

LOUISE MATHEWSON  
Praise for *A Life Interrupted: Living with Brain Injury*

**"Reader: You will be TRANSFORMED BY INJURY—vicariously and literally as you read this book of poems.**

"There is a message in this poetry that is poignant and essential for all who are recovering from traumatic brain injury and for those who love them. This poetry will transform you: Mind, Body and Spirit. You will feel your skin prickle; your heart and lungs open and your mind relax in a way that prose would never penetrate. You will become aware of the greater importance of your Life experience, transformed by injury. You will know the stages and transitions that occur on the healing journey with Traumatic Brain Injury. You will experience a wakeup call mentally and spiritually to declare the purpose of your life. As you read *A Life Interrupted*, you will be interrupted to become more authentic and whole, while wholly different than before.

"This book should be required for every neurologist graduating from residency. It should be in every VA hospital for soldiers returning from war. It should be at the bedside of all who suffer at home. A caretaker should gently read these words out loud to heal and be healed.

"The book not only outlines the TBI journey but specifies resources for healing. The best of the best therapy and therapists in this country are listed at the end of the book. These approaches hold hope for all who have chosen this challenging and difficult life in transition. To those who work with TBI and those such as Louise Mathewson who live beyond it, we owe our gratitude and awe."

**Linda W. Peterson-St. Pierre, Ph.D.**

Emeritus Professor, **University of Nevada School of Medicine**  
Marriage & Family Therapist

Author of *Children in Distress: A Guide for Screening Children's Art, Clear Vision: The Power of Story & Write Out Loud: A Guide for Families who Live and Work in War and War-Like Environments*

**"Life can change in a moment.** This collection of poems by Louise Mathewson provides record of a shattering car accident and the aftermath of a brain injury. Ms. Mathewson awakens from a coma to find her self and her life irrevocably changed. At first, she is unable to walk or make herself understood. Her brain could no longer abstract or remember. Although the setbacks are many, she is able to begin again. The collection will provide hope to patients 'transformed by injury' and their families. Writing itself proves to be a transformative act. The poems reveal her strong spirit, resilience and the step by step journey of recovery."

**Sheila Packa**

Duluth Poet Laureate 2010-2012

& author of *The Mother Tongue, Echo & Lightning,*  
*Cloud Birds & Migrations: Poetry and Prose for Life's Transitions*

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**“Shattering, haunting, humbling and ultimately triumphant,** this poetic memoir takes us deep into a damaged brain and the courageous crawl back to a reclaimed life. Language, once lost, returns to shimmer on the page, each poem an altar to the angel’s promise that in trauma there is transformation. This collection will surely provide hope, identification, and voice for those who struggle with TBI, and those who love and serve them. It is a brilliant and urgently needed addition to the literature in therapeutic writing.”

**Kathleen Adams, LPC**

Director, Center for Journal Therapy & Therapeutic Writing Institute

**“A *Life Interrupted* is a must read for anyone who has experienced loss, illness, crisis, or traumas—physical or emotional.** This heart rendering account of one person’s journey from chaos to serenity leads to the discovery that ‘Traumas are about transformation.’ Mathewson takes you from the path of shock and confusion onto one of hope and possibilities. I loved every word.”

**Alice C. Nixon MSW, LCSW**

Trauma Specialist

[www.BrainBreakthrough.com](http://www.BrainBreakthrough.com) & [www.LetsAskAlice.com](http://www.LetsAskAlice.com)

**“A must-read for anyone in the traumatic brain injury (TBI) field.** This poetry is packed with inspiring words painting a patient’s viewpoint of the long journey from horrific accident to revitalized person. Louise is constantly viewing her injury as the glass half full, finding new possibilities in day to day happenings while re-developing brain pathways. In her words, ‘TBI = transformed by injury.’”

**Deborah Zelinsky, O.D.**

[www.mindeyeconnection.com](http://www.mindeyeconnection.com)

**“In few words, in poetic metaphor, readers are thrown into the realities of brain injury and recovery in ways that will stay with us for a long time.** Louise Mathewson’s writing is a map to a journey we may not all take, but we all need to understand! I am grateful for the comprehensible guidance of Louise’s writing—it increases my understanding and allows me to be a better companion to people with traumatic brain injury however and wherever our paths cross.”

