

# Filled to the Brim

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HOPE  
TRUST  
FAITH  
LOVE

My story is reality

HOPE





My story is reality

My story is at any time, page 596

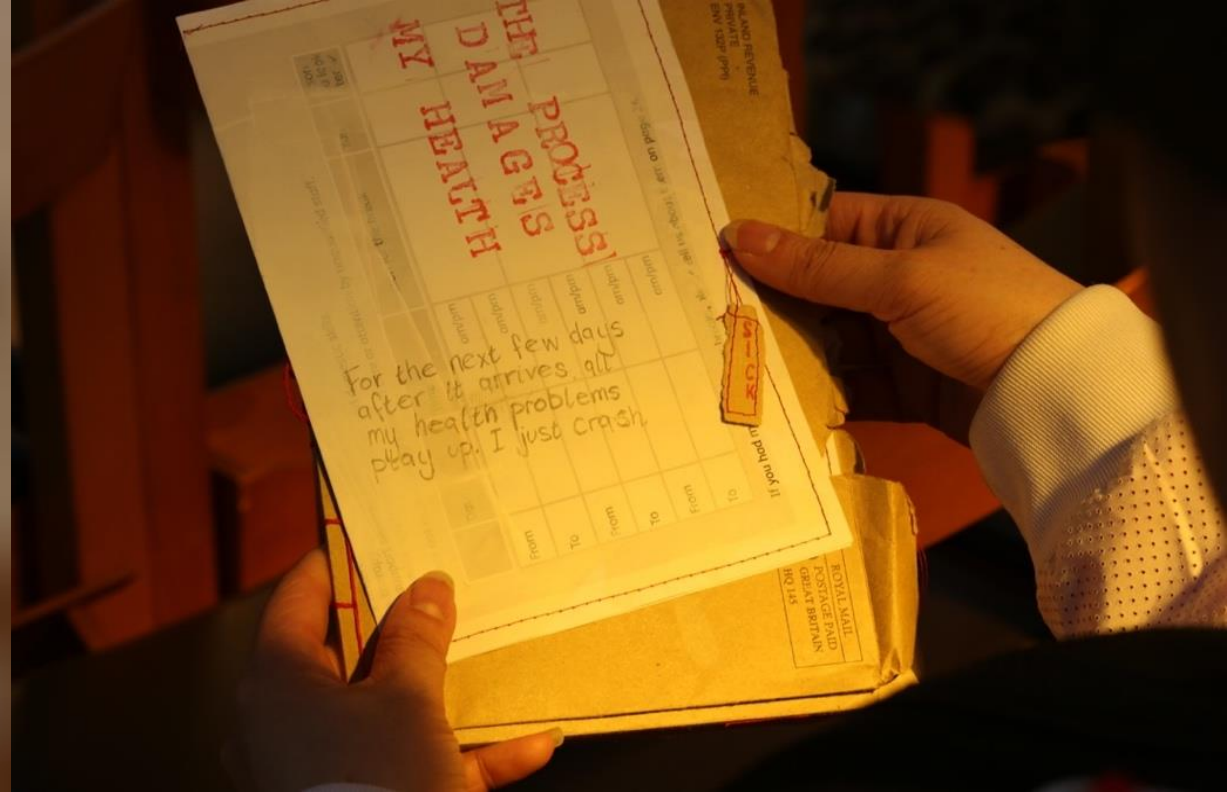
to read from page 1 to page 596

There is no contents page

chapter, from paragraph to word

And I can read it





Images from 'Connecting Stories' research, Wren Radford and Poverty Truth Community

The pages in this book are part of The Embodied Everyday project  
which has explored how the impacts of inequality and poverty  
are felt and experienced in everyday life  
but also, how it is in daily actions  
of creativity  
of care  
of standing up for ourselves and one another  
that we find ways of  
navigating  
surviving  
scraping by  
resisting  
and maybe flourishing  
even in the smallest of ways

and in these actions, we start to shape  
alternative meanings  
different ways of living and seeing  
a way of knowing  
something's worth  
quite apart from what has been decided  
about us by the 'powers that be'

