

# *If I could tell myself*

*A poem by Nikki, survivor of domestic abuse, York*

If I could tell myself  
That the romance, the joy,  
that intoxicating feeling,  
It wasn't love.  
It would be short lived.  
It was a dupe, a hoax,  
A tragically well-known pattern  
and ploy.

That the dreams and hopes we had  
were mine and mine alone.  
That he never wanted to live them  
with me.  
That he would criticise, accuse, threaten,  
confuse and destroy me,  
Until I doubted every piece of my now  
dusty mind, body and soul.

That this so-called love  
would become fear.  
Fear of what wrong I would do  
that day,  
Fear of what he would seek to find  
and manipulate.  
Fear of simply being me  
and the consequences.

That through fear,  
I would lose myself.  
I would lose confidence.  
I would lose friends  
and independence.  
I would lose rational thought.

That this is exactly where he wanted me.  
So confused I would romanticise the  
love we once had.  
So desperate to get it back I would cling  
onto any ounce of conniving kindness.  
So trapped and hopeless that staying in  
fear was better than attempting escape.

If I could tell myself  
That this was not love,  
That this was not my fault,  
That there was a way out,  
I would.

And I would wrap my arms around the  
scared shell of a woman  
and hold her.  
I would hold her and hold her  
some more,  
Until she felt the warmth of my heart  
and the safety of my embrace,  
Until she remembered who she was  
And believed she could be again.

## *Controlling behaviour is domestic abuse.*

You can get local support from IDAS: **03000 110 110**

Support for those causing harm: **01904 557491**

Report to North Yorkshire Police on: **999 or 101**

