



Black Dog turned 2 in March this year and has been a little quiet lately to allow for some creative processes to flow freely and emerge in their purest form. One is the book, the other is an *experience* that reflects the deepest intention of The Black Dog Project and I'd like to share that with you. \*

[theblackdogproject.com](http://theblackdogproject.com)

To begin offering that *experience*, I introduce you to two different generations; unknown to each other; sharing two previously unspeakable truths; spoken from either end of the country . . . These two souls unite through The Black Dog Project and what you'll receive over the coming days in your email box is the very real *experience* of how the telling of *their* stories has strengthened their distant steps forward and has the potential of offering inspiration and hope to those who give their stories a place in their day.



one of a war most think is **OVER** and done

one of a war just **begun**



The Black Dog Project's deepest intention. . .  
 . . . talk about unspeakable truth;  
 create a place for it outside of ourselves;  
 contain it within an image, a form so it can be *seen*;  
 so it can offer a different perspective of the *experience*;  
 which has the potential of transforming hopelessness into hope;  
 and initiating empowering steps beyond the experience.

[theblackdogproject.com](http://theblackdogproject.com) provides a place to take that process one step further and share experiences and insight with others.



Thanks for listening and passing on the stories that follow . . .

Janine—The Black Dog Project

# EV's story...

I introduce to you a brave young soul, EV who's story has taken over seven months to tell. EV's battle is long from over as she remains very ill but you may, quite literally, help save a life here or at least renew a young soul's faith in a world (particularly that of the internet) which has done her much harm.

\*

When I first met EV she was in hospital, **too sick** and incoherent in her thoughts **to write**, nor could she use a computer to help her *tell*. So initially I listen, write and draw as *she* tells.

As you follow the story, you'll experience how the ink from her own pen 'takes on a voice', revealing a gift that gives her life new purpose and meaning, gives her the strength to continue fighting her own tough battle.

On the eve of releasing EV'S story, however, I am concerned about sharing the painful details of an experience she is still processing. So we decide, at this point in time, to share the means by which she has been able to tell her story and the personal transformation that has come from that. It is of great value sharing the *process* of the *writing out* of the experience because it offers a means by which others may also ease the burden of carrying untold truths—and it does, as will be revealed as you follow the story . . .

\* It is important in EV's recovery to know that people have read her story. You can help by simply pressing 'reply' and leaving a message for her, - even just . . .

'I'm following your story'. Black Dog will collect the messages for EV. Or post a card, a note, a something to: EV, c/- The Black Dog Project, PO Box 4580, Myaree BC, MYAREE WA 6960.; or simply pass the story on to others—thank you.

\*Email contact details will be kept confidential by The Black Dog Project.

