



# *SILVER LININGS*

*Creative Writing Outcomes*

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## Silver Linings

Looking at the carpet of white clouds. They look so comforting like you would just bounce off them and wrap yourself so warm. Here the sun is always shining even in the midst of winter. It's never a dull moment even the nights are starry and dreamy. That's what being 30,000 feet above in a plane has made me feel and see.

I am the first of my family to have been privileged enough to take flights as many as us have. To have been in the lands unknown by my family members and to bring back the tales. I have been to the queen's castle, though outside it, I saw all the gold that just beautifies the outside. I have been to where important meetings are conducted in the UN headquarters with the Golden globe outside that looks unfinished. I have felt snow fall on my skin for the first time and the biting cold that made it unbearable to breathe yet I was being told there is no bad weather, just bad clothing, haha. I have been in rooms with people I never thought possible and yet my story, my voice meant the meeting was a success.

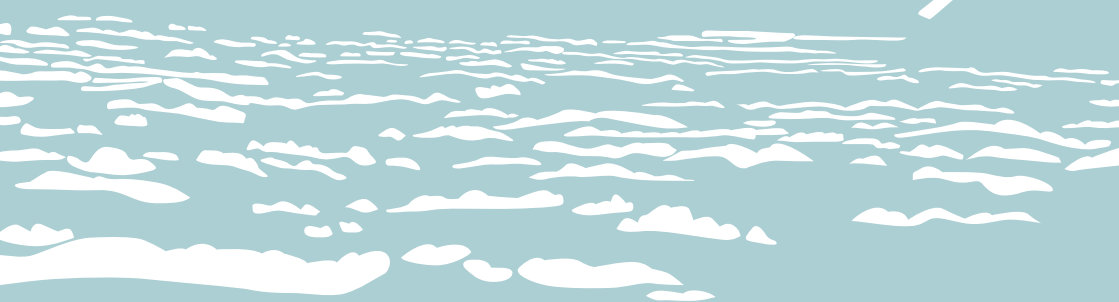
My story has it all, the ups, the downs, the joys, the lows and such bright hopeful future. See just right after high-school I got pregnant, nothing planned which meant I got deeper into poverty that was around me. My little boy was born oblivious of what our world was like. It wasn't the best upbringing, I didn't have a lot to give but love. He passed away my little one just after I was told I was HIV positive. I thought wow, like why not die as well.

There was a lot of gloom and doom and it all didn't make sense.

Then I thought I will tell girls, no need to do what I did, I already made mistakes enough for all of us. Then I did and I healed. All this embracing of me and my story has kept me alive. It saw that I kept going with life and I found love again and had my rainbow baby, my sweet creative girl.

I have found sisters from all over the world who have filled my life. When I wake up I am blessed, when I go to bed I am blessed. That which was meant to destroy me liberated me. Showed me all that was in life for me to be part of and enjoy. HIV was after all the silver lining, it opened the world for me. I am the best of me and I keep growing and glowing.

– Akilipa –



## Self Love

Kick back and relax Akilipa, you  
deserve the warm sun rays on your face  
of the orange and pink sunset  
Dip yourself in the deep blue of the  
ocean and let the water drown the  
blues

Let the worry and burden  
slide away, you don't need the  
baggage

Sleep comfortably your eight  
hours, promise the world will be  
okay

Everyday water this seed of love  
For self and bloom, glow girl!

– Akilipa –



## Clouds

HIV Positive, what's good about that. Well let me explain the silver lining to this grey cloud.

Every cloud has a silver lining, believe it or not. It's just sometimes you may need to look for it a little bit harder, or need some help on the way.

The silver lining in my cloud was my peers, my peers that became family then friends, friends that are forever no matter how near or far. A train journey is the beginning and not by choice a support worker took me to the train station, and put me onto the carriage, well actually she pushed me on and before I knew it the door was shut, and the journey had begun.

Part of that silver lining was a room full of women, women who were the same as me, women also living with HIV. But not just that but a room full of hope and promise, a room full of future family support and knowledge in abundance and something so bright, it was a room full of light.

So that is the beginning but just yet there is no end, because I am still here living my best life possible. Challenges come, and bad days too, but that's just true of life. Being HIV positive doesn't change that.

The cloud has dispersed now and all I can see is that knowledge is power, and peers make you feel as one. So, if you find yourself in a dark cloud remember that there is such a thing as a silver lining.

There is never a problem without a solution and there is always a silver lining.

