thanks for watching my most clumsy attempts to blurt out the I-love-you stuff to him, again and again, and still considering me to be an intelligent person. Where would we be without you? Where would I be? By the way, between laying in the sun during the day and guarding Charity Towers at night, do you also take up one-off assignments? Like, for example, penning a love letter or giving a surprise serenade during lunch break? Thanks for considering it.

Clapfully yours,

Lea, (very love-struck) human,
PR Department, Charity Towers.



Dearest Lady,

I would absolutely do those things for you! But, in this case, you and I still need to go down the traditional route, I'm afraid. First of all, I do not know how to print a Braille-letter and I guess your knight would need that. (And then, if it turns out on the spot that he doesn't know how to read Braille, then I would have to translate it back, read it out aloud and hope for the best. To be honest, my writing skills are still somewhat behind yours, Lea. Although I have a short column in The Daily Pooch called *Just scratchin' My Ear – Things I Don't Get About Bipedals*. It's a start, I guess!...) If we would opt for the serenade, would my slightly false notes pass for such sensitive ears like Henrik's? What if he would call me a 'bad dog' after he listened to my singing and word would get around the building around the 'bad dog'?? Since you and I need to aim for a best possible outcome, I recommend embracing my musical skills where they are at the moment: once a month, at the full moon, where only the neighbours comment.

I know the obstacles seem too big here; you can see, he can't, you know what you want to say, to me he hardly seem to, you are soft yet determined, he... I don't know, tired and married, you are single, he's busy. But, my evolutionary upgraded friend, a new chapter can only start with new words. If an autistic and a blind person could come this far, if you've reached to this point, there's no turning back now, I reckon. And hey, if it doesn't work out, you can still adopt me. Deal? 'Cause I would love to live with Lea, you instead of working here. Let's discuss rent anyway!

I lift my paw to you,
Bradley, ultra-resilient canine at your service!

(We could perhaps give that serenade together, if you're scared?)

Brad,

You are one wise canine!

Today I have decided that, indeed, if I have managed until now, then I shall have the courage to talk to Henrik about some important matters. Okay, well about the fact that I have had feelings for him for ten months. (It's just when I write 'some important matters', it sounds much less scary.) But if I add up all the mornings, afternoons, daytimes, travel times, evenings and nights I spent thinking about him, processing his facial expressions, his body language, changes in his use of words depending on the various situations, understanding his habits and routines and likes, plus the changes that occurred in how he does things since I've known him, and me asking him why he altered those things – after all this... I guess there's nothing left to do than to blurt it out. Those milestone love-you words. Not finding a better timing tool, I've decided to once again use my logic. My aspzie way of establishing when to inform him about the true nature of my feelings have been this: find the day when it crossed my mind for the first time that I might be attracted to him. Done. That's easy to remember (I accidentally ignored him, thinking nobody was in the room because the lights were off – then I went back to apologise and didn't feel like leaving for several minutes).

Second step: count nine months in the calendar (nine is 3x3 and if a human being can become viable for Earth environment within nine months, this should not take longer either!). Then choose the closest day to that date when we are both at work and both are free and can find a quiet space to talk. Easy, right? That's like within fifteen days... Holy dogfood, Brad! What if this frog won't turn into a prince??...

Now freaking out,
Lea, human, your pal of a disaster.

Still go for it, in my opinion. There are no two frogs the same - or princes, for that matter. If you feel like chickening out on the day, miss, just look into my eyes when you say the Big Words to Henrik. Look to good ol' Brad, I will ground you. Dogs have that effect, you know. Talking about grounding, I can even bring you a beef bone we can burry after the meeting together. (It's just a little thing I sometimes do, but don't tell the caretaker, he loves to maintain the lawn and he's very proud of it.)

This is so exciting!

Bradley, canine, your faithful servant.
PS: You're not a disaster. Cats are, me thinks.