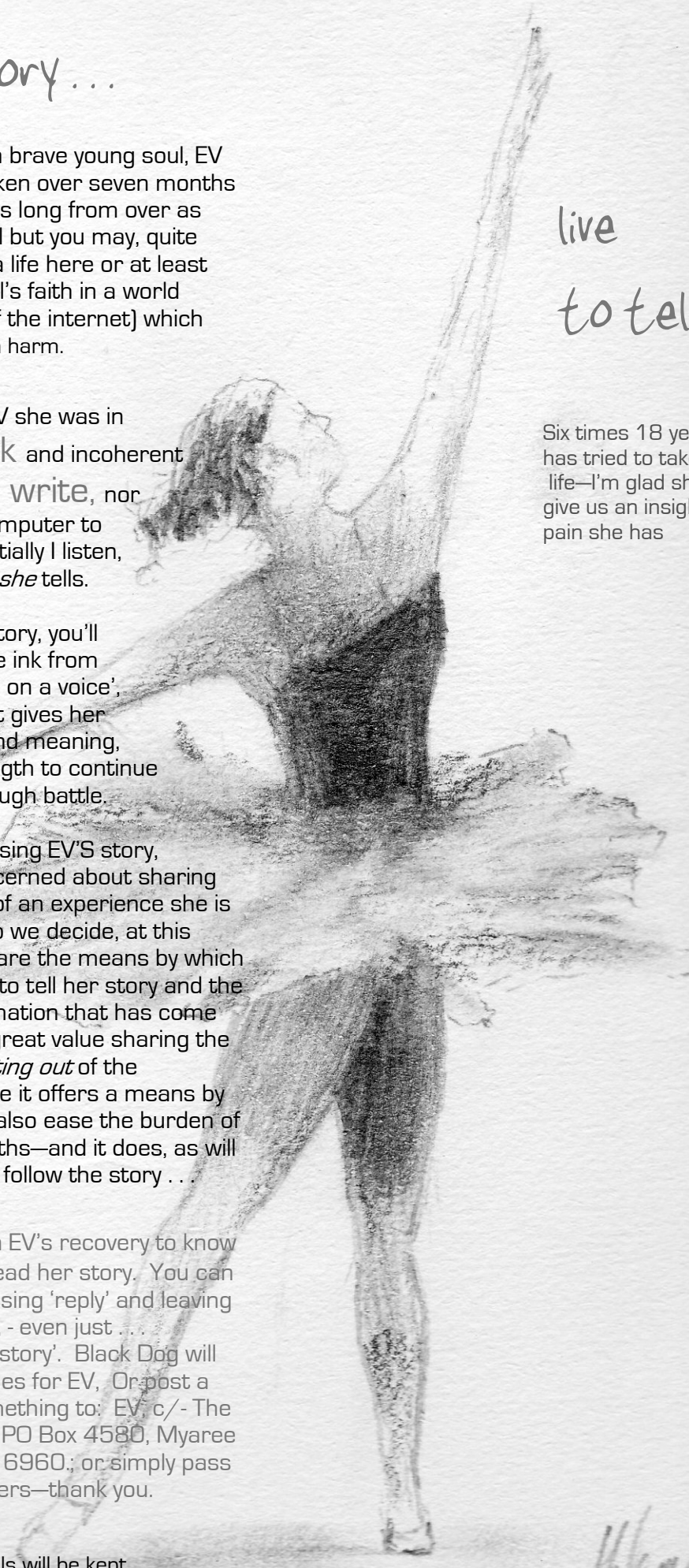
live  
to tell

Six times 18 year old EV has tried to take her own life—I'm glad she's here to give us an insight into the pain she has

survived.

I believe in you.

Harley Manifold [Artist] draws a ballerina and offers words of hope to EV—maybe others will send her drawings too?



Harley Manifold

Many weeks into the 'telling', ink from EV's own pen takes on a voice. She writes in this 'new' way with an inky brush pen and imagines pushing it through the hole in the wall (Black Dog website) to others from the world outside her abyss—where she longs to return.

I am every and I am real. It would be easy to believe I am a character made for this site. a vessel for someone to tell you what they want you to hear. to fill space. create awareness and all that but I am a girl writing her piece to be put on a website she has never seen before. writing what she can then pushing it through a hole in her cell wall. launching it into the unknown. So I will be using this space to tell my story and I won't front for a minute and say it is a story told for the reader it is just a story that must be told and if you take anything from this it is just an added extra. it is a distasteful topic not words that are meant to be spoken aloud, taboo



Picture a girl who has been imprisoned so long she no longer fears what tomorrow might bring and she rebels no longer able to be silent. to keep to herself words she is told must remain unspoken. as she writes what she can while she has the strength then rolls it up and pushes it through a hole in her cell. laying back her thin emaciated body can rest she takes a deep breath. a small weight has been lifted from her ~~shoulders~~ she will continue like this until she has nothing left to say it seems that the prison walls are less solid. Maybe freedom is in her future but for now all she hopes is that her story is not pushed back through the hole back into her cell. I feel like that girl and in this space I'll push my story out of my cell and it will emerge on the other side on a website I have not seen and as I am no longer connected I doubt I ever will. I could know you but will never know you have read it that's kinda cool hey? if you could see my goofy grin. watchin TV cause even if I was locked in a cell I'd still be goofin around I don't know whether it is that I am stir crazy or what but I just refuse to ~~be~~ broken like some horse. no matter what deep or heavy shit I have gotten myself into. so if you are around watch this spot when I can I'll push some of that story through the hole

E.V.



## The beginning...

I met a young girl in hospital  
for which she is about to tell you  
it is with great courage that she tells  
her truth-

asking only that you find  
a moment in your day  
to hear it

for helping her share her story  
she say's apologetically  
'you've given me so much'  
I feel sorry for not being able  
to give her enough  
and it's hard, really hard  
telling a story nobody wants to hear  
carrying the load of shame  
that weighs heavy on her existence  
but she now sees hope beyond the telling  
life beyond the story  
she believes that every hand  
that reaches towards her  
every heart that holds her story  
will strengthen her uncertain steps forward  
lighten the load she carries  
into every new moment  
become the hook she takes hold of  
to set herself



EV draws

**free . . .**

pass it on . . .



