

**A Review of *A Life Interrupted: Living with Brain Injury* by Louise Mathewson
by Mary Ann Grossman, Books Editor at Pioneer Press and TwinCities.com**

(Louise Mathewson) suffered severe brain injury in an automobile accident. She was in a coma for two weeks – and this whole collection is about the difficulty of trying to make people understand how hard it is when you’re coming back from brain injury. She couldn’t remember things, sometimes people spoke to her and it didn’t make any sense to her. There was frustration, there was a lot of depression, but she came out of it on the other side. And, what I presume is about half-way or a little more through her recovery, she wrote this poem called “Maybe” which I think is interesting for those of us brain injury or not. This is “Maybe”:

Maybe

Maybe
I don’t have to
accumulate information like I have for a lifetime.

Maybe
I don’t have to
process every bit of language I hear.

Maybe
I don’t have to
understand it all.

Maybe
I don’t have to
be the homemaker I’ve been for so long.

Maybe
I don’t have to
be the perfect daughter, mother, wife.

Maybe
I don’t have to
be what others expect me to be.

Maybe
I’ve been
granted freedom from the ‘have-tos’
put on me by parents, society, myself.

Maybe
I can be who I am,
a person who feels energy everywhere,
sends blessings, peace and love to everyone.

Maybe
I don’t have to
know the meaning of life.

Maybe
it is in living again.

She is a wonderful wordsmith. And then I'll read just a short one because we'll end on a point of optimism. This one is titled "After"

After

brain injury
coma
forces her to spin
dead story threads
woven
with bits of hardwood beliefs
soil particles from her previous life
cemented together with chemicals
in her brain.

She lies low
quiet
still
waits.

Sheds layers
of her worm-like
wrap.

Spirit
grows
emerges
a beautiful butterfly.

So, whether you have had brain injury either with yourself or a family member, there's a lot of wisdom in this book.

Note: The preceding is a written transcript of an audio interview originally posted at TwinCities.com on 10/22/12.

For more information about Louise Mathewson, visit LouiseMathewson.com.