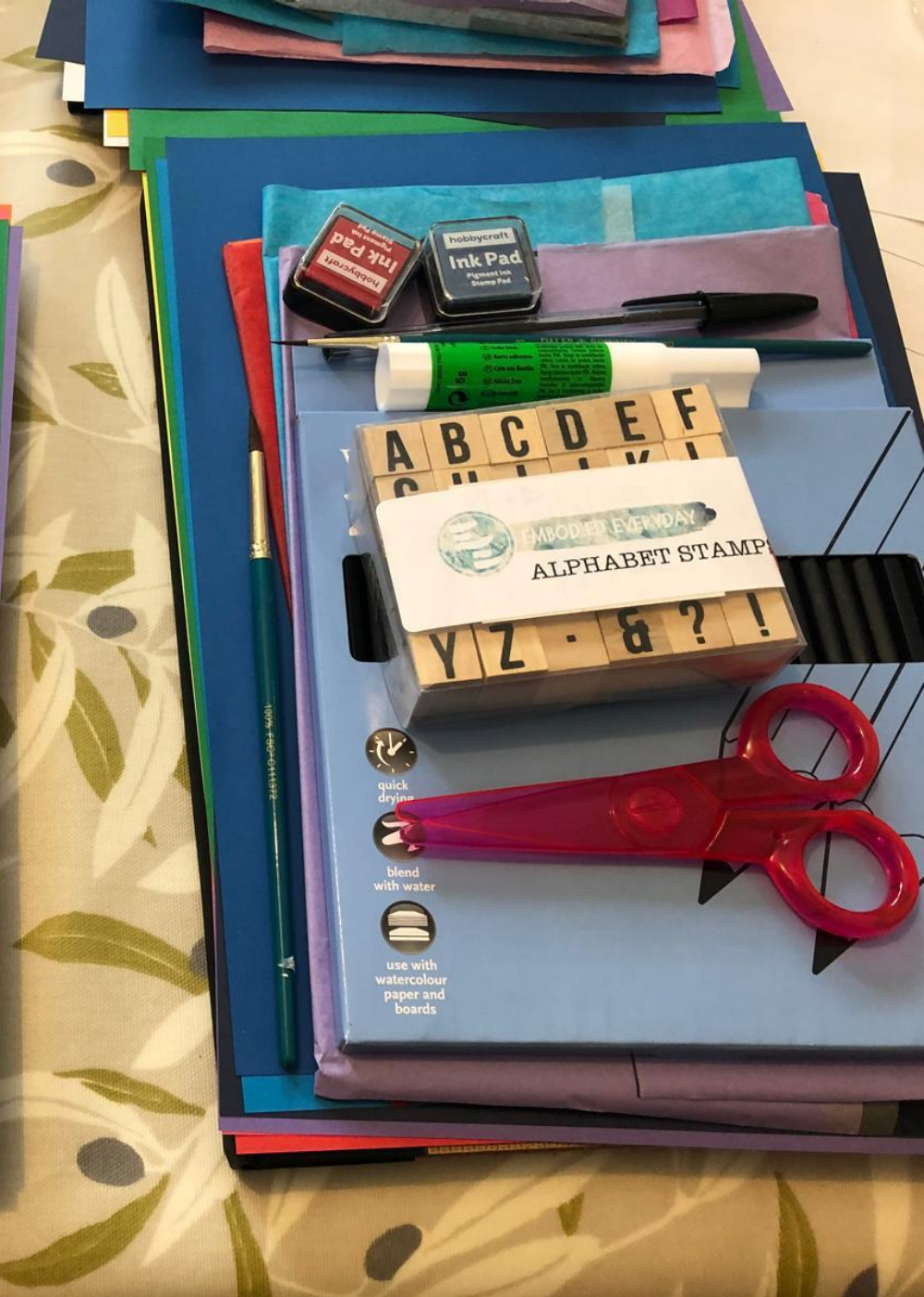
**Embodied Everyday**

this isn't a romantic notion  
we don't look through rose-tinted glasses  
we understand and live  
the harms and heartbreaks  
we keep these firmly in view  
(how could we not,  
when we live with them daily)  
but we also know  
our lives are  
many, multiple, tangled, true  
full of contrasts and contradictions  
difficulty, but beauty in between

we can't be boiled down  
reduced to an essence  
an issue  
a budget  
a headline  
a talking point  
an agenda

we peeked under the surface of what is ordinary  
even mundane  
reflected on what might pass you by  
and we found it  
filled to the brim











Filled

to

the

brim



The smile that I wear

holds a whole lot of pain

What I wish people knew  
about an ordinary  
day in my life?