# talking about 'it'

EV talks Nov 2007—draws April 2008

- jb: Telling your story you hope people will understand better . . .
- ev: No-one could possibly understand. No, they won't. They can't.
- jb: So, OK, can we go say, giving them 'insight' into your experience?
- ev: **Yes!** that's good—**insight** is good.
- jb: I want to find a way to engage people in the story—lead them gently 'cause I know you're concerned about how they'll react and feel.
- ev: No. Whatever you do, there will be people who will never read it. They just don't want to know about that stuff. A lot of people just don't believe it. They think it's suppressed memory and it's not real- it can't be because

**it's so horrible!** They'll probably just press delete.

- jb: Was there a starting point? A moment when it all began?
- ev: Yeh. I went onto the web and I saw XXXX (not written because it's not a place we want to advertise), then went into the site, then into chat room . . . .
- jb: What kind of space were you in—did you feel lonely, vulnerable or something?

“ I was just curious ”

It's important to salvage what little dignity, what little of her 'self' EV has left, so specific details of her story won't be revealed but rather the empowering process of telling it.



I'm telling on you !

Telling is really scary.  
The little girls I draw  
and *their* stories  
become EV's army of ink-  
help her 'tell',

Can you keep a secret



But it's

**BIG**

And if it lands on you  
You'll be crushed  
We'll be crushed  
Then I say it  
Words slip through tight lips  
There—it's out!  
It doesn't fall  
It flies  
And we watch it soar  
And it's beautiful  
Beautiful—because . . .

. . . it's **FREE !**



EV moves around a lot during  
our time together.  
Up and down out of her chair.  
Arranging and rearranging the table.  
She notices her movement is  
distracting me when I pause  
when I'm writing or speaking.  
She reassures me not to worry,

"I'm still listening. I can still hear  
you. I just move around a lot but I  
Can do lots of things at once."

It must be so hard to sit with  
her feelings, her experiences.  
To stay still and not move away  
when her story is all around her.



Keep scrolling down . . .



It's important to create

## a safe place to 'tell'

What helps is to regularly check in with each other by saying,

"I'm feeling a bit blah, blah right now—what about you?"

"I'm thinking blah, blah—what do you think?"

For example, when I was telling EV my meaning of one of the little girls on the '21' postcards, she put forward her meaning, which was different to mine. She observed my reaction and interpreted it to come from her

## 'saying something wrong'.

Having the courage to ask, to be honest, to 'check in' about my reaction gave me the opportunity to explain to EV that I reacted in that way because I was 'bowled over' by the different insight she offered. Enlightened by the different meaning the little girl held for her.

Perhaps if she hadn't have 'checked in' she would have silently carried the burden of that moment.



## too much to ask ?

EV points out a hospital staff member who

'doesn't like her'.

I don't understand how someone could not offer a place in their day to someone who believes she doesn't deserve one.