**Christina Baldwin, M.S.**

author of *Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story*

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**“After a severe traumatic brain injury a life is changed; the recovery will be challenging, but the soul need not be lost.** Louise Mathewson has created an amazing collection of insights into brain injury recovery as a transformation, one that can be experienced in terms of a positive journey. In her words, she has truly ‘Learned to dance with an injured brain.’”

**Julie Stapleton, M.D.**  
Neurotrauma Specialist  
Boulder, CO

**“*A Life Interrupted* by Louise Mathewson is a collection of uplifting poetry written in the first person but easily transferable to the reader. The metaphors and multiple modalities of rich imagery gently move the reader forward from one page to the next. **The intimacy she is able to share with the reader and deeply optimistic sense of faith is inspiring for any and all who have experienced loss....**Her personal story is one that should be shared with anyone with a brain injury.”**

**Robert G. Kohn, D.O.**  
Diplomate Neurology American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology  
Assistant Clinical Professor Radiology  
University of Illinois-Chicago  
[www.DrRobertKohn.com](http://www.DrRobertKohn.com)

**“The poetry here is piercing, all the more so when you realize it opens a window to a landscape rarely charted.** Certainly not charted with such power by a poet whose brain, as she writes, once was ‘sheared.’ Louise Mathewson was lost, was hijacked, when her brain hit a dashboard in a horrific car accident. She made her way out of the ‘dungeon of despair’ one word, one stanza, at a time. And so we all emerge from *A Life Interrupted*, forever wiser, forever more grateful for the grace of the everyday.”

**Barbara Mahany**  
reporter & feature writer  
[www.barbaramahany.com](http://www.barbaramahany.com)

“A car accident left Louise Mathewson with a traumatic brain injury (TBI) that changed her forever. She awoke after a two-week coma unable to walk, read, speak, remember. But something deep inside had not been touched—her essence, her soul, remained intact. It struggled through the confusion and chaos to reclaim its voice as she struggled to regain her physical and mental abilities. **This book of short poems recounts Louise’s strenuous journey back from the darkness of this ‘invisible injury’ and allows us to rejoice with her when, finally, she is able to change her personal understanding of TBI to ‘transformed by brain injury.’”**

**Barbara Stahura**  
author of *After Brain Injury: Telling Your Story*

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**“Brain injured individuals are launched into a journey through unfamiliar and chaotic terrain, a path with few signposts and one mostly traveled alone.** Many enter that wilderness and do not return. Louise Mathewson has traveled that path. Yet, remarkably, she has refused to surrender to its isolation. Through her poetry she insists that we join her there as she wrestles with the angel of transformation, as she emerges from the cocoon of her grief to become the shimmering poetic butterfly so evidently here now. **What emerges through her writing is an evocation of the experience of brain injury that is by turns wrenching, detailed, clinically accurate, ruthlessly honest, and in the end spiritually rich and nourishing.**

“This is not necessarily an easy book to read. Much of it is about the peculiar qualities of suffering and distress that happen to people following a traumatic brain injury. This is not the breezy, Hollywood version of life we are so accustomed to, where bad things never happen to good people. Here is the voice of a good person, and something quite bad has clearly happened. Louise refuses to let herself or us off the hook too easily. ‘You must look at this,’ she seems to be saying; ‘this is real and it’s not okay to ignore it.’ So we must accompany her on the journey of her personal tragedy and ultimate transformation.

**“A wonderful jewel of a book!”**

**Darell M. Shaffer, M.D.**

Hearthstone Institute

[www.hearthstoneinstitute.com](http://www.hearthstoneinstitute.com)

"Louise eloquently relates the experience of a brain injury into such poetic prose. Through her analogies, she conveys what it must feel like to live with a brain injury. Her words soothe me."

**Mary Dineen, M.S., CCC/SLP**

Speech Language Pathologist

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