Have Crohn's disease. 10-15 toilet rolls a week.

Was OK when not in Covid as I was always out at meetings so saved on the ones at home.

Now at home all the time, using them more, more stress, have had to borrow from the neighbours.

Embarrassed.

Stressed.

Upset.

I often have to go to the loo every half hour. Leaves me tired, weak, pain, sick, no appetite, drained.

What annoys me is people saying 'you're not going to the toilet again are you?'

It's upsetting having to explain. Also limits me to when I can get out and about.

Having to wash bed linen and clothes daily.

Penalised by benefits system for having an illness.

When I win the lottery the first thing I'll buy is an extra-soft brand of expensive loo roll!

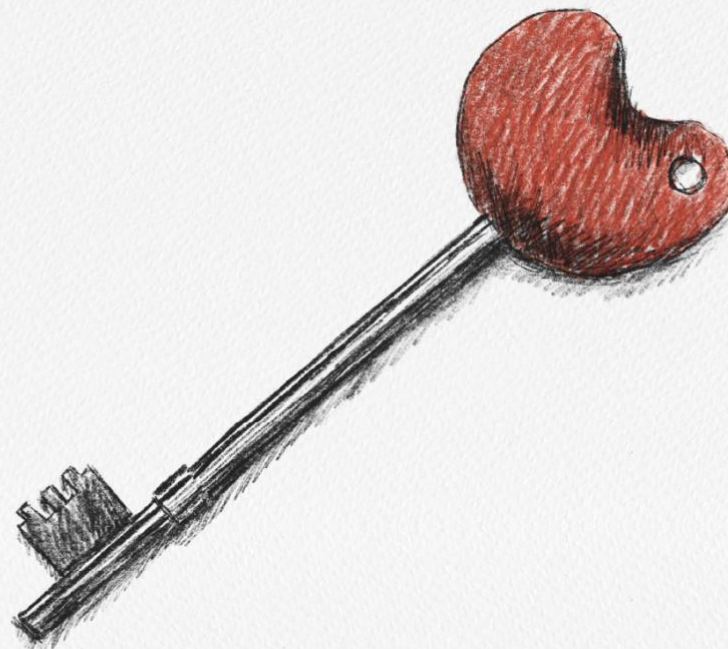




Access to toilets for disabled people is crucial.

I carry my RADAR key everywhere with me,

Its usually on a keychain with a soft toy  
so it's easy to find in my bag.



For many years I have been on and off various meds, for various conditions. Due to this I began to resent having to take so many tablets and I became very lax when it came to taking my medication.

To try and combat this, I found a weekly docket box with Hello Kitty on it. This has helped me to get better at remembering to take my meds and not to hate it quite so much.

My box is clear and round with a compartment for each day and three different pictures of Hello Kitty on a few of the days. It is very smooth because it is made of plastic. To preserve the letters and pictures, I painted over each compartment lid with clear nail varnish...it has worked and now despite owning it for about seven or eight years now, it still looks relatively new! The only thing I think that gives its age away is that a few of the lids don't click shut as snugly as they used to and are a little bit loose.

Having something that makes me smile helps to deal with the frustrating, mentally draining, austerity-inducing, boring, repetitive, robotic, nature of life with multiple chronic illnesses.





The lipstick is worn down  
Like the container.  
The mirror is broken.  
The butterflies still dance on it.  
I carry it everywhere with me  
in my pocket.  
It means such a lot  
but mostly reminds me  
to take a moment  
of liking myself every day  
no matter how worn down I am.

I love the sound of the clip,  
the feel on my lip.  
When I had chemo and  
lost all of my hair, I would wear this lipstick.  
It was the only thing on my face  
that I could make feel nice.  
My eyebrows and eyelashes were gone.  
It helped me face the world with a little more confidence.



My glasses are red and brown, hard, and life saving.

My glasses broke.