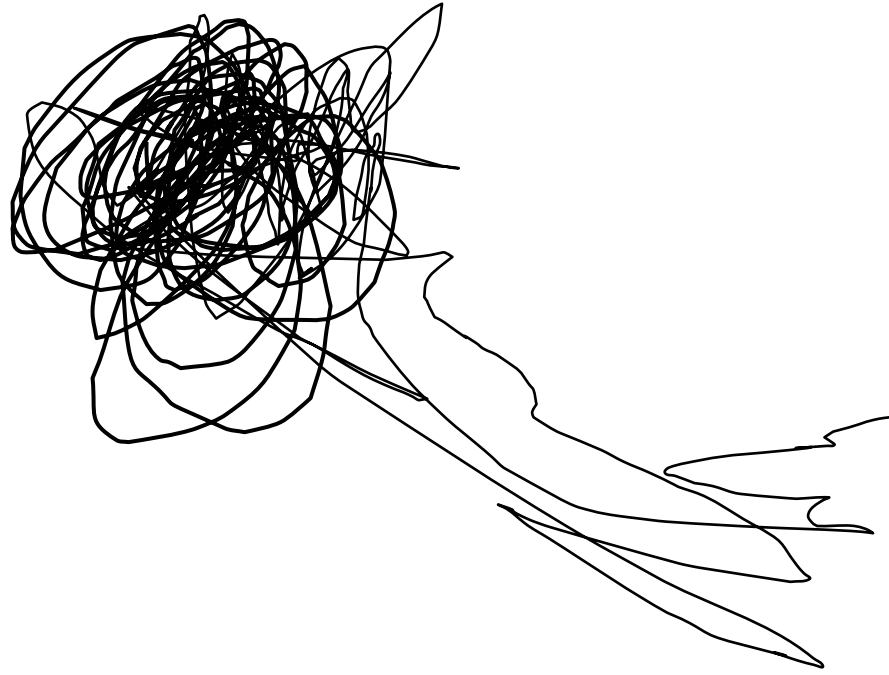


substance in

# scribble

EV is puzzled when I grab her brilliant moments of insight - when I say, "OK, hold that thought for a moment" She's uncomfortable with stopping but is patient and intensely interested as her words flow from the big black texta onto the

soft white watercolour paper . . .



I'm not sure that she can see what she has to offer.  
I hope that perhaps if she

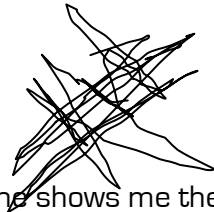
**sees it** (written on the page),

**hears it** (as I read her words back to her),

**feels it** (by being held in that moment by the speed at which I can write),  
maybe, just maybe, she can at some point in time, hold onto it by herself.



# texture



. . . is important to EV. She shows me the little books she draws in with a Chinese ink pen. She demonstrates how this is done. Taking the black block and the

'wooden 'bug' and explains how if you add some water to the block, when you rub the bug on the block it makes . . .

. . . black puddles of **ink.**

Then you dip a fine brush into the ink and use it to paint a picture. She's very happy to have discovered in this process that the ink doesn't go through the fine paper onto the other page.

I wonder if it's symbolic for her to find something that captures the part of her that she has given over.

I gather she likes things that 'feel' nice.  
I wonder if when she's absorbed in that moment . . .

. . . feelings from her experiences cease to exist





EV  
writes  
and  
paints  
(Dec 2007)

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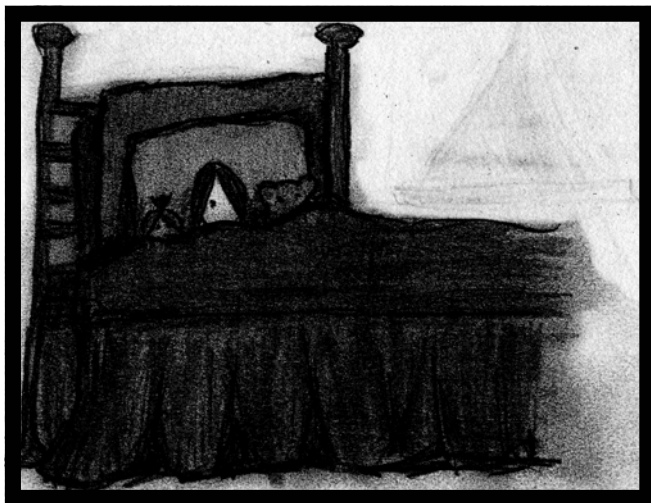
what  
is  
right  
?

People saw my internet relationship  
And they say that's wrong.  
It is like you are telling me

## my blue is red

And that person lied.  
I fit in as a blue.  
I feel natural as a blue.  
But then you go to \* \* \* \* \*  
And people are teaching me to be red.  
After a while I start to act red.  
But my world is still blue.  
No matter how much you love someone  
You can't just walk off a cliff  
because they say you will be fine.  
Even after years of them reassuring you  
you will be fine  
You can't force yourself off the cliff.  
But what if what they are saying is true.  
And you step off the cliff.  
And you find you are OK.  
And that the blue people  
were lying all the time.  
And the world is really red.  
Maybe after all the hard work  
I will just fall off the cliff.

When I first met EV



I saw **blue**

she saw **red**  
and out popped

‘Meet me in **pink**’

You can't see me  
Because I don't wear black.

My voice you may not hear  
because it's much softer than you'd expect.

You may hold my hand as it surrenders to yours,  
But you won't know it belongs to something I never show.

You may touch and play with fluffy toys on my bed  
But I doubt you'd play with what they can't tell.