If you'd like to contact Lea about her article you can do so at
leapublish@gmail.com



Poem by C.D

Chasing Thought

**Thought, visible for a second,
slides away.**

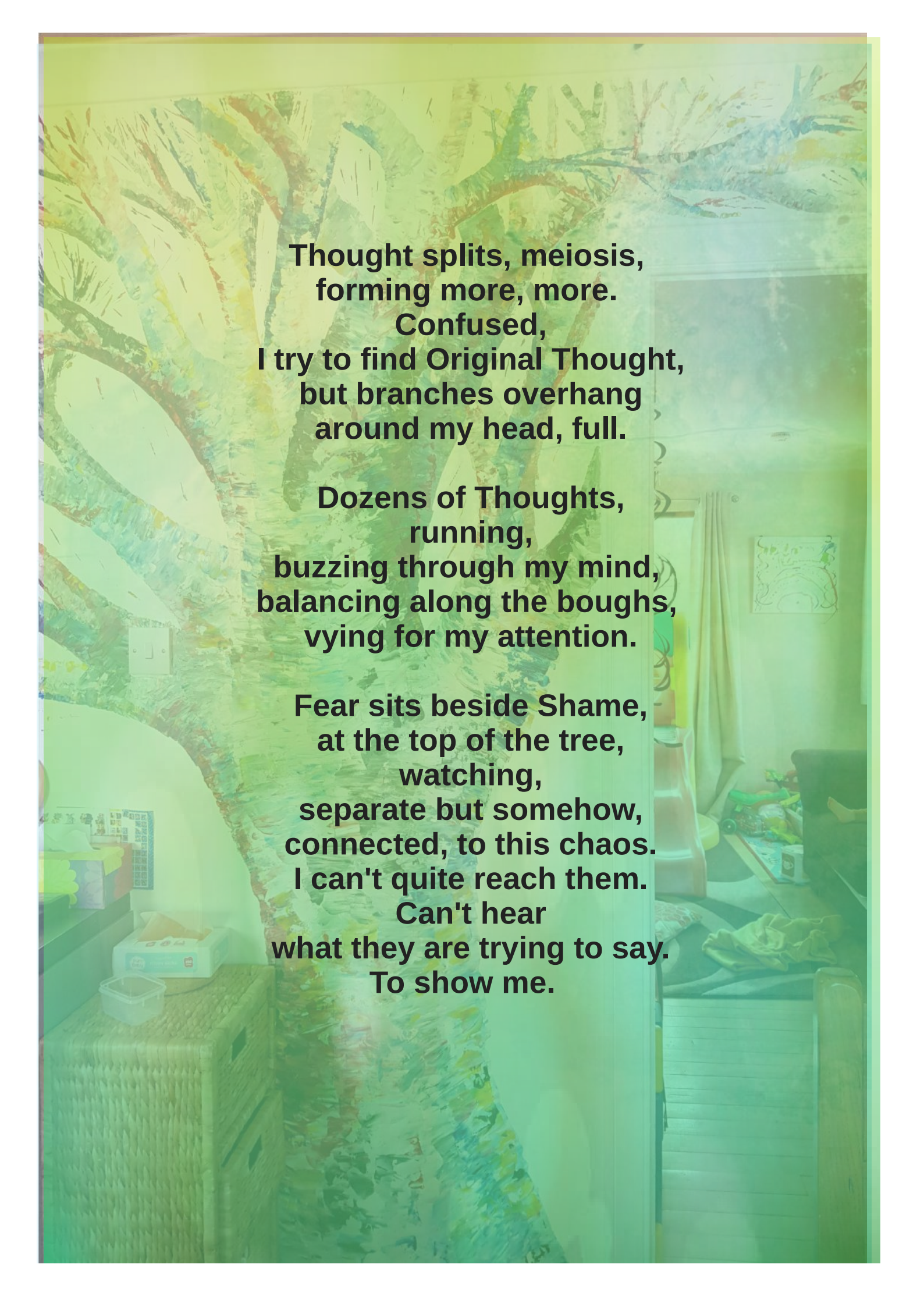
**A dusky, ashy, dust ball,
rolling in the wind
to the foot of a tree.**