I took them to opticians, they said I had to pay upfront to get them fixed and I had no money. I started crying.

Upset.

Depressed.

Marginalised.

How much more can people on benefits take before they give up struggling to survive?

My eyesight is getting worse, and because of my health, there are times when I go blind for about 30 minutes at a time. It's scary when it happens outside and I have to ask people for help.

I worry about what will happen when it totally goes altogether.

I rely on my glasses for everything.

The lady in the shop felt sorry for me and tried to help. Despite everything there are still caring people in this world.

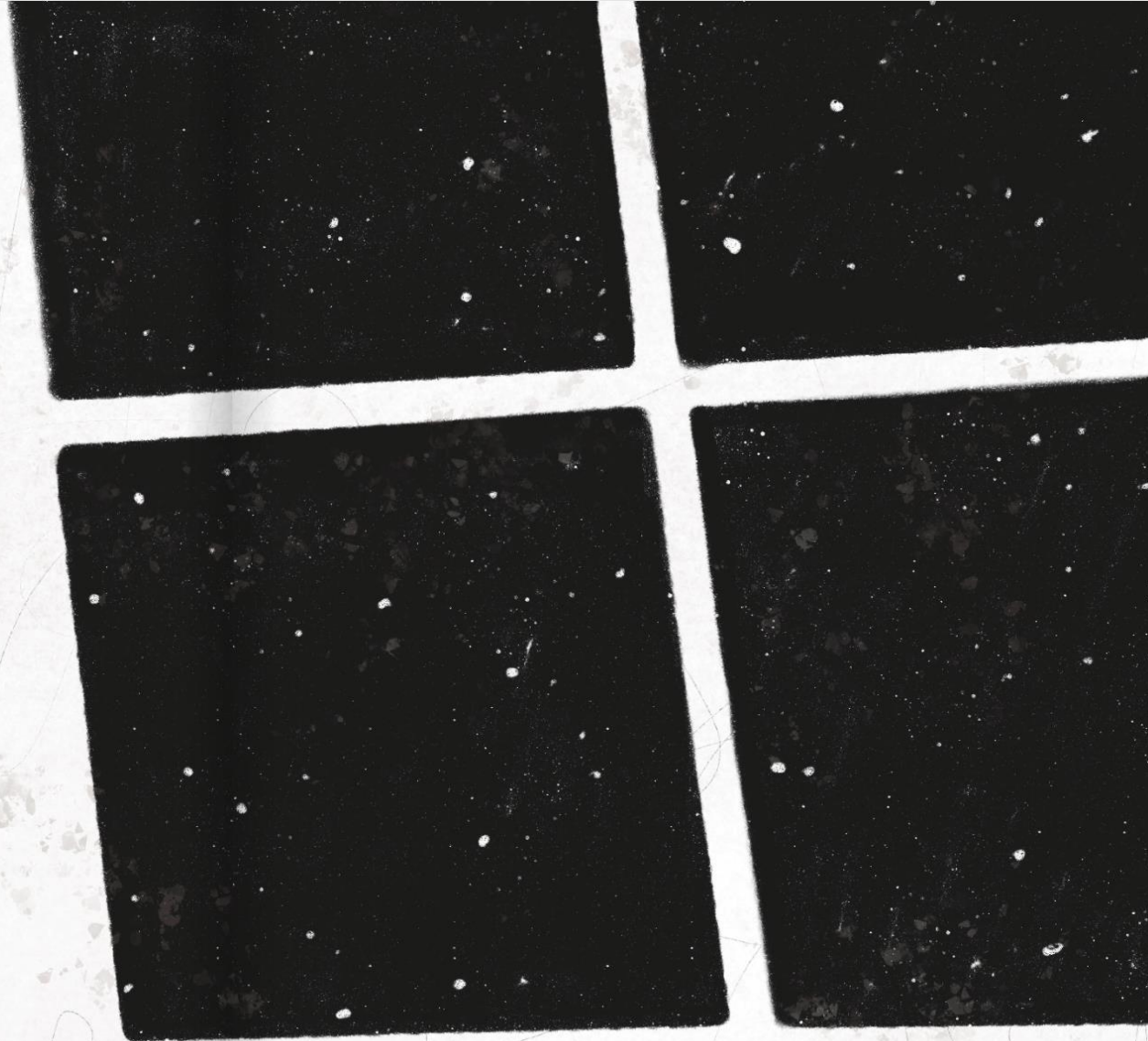





Day to day  
Since my dad passed away  
Grieving has felt like a never-ending process.

