

The Road Trip (Part 1)

It was the middle of January when we met for lunch
And, I couldn't wait to catch up with this lovely bunch.

We've known each other for over a year
Since we applied to See Me to volunteer,
To work collaboratively across the nation
To end mental health stigma and discrimination.

We chatted about See Me and Time to Talk Day
And considered how to help people have their say.
We talked about going on a Scottish road trip
Inside I was thinking...oh come on, get a grip!
We only had a few days to get it all organised,
To plan and prepare and get everything authorised.

We had to plan, consider and cost our route
With distances and time to record and compute.
And, juggle prior commitments to free up the time
To travel for days around the Scottish coastline.
We had to talk to our families and respect their views
And be aware of their reactions on hearing our news.

We had to bear in mind our own health and wellbeing
And address the fears that each of us was feeling.
At home, we have support systems and strategies in place
And, when things get difficult...a warm embrace.
We have various helplines and access to services
From organisations in various premises.

The initial idea began with a group of three
But as it transpired... it wasn't to be.
So, instead of a three it became a two
With the fortitude and optimism to see it through.
We set off from Erskine on the Sunday morning
And by Glencoe, faced an amber weather warning.

For a while we were stuck in the driving snow
With little information and no place to go.
We learned of an accident up ahead
Which explained why the tailbacks were so widespread.
We weren't sure what to do or say
Other than enquire if we could help in any way?

Everyone was trying to assist each other
To get home safe and sound by working together.
Even in such gruelling weather conditions
Time to Talk remained both of our missions.
We learned of grief, loss and change that day
And, the power of the three little words...are you okay?

We reached our destination by nine that night
Exhausted from the day's Time to Talk plight.
We were disappointed at the opportunities we missed
To access the unreachable locations on our list.
But we did what we could in the time that we had
Which, on reflection, wasn't half bad.

We checked in, spoke to our families and fell into bed
And spoke with the owners in the morning instead.
We chatted about services, support and speaking out
And working together to make change come about.
Laurence and Tracy were so friendly and kind
A lovely representation of the good in mankind.

After some digging we got the car out of the snow
And, Nancy, the Sat Nav, showed us which way to go.
As we stopped by the roadside to produce a video update
We got splattered in mud by passing lorries...thanks, mate!
We left Drumnadrochit soaked and a mess
And headed off to meet the citizens of Inverness.