**I concentrate so hard.
I catch him.**

**I try to start at the beginning,
But Thought slips from my grasp,
evading me.**

**I snatch him again.
A flicker of recognition,
my reflection in the little sphere
prompting a moment of unease,
a memory.**

**But then the panic explodes,
Emotions rush through me,
Thought jumps out of my arms,
escapes me,
dashes up the tree trunk.
Emotions follow.**



**Thought splits, meiosis,
forming more, more.
Confused,
I try to find Original Thought,
but branches overhang
around my head, full.**

**Dozens of Thoughts,
running,
buzzing through my mind,
balancing along the boughs,
vying for my attention.**

**Fear sits beside Shame,
at the top of the tree,
watching,
separate but somehow,
connected, to this chaos.
I can't quite reach them.
Can't hear
what they are trying to say.
To show me.**

Time now for some more of our readers creative endeavours as we showcase their fantastic ...

ARTITUDE!

Brian 'Fred Worm' MacGregor.

This Is The Voice Of The Sea,
By, Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.

On Several Nights Many, Rather Tall Great Waves,
Are Then Pushed Through Those Darkest Of Caves,
By Yet Another Storm - That Slowly Begins To Form,
Great, Echoes - Wherever, This Sea, Quickly, Flows.
And, Whilst, Little In Life, Is Ever, Going, To Be, Free,
One Of Those Pleasures, Is The Voice Of The Sea.

Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor (2020).





THE SEATING SELECTION IS EVERYTHING
WITH ANYTHING LIKE SITTING PRETTY.

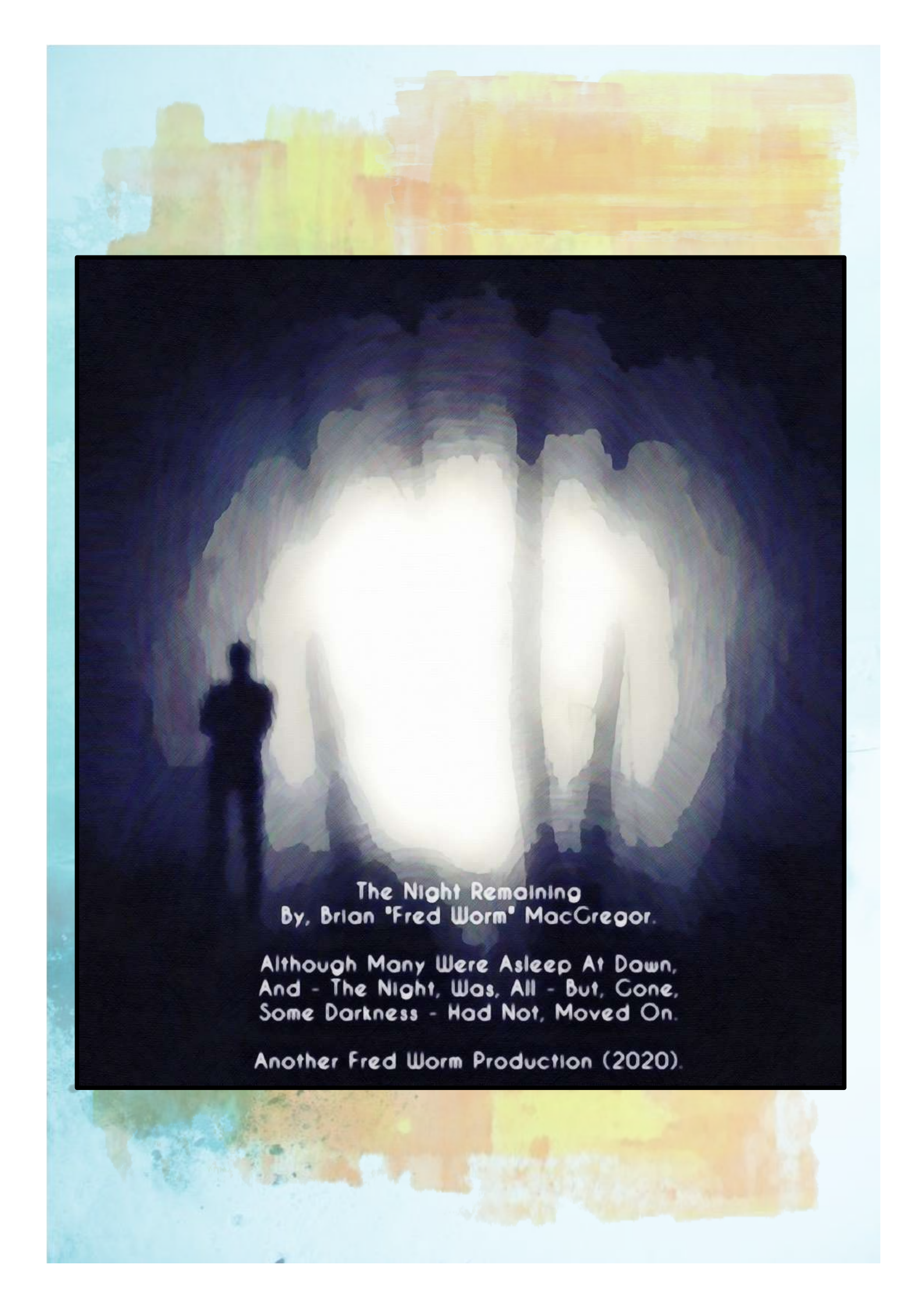
(C) COPYRIGHT 2018 BRIAN "FRED WORM" MACGREGOR.