The little one sees it in my face. She says,  
'It's ok, you've got me.  
Grandad is in the stars now'.

Blinking back the tears  
I lie down, look up,  
And think about what she said.

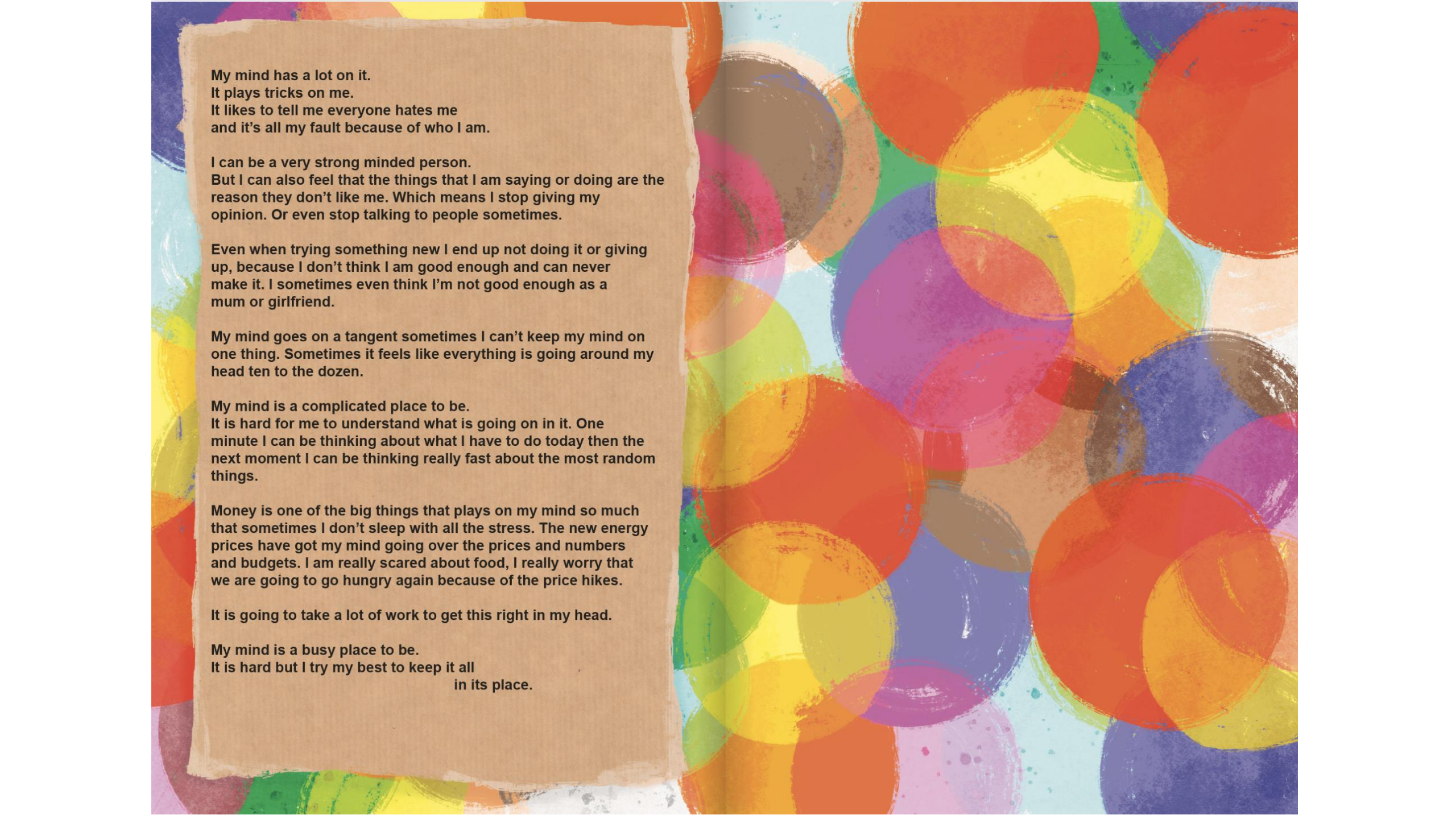




My body knows the truth, so it does  
The truth that others can't bear  
The truth that I am in pain everyday, even if you can't actually see where,  
My body knows it is ignored by those who help and heal  
And just because they love to deny, it doesn't make my burden any less real.  
My body knows that I weep for her as I only want what's best  
Yet the DWP holds no hope for me  
There's a good chance I wouldn't even pass their test  
My body knows it is not free to live and dance and play  
Yet my body is where I exist on this earth, every freaking day.





The background of the entire image is a vibrant, abstract pattern of overlapping circles in various colors including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and brown. The circles vary in size and opacity, creating a sense of depth and movement. In the foreground, a piece of brown, textured paper is pasted onto the left side of the image. It has a slightly irregular, torn edge and contains several paragraphs of black text.

My mind has a lot on it.  
It plays tricks on me.  
It likes to tell me everyone hates me  
and it's all my fault because of who I am.

I can be a very strong minded person.  
But I can also feel that the things that I am saying or doing are the  
reason they don't like me. Which means I stop giving my  
opinion. Or even stop talking to people sometimes.

Even when trying something new I end up not doing it or giving  
up, because I don't think I am good enough and can never  
make it. I sometimes even think I'm not good enough as a  
mum or girlfriend.

My mind goes on a tangent sometimes I can't keep my mind on  