You can eat the delicious cakes left on my plate  
But please know all I can feel is where they cannot go.

And if you kiss my dry lips you won't taste the dirt,  
I spend all day cleaning it off.

EV has a sharp mind,  
quickly examining my words and is quick to  
pull me up when

‘It’s not right’ or  
‘not how it really is’.

It puts me at ease knowing that  
she will say where she wants  
us to be so I don’t have to worry so  
much about where we’re going .



a  
soft  
place to  
fall into



During our first session we decided to work on  
butchers paper—EV telling her story and me being the scribe.  
So when I arrived to our second session bringing a large art pad  
of beautiful crisp white, softly textured watercolour paper she  
was a little alarmed. Feeling the texture and thickness of the  
paper she said;

“But we can’t use this paper—  
it’s too good!”



I reassure her by saying  
I believe her story  
is deserving of being  
captured and explored on something

beautiful.



Keep scrolling down . . .



November 2007

EV asks me to draw a little girl in a cage—representing how she pictured her situation on the internet.

### Bits and pieces . . .

EV's story is presented in parts and moments.  
In no particular order—because there is none in her life.  
Not always making sense—because it doesn't.  
With no place on a time line—because time doesn't matter when you're stuck . . .  
. . . and a line can't catch you when

you're

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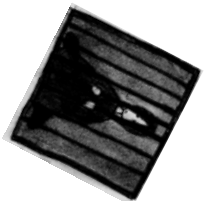
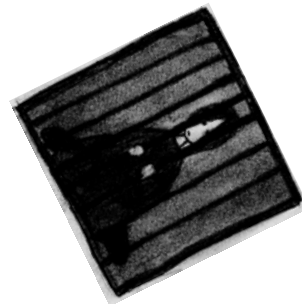
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Conversations are taking place about EV  
being discharged from hospital—a world she  
feels she was just beginning to adjust to.

Now, she says;

“They pick up my cage,  
turn it upside down  
and shake it! ”



an **I**nch

\* It is my integrity that is important  
Is that so selfish?  
It sells for so little,  
But it's all we have left in this place  
It is the very last inch of us.  
It's small and it's fragile  
And it's the only thing in the world  
worth having  
We must never lose it,  
Or sell it—or give it away

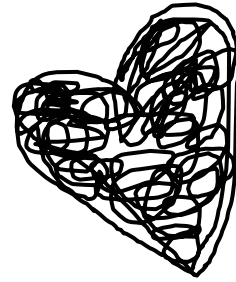
We must never let them take it from us.

\* EV is a fictitious name, taken from the  
character Evey in the movie 'V for  
Vendetta'. The piece above was written  
on a note found in the wall of a prison  
cell in the movie.

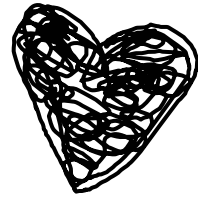
love is used too often. ?

But how will I know I'm in love?

Well you feel safe, special  
like you have a best friend.  
All pretty harmless info but people  
didn't realise how on the ball I was.  
So I was curious about this  
sex thing. I wanted to explore it  
so all I had to do  
was find someone  
who was a friend  
as well as a boyfriend  
who made me feel




special—safe.



Well I don't think I knew the difference between

love & love

I love  cake



EV peeks inside a perfume box.  
Captivated by its lining,  
careful not to damage the box,  
she gently reveals its treasure -  
a thing of beauty . . .

. . . 'on the inside'.



A thank you to you mum

who never reacted with disgust  
or failed me since the moment  
i woke up lucid and told you  
what had happened.  
i will always respect that  
even as it felt like  
the world was falling apart  
and i knew why  
that you waited  
until i was lucid enough  
to tell you of my  
own accord.

E.V. writes and draws . . .  
I come and sit back in my hospital  
room after I went to the

remembrance day ceremony .

I was nervous and jittery.  
I change positions lots and  
almost fell into the hedge  
under the flagpole. I felt out  
of place and sure I would  
offend the spirit of the Anzacs.  
I almost cried it was beautiful.  
I think they keep the  
war cemetery so sterile because  
they spent so much time  
in crap.  
Their final resting place  
is clean and safe.  
**I cried.** I waited for  
the bulk of the crowd  
to leave and snuck as  
close to the memorial as I dared.