A Certain Peace,
By, Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.

There is some, dark red mist - in life, that comes as quite, the greatest, ever, test,
Very much like, great sparks, that race, through, the beauty of, a tinder dry, forest,
Until some meaning - is found, those flames, will, then be, the only echoing sound,
But, as the tension, burns away, from night to day, theres, an even greater release,
As by dawn, there is little left, but one things sure, there is now,... a certain peace,...

A Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor Production in 2019.



The Night Remaining
By, Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.

Although Many Were Asleep At Dawn,
And - The Night, Was, All - But, Gone,
Some Darkness - Had Not, Moved On.

Another Fred Worm Production (2020).

The image shows two white silhouettes of human faces in profile, facing each other. Between their foreheads is a bright, glowing green light that radiates outwards in several directions, creating a starburst effect. The background is a dark, textured green.

The Circle Must Always Be Complete To Be Whole
Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.

The image depicts a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The scene is illuminated with a strong, warm glow of red and orange light, which appears to be coming from behind the trees, creating a silhouette effect and a hazy, atmospheric quality. The ground is dark and shadowed.

The Written Word Has No Shadow - So Never Live In Its Shade
Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.

Amanda Mumberson's photography.

"I find photography and being out in nature has done wonders for my confidence. It gives me a purpose to leave the house and feel at peace in my surroundings. I am crazy about birds especially and love to observe their behaviours. It is great to come home and manipulate an image to make it more creative and add moods to my images."