one thing. Sometimes it feels like everything is going around my  
head ten to the dozen.

My mind is a complicated place to be.  
It is hard for me to understand what is going on in it. One  
minute I can be thinking about what I have to do today then the  
next moment I can be thinking really fast about the most random  
things.

Money is one of the big things that plays on my mind so much  
that sometimes I don't sleep with all the stress. The new energy  
prices have got my mind going over the prices and numbers  
and budgets. I am really scared about food, I really worry that  
we are going to go hungry again because of the price hikes.

It is going to take a lot of work to get this right in my head.

My mind is a busy place to be.  
It is hard but I try my best to keep it all  
in its place.



Family, 2 kids, all for them

Money

Sad

Happy

Epilepsy

Irlen Syndrome

ADHD

Chronic Pain

Autism

Asthma

Try hard to make ends meet

Life can be hard

Dyslexia

Home

Mum

Girlfriend

Sister

Give all I can to make everyone happy

Daughter

Auntie

Friend

Am I good enough?






**I flourish when I watch my plants and flowers  
take seed and grow.**

**I flourish when I paint pictures.  
I paint colours to contrast with my dreary life.  
Feel good, achieved something.**

**My neighbour gave me some seeds and  
I painted her a picture in return.  
I loved seeing how happy it made her,  
she said it made her day.**





**I wanted to include  
a picture of nature  
because I see how the chaos  
builds the beauty. All those different  
plant shapes, colours, growing  
patterns, all layered together, make a  
calm, serene, and beautiful scene.**

**This is how I feel every day;  
like the chaos of my health  
enforced lifestyle can still  
actually build up to have  
moments of true beauty,  
calm, and peacefulness.**