A Vet (veteran) came up to me and said,

“keep smiling”.

I told him how I thought his walking stick  
was cool. It opened into a seat. I knew a few  
Vets who would have loved it  
but his Father got it so it must be really old.  
I think I'll tell Steve and  
see if we can make one.



I was so touched  
that this brave man  
took the time to  
talk to me.  
It renewed my

courage.





During the time of EV telling her story, I had been talking to a Vietnam war veteran who was considering telling his. The veteran, on hearing that a young soul was courageously attempting to tell *her* story makes the decision to put *his* story, untold for over 40 years, onto the page. EV, hearing of the veteran's decision to tell, writes him a letter.

A little bit of **magic** fills this moment \* \* \*

I am every and I am real. On the eve before I launch my story I wanted to write to you. I heard word that someone else was thinking of embarking on this journey and I thought wow what a brave soul. things I should really learn to say about myself but hey... Anyway its not an easy thing to do. I mean tell your story that is. and I thought I'd share with you what I learnt on the way. 1. It doesn't matter I'm not the best writer that you can see where I have gone over spelling mistakes you'll see scribbled out passages because I wrote words in wrong order ect. so if you can write is not important in writing. you'll write your story and then you'll write your story over as I became more comfortable with it. well atleast I did over and me ~~is~~ and people will help you too. ~~it~~ IN the beginning I just talked and someone else wrote. I described and pictures were drawn. and I never kept my mouth shut when things were wrong. cause that made us all relax. anyways back on track tomorrow my story will be released and I hope it helps you tell yours. In what ever way you want because its hard so very hard to let it go. in my case push it through the hole and hope for the best. I gave my story to Janine pushed it back and forth over the table before I let her take it with her (her being JB) then called my ~~name~~ phyc beaus I was sure JB wouldn't want to know me any more. but no one was disgusted with me. I am lucky to have a new name to tell my story because I know anyone would worry about what the people you know will think. but the human nature will surprise you there is a good in people I did not expect to find. take heart, have faith and as I said "dont give up because I won't". I dont know who you are, what you do. I will never see you or meet you. I do not know your story But I do know I believe in you. and if you decide to share your story know that some one will read it with love and compassion the basic kindness we all deserve. completely free of judgment. I hope my story helps yours.

like I said  
the physical  
writing not  
important.

~~EV~~ EV



I can now plan for a future I never thought I'd get.

Now I am looking at going back to school so I can get an education.

*It's not the end of EV's story—it's just the beginning...*

I'll start by saying, Black Dog exists in its present form due to the many people who have contributed art, stories and articles to the website; the many friends who pass those stories on—which makes wonderful connections with others and *is* making a difference. It's also important to add that EV has been supported through the process of telling her story, by her family and Psychologist. I now ask EV how the Black Dog experience has helped her and thank you for being part of that...

“ I am EV and I am real. Once upon a time I lived my life each day at a time. I can now plan for a future I never thought I'd get. Now I don't simply survive I grow and I heal. Yesterday isn't as scary now I have today. It wasn't writing my story that healed me, but the things I had to heal so I could tell my story. I learnt writing was my tool and not a barrier to struggle through, that you aren't reading my gramma, or my spelling, but my words. Like my name sake I was reborn, I was faced with the end and chose to keep going. V had a christening of fire, Evie Hammond of rain, myself of ink. I met some amazing people who gave me the courage to expect kindness from people, this in turn allowed me to see the kind acts of those around me. Now I am looking at going back to school so I can get an education. The kind words you have given me and my experiences now allow me to be the director of my own life. It won't be easy but I won't give up, neither will you. ”



*EV has also made a significant contribution to Black Dog...*

EV has inspired a Vietnam veteran to tell his story, untold for over 40 years. (coming soon); set Black Dog on a different path, building on the concept of the Army of Ink which also runs through the book; EV holds the book close and has written a review - see 'In My Room' webpage on Black Dog; EV's insight inspired the line on the front cover of the book 'you can't see me because I don't wear black'; the poem in EV's story, 'An Inch' has open the floodgates for the latest Army of Ink series to spill onto my page—some can be seen on the Army of Ink webpage—just arrived!

Again, I thank all who support and contribute to Black Dog and I thank EV for trusting us with her story and what that has contributed to Black Dog and those who received it. I'm sure we'll be hearing more from EV in the future!

Soldier on—together we rise...