

Companion to 'Torn Pieces' poem cards

Prompts for workshops and independent use

For People Living with Chronic Illness

- Which line or image in this poem feels closest to your own experience of illness?
- The poems speak of *resistance* and *voice* — Have you felt empowered or disempowered in a particular place, such as home, work, public places?
- What does “rest” mean for you — is it healing, frustrating, stolen, or something else?
- What kind of poem would your illness write?
- Create a short “postcard poem” that includes the voice of your illness and your own in response — this does not have to be long, even 3 lines can work well.

For Medical & Health Professionals

- The poems notice *hands, voices, bones* — how do you notice these details in your patients?
- What do you think of the idea that language (e.g., medical terms) can “flatten” a person’s experience and sense of self and belonging?
- How do you hold space for both suffering and resilience in the same patient encounter?
- If you let a poem, rather than a symptom checklist, guide your practice for a moment — what might shift?
- Write a one-line reflection you could carry into your next patient interaction.

For Health Researchers

- The poems present “illness as a map changing form.” How might this metaphor inform research design?
- Which voices remain “off” or unheard in your own studies — and how might you invite them in?
- What does it mean to analyse data that resists neat categories, like these fragmented verses?
- How could poetry complement or complicate your usual methods (surveys, interviews, statistics)?
- What ethical responsibilities do you feel when representing lived experience in research outputs?

For Families & Whānau

- Which part of the poem helps you imagine what your family member is going through?
- Where do you see your own exhaustion, resilience, or love reflected here?
- The poems suggest illness can make someone “louder than a river” on the inside — what do you think your loved one wishes you could hear more clearly?
- Share a time when illness changed a small detail of daily family life — how did you adapt?
- If you could send a postcard back to the poet, what one message would you write?