Amarda Mumberson
PHOTOGRAPHY




Amarda Mumberson
PHOTOGRAPHY


Amarda Mumberson
PHOTOGRAPHY




Amarda Mumberson
PHOTOGRAPHY



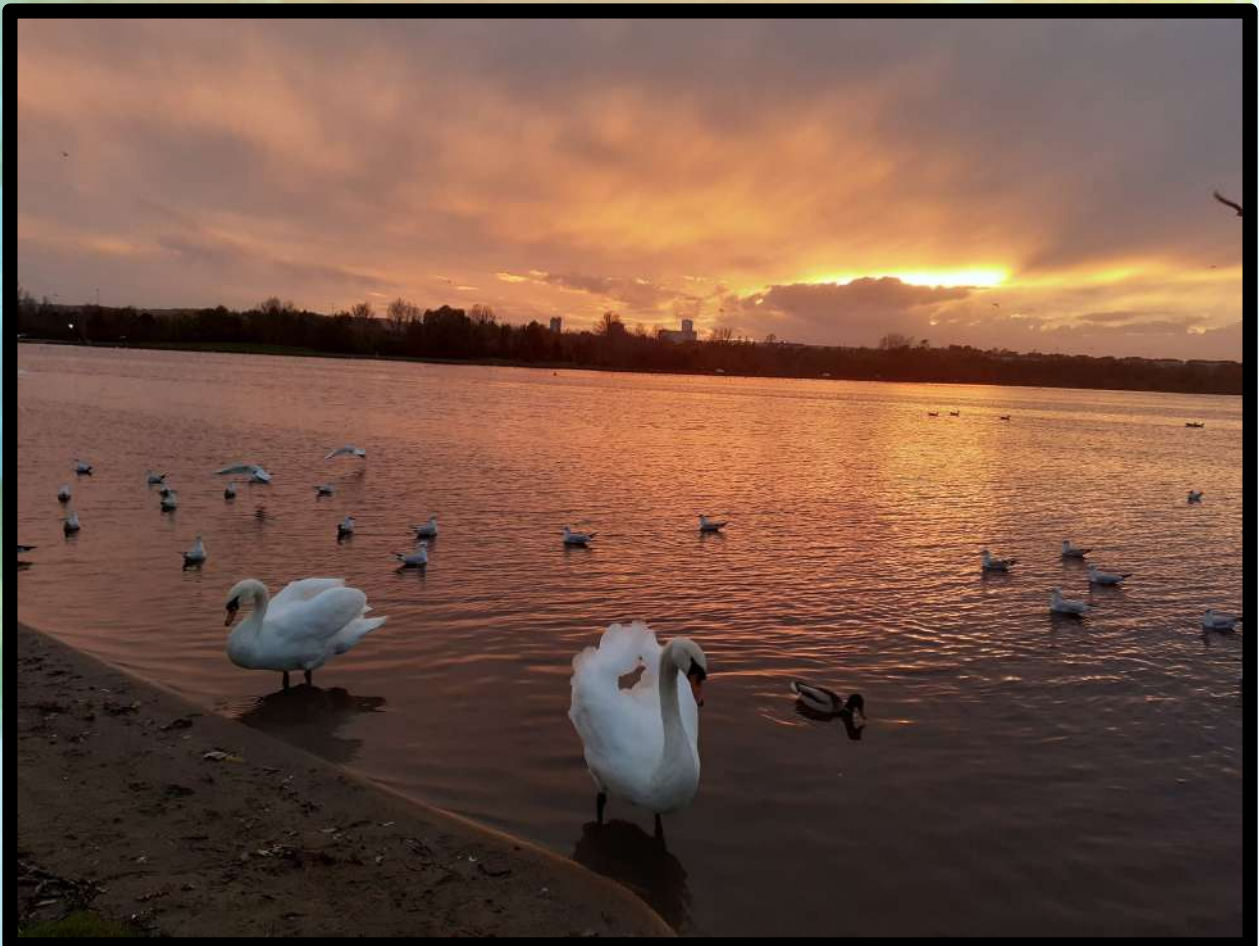
Sandra Smyth's photography.