Making bread with my family

happy

talking

spending time together

love

food

me

care

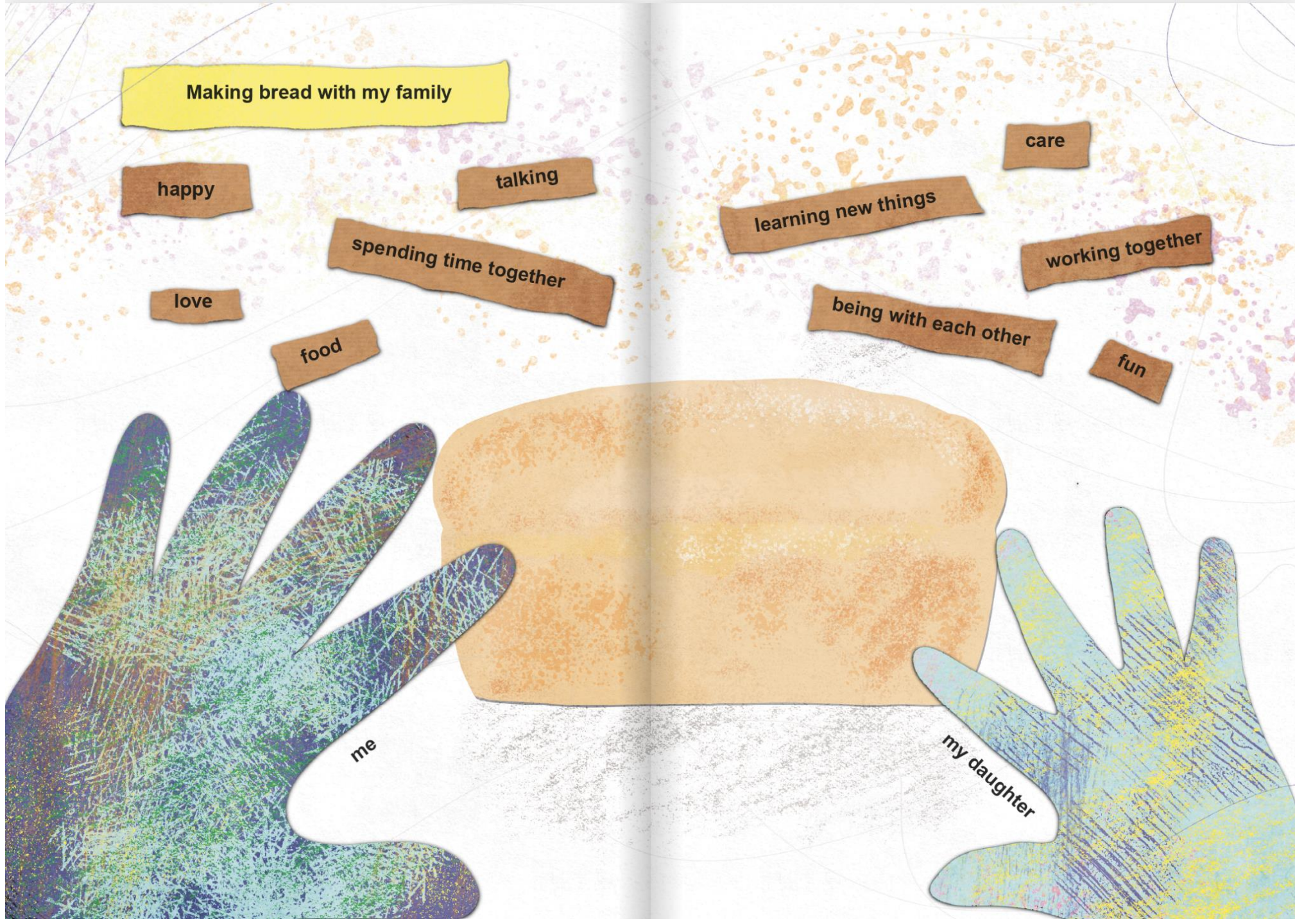
learning new things

working together

being with each other

fun

my daughter





My blank journal.  
Please don't take this as rudeness,  
I have enjoyed the group,  
It's just that right now  
Under so much emotional pressure,  
exhaustion, worries,  
to put my thoughts and feelings  
in a sequence and in black and white  
is too much.  
I fear being misunderstood,  
or left un-understood  
So, better to be blank,  
empty.



I am alive with colour, I am one with the sun,  
Reds and emerald greens chase each other as I close my eyes  
My soul gulps in the fun.  
I stretch my arms up, up, up to soak you in  
I connect every inch of my body to you.  
You're mesmerising, Divine, utterly magnetic.  
I am here to enjoy your lavishing beauty, wonderfully poetic  
Confidence screams from every pore,  
Never ending party atmosphere,  
I am ecstatic, enriched, energised,  
Cells call cell phones, invites are surprised!  
Van Gogh brush strokes swoop in the air,  
Butterflies flutter flutter past.  
Mona Lisa smile, she knows, tilts her chin.  
At last I'm filled to the brim.

Written after time to myself in the community garden





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**<http://lincolntheologicalinstitute.com/filled-to-the-brim/>**