

Roller Skates

By Elise Woolnough, Oakland Care

When you ask me about what it means to be connected,
I think about the relationships in my life that took turns unexpected,
Because often when you are in a position of care,
It's easy to overlook the exchanges that you can share.

Your priority is to feed, to comfort, to dress,
Unknowingly putting on the blinkers,
Letting all nuance in your day shrink and compress,
You love what you do with a fire deep, a burn,
But you forget to pause, to listen, to see what you can learn.

If only you'd remember to open your eyes,
You'd see the one you care for with no bounds, no ties,
Like that young girl with little power of speech,
Who had you running in circles just to keep her in reach.

The day you took her to the roller rink it filled you with dread,
Not really worried about her, more you falling heels over head,
You watched as she grooved around the floor with ease,
Whilst you clung to the side, palms sweaty, trembling knees.

You gaze on with awe as you watch your girl fly,
Wishing you could let go of your inhibitions, you ask yourself why,
But before you know it, she appears by your side,
Hands extended; she invites you to glide.

In a leap of faith, you let her take the lead,
She guides you with confidence and picks up your speed,
Your legs start to wobble and your heart starts to race,
But the force that drives you forward is that smile on her face.

She pulls you upwards and saves you from your fear,
Your body hits the ground, you hold back the tears,
But her words, usually limited, came like an angel to soothe your pain:
'Sometimes we fall, but we get back up again'



In this moment you are overwhelmed with clarity,
This was not an event of labour, show or even of charity,
But an act of love, of friendship, a caring exchange,
A reciprocal bond, a connection, why should that be so strange?

That a girl, who on the day to day relies on your care,
Has comfort to offer and wisdom to share,
In moments of connection the tables can turn,
So put on your roller skates, see what you might learn.



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care
workers'
charity