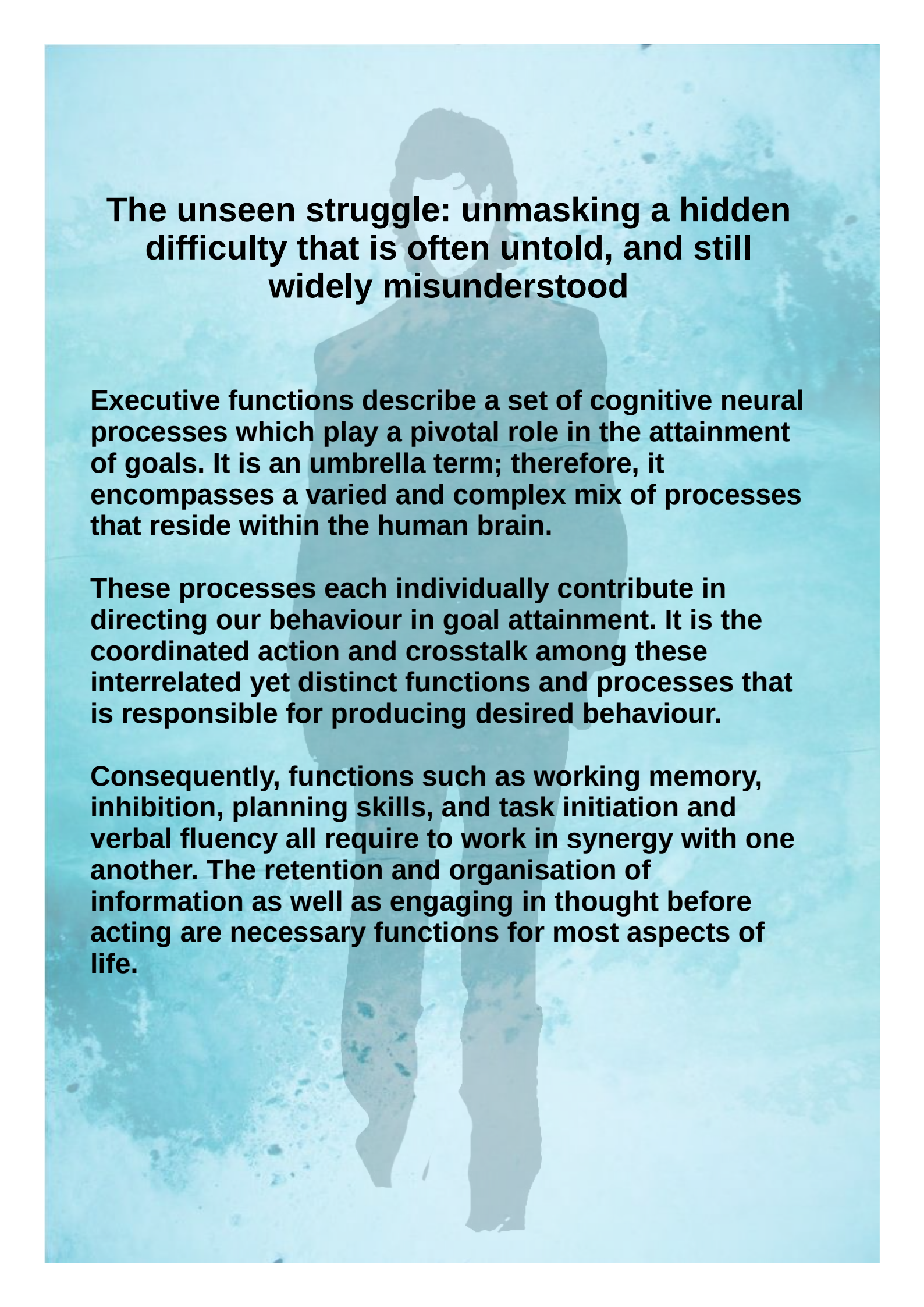
"I was diagnosed with Autism at the age of 45, I had lost my identity/self-esteem, looked back into my childhood to identify my authentic self and remembered I would carry a toy camera around with me, so as an adult I took up photography again. I had used my mobile phone camera and took a few pictures, people commented about the pictures telling me they looked great, that helped to boost my self-esteem and it's now become my passion/interest."









A person is walking on a beach, their figure silhouetted against a bright, blue-tinted background. The person is wearing a dark jacket and pants, and their shadow is cast on the sand. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

The unseen struggle: unmasking a hidden difficulty that is often untold, and still widely misunderstood

Executive functions describe a set of cognitive neural processes which play a pivotal role in the attainment of goals. It is an umbrella term; therefore, it encompasses a varied and complex mix of processes that reside within the human brain.

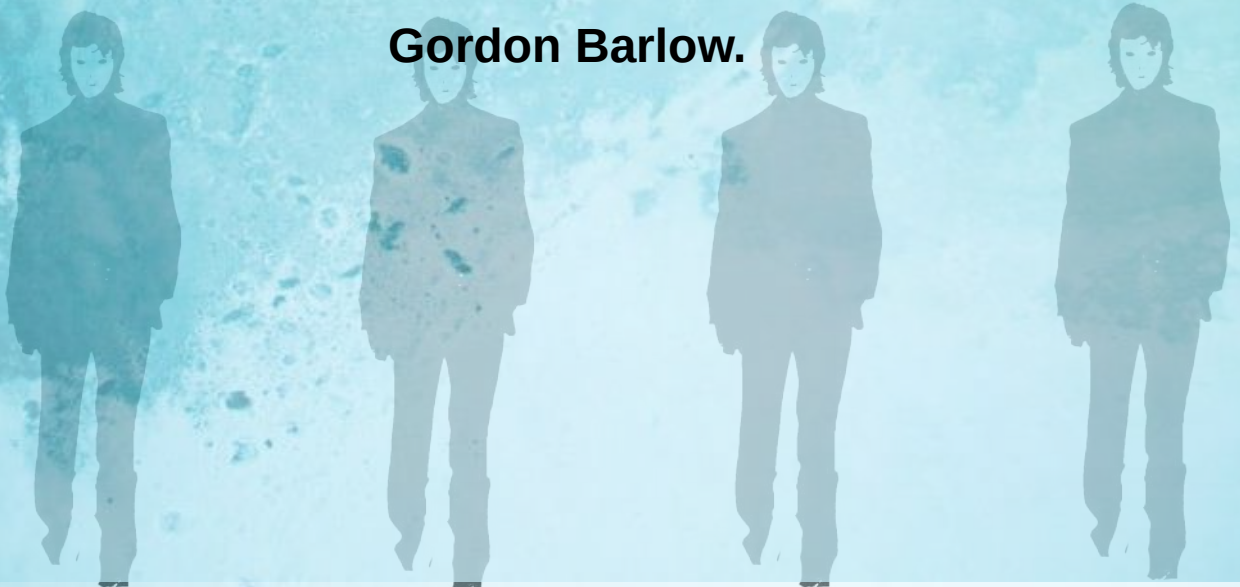
These processes each individually contribute in directing our behaviour in goal attainment. It is the coordinated action and crosstalk among these interrelated yet distinct functions and processes that is responsible for producing desired behaviour.

Consequently, functions such as working memory, inhibition, planning skills, and task initiation and verbal fluency all require to work in synergy with one another. The retention and organisation of information as well as engaging in thought before acting are necessary functions for most aspects of life.

However, there are groups of people who have been identified as perhaps experiencing greater difficulty in the application and use of these seemingly innate abilities. The identified groups can include people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, schizophrenia and dyslexia. It is suggested that while there can be a higher incidence of executive functioning difficulties among those groups, it is not a universal feature.

Evidence of tangible difficulties with executive function can be manifested in a variety of ways. One such example could be the student who seems always to blurt out things before pausing to think. Perhaps another could be a person who appears to engage in risky behaviour without consideration of the subsequent consequences. Another instance could perhaps be the student who struggles to structure the organisation of their essay due to planning or organising difficulties. These concrete examples illustrate not only the importance of executive function but also the potential consequences of its dysfunction.

Gordon Barlow.



SPECTRUM SUPERSTARS!



Name: Gary Anthony James Webb, better known as Gary Numan.

Age: 63.

Occupation: musician, singer, songwriter, composer, and record producer.

Autism Appreciation Week (6 – 10 September 2021)

Scottish Autism is hoping to pilot an Autism Appreciation Week in September (6th-10th).

April has been established as Autism Awareness Month, with the 2nd April being internationally recognised as Autism Awareness Day. We acknowledge that, for many autistic people, promoting awareness is not enough and that the message of acceptance is preferred.

We feel that an important aspect of acceptance is appreciation for what autistic people bring to society. We would like to highlight this by an Autism Appreciation Week organised by Scottish Autism. As this has been an incredibly challenging year for many, we want to show our appreciation of those we support in our services, those individuals we have worked with and show our appreciation for autistic people and their families in our wider communities.

As ever, we want to hear what you think about this approach. Would you welcome an Autism Appreciation Week? Please email us your thoughts at marketing@scottishautism.org.

AUTITUDE NEEDS YOU!



Well that's it for issue 6!
Hope you've enjoyed it!
Don't forget to send your contributions to
autitude@scottishautism.org