– Sam –

(photograph and poem)

*Stood all alone  
Which way should  
you go.*

*A hug from a stranger  
A stranger who has shown others the way*

*The way out  
is just over there  
Luminated in the dark  
the light will guide you*

*Stand tall  
In the face of Stigma*

*Blessing the warrior  
you are.*

*You think I hide  
behind a book*

*but this book  
talks of Power*

*It gives me new tools*

*You see a virus  
but I see  
Pure Strength  
look harder*

*See me  
A warrior  
Strong and bold*

*Look at me  
And my table  
It does not stand  
before me.*

*We stand together  
Resilience is our bond.*

**- Sam -**



## Homage to my breasts

*I see you notice them but you close  
your eyes  
You pretend you can't see  
or feel them, but it's clear they  
fit in your arms  
You can walk away in fear but  
I am safe and free. Look at me  
I will continue my journey with or  
without you. This is me. Look at  
me. I am here!  
Beautiful with brown piercing eyes  
I can put a spell on  
you*

*Strong, powerful woman, invisible no more. My skin always glows even with one eye*

*Thunderstorms and rain. I will always ride high with strength on both arms. I am fierce!  
'Invincible no More'*

*No Matter how hard life has been, I have built resilience and strength in life challenges!  
I believe everything in life happens for reason*

**– Estelle –**

(photograph and poem)



## Silver Linings

*My silver lining is my child. A blessing, a presence that was not to be ignored, terminated or forgotten. Because of her I received my diagnosis. Because of her I received the strength to continue. The lemon that made sweet lemonade. She wasn't planned. She was my future.*

*She showed me how to prioritise life, mine, hers, hers and hers. To prioritize peace. It took time. The awareness of mortality. Time was a precious quantity I didn't have. HIV and her cut me open, scarred, scared, broken. Those cracks allowed the light to shine through.*

– Mel –

## Homage to my feet

*Finding my way in forests I want to forget.  
My feet keep me standing strong, when the dark shadows draw me down.  
Leading me to the exit of fear and the entrance of self love.  
Away from the kitchen table to worthiness beyond.  
With their rootedness I feel whole and beautiful.*

– Mel –



## Self Love

*I am pondering in my deep thoughts, calm and collected, In  
the calamity of the pandemic.  
Floating in a meander, owning my space, sometimes tangled  
in the roller coaster is life, I keep standing tall, this too shall  
come to pass.*

*Colours keeps changing, like a chameleon. Sometimes I feel  
I'm in the dark hole, sometimes floating in the blood river,  
sometimes I feel pure like a fresh falling snow, like the banana  
skin peeling off and renewed.*

*Through it all I am grateful for the comfort I have I'm my  
home, my children and the warmth of my bed where I lay my  
head for the night.*

*Self loving me, helps to appreciate every breath I take.*

– Neo –

## Self Love

*Self love is letting others take care of me and  
some of my needs*

*Self love is lying down in a river  
of calm surrounded by beautiful  
mountains, in my lovely red shoes  
just because I can*

*Self love is being who I want to be  
how I want to be, and wearing  
what I want to wear, doing what  
I want to do*

*Self love is sharing my bed  
with someone. Making sweet  
gentle love, and lying down next  
to each other when we are  
done*

*Self love is reaching out through  
the dark clouds, emerging even  
Stronger and charting my own  
path in life*

– Angelina –

## Self Love

*Self care, Self love*

*Can be distracting – soul destroying*

*Can be relaxing – forever flowing*

*Self care – self love*

*Sometimes it feels foreign, a bit like you're in another's skin*

*Hiding under covers, away from life's pressures*

*But oh what a relief! The giant hand of the universe calming you  
down and easing you into life's pleasures*

*Self care – Self love!*

– Lady Bex –

## Homage to my spirit self

*Dust covering  
Experiences only on the outside  
The spirit of self lives on the inside  
strong unchanging*

*It can weigh heavy  
But I am ahead and I am in charge  
the spirit self lives inside  
might get dim sometimes  
or seem so rather  
but its fire burns*

*Every beginning has an end  
apart from the spirit and the self  
Remember that  
so whatever happens  
We remain*

*I laugh in the face of danger  
because my crown is light  
I can bend but I never  
crumble  
light is my crown*

*Beauty my spirit and self  
when all is said and done  
I remain a beautiful  
spirit and self  
Nothing can stain that*

## Three tips for finding Silver Linings

1. There is nothing wrong with you life happens to all of us and there is a good that will come out of the experience you only need to be looking for it to find it
2. Always remember that you can always choose. Remember how special you are. There is only one you and you have something special to offer
- 3 remember but your value is not negotiable free yourself of judgement and shame and choose not to let anyone judge or shame you they can choose to but choose not to take it in

– Laura –

*Power  
I see you  
whatever it is I will handle it  
I do  
because I am powerful  
standing straight laying low whatever the position  
my power remains*

*Strength  
Booyah!  
in all my glory  
dark horse they call me  
I say strong*

*Resilience  
look into my eyes  
I came from somewhere  
where come what may we thrive  
I'm from there I am there  
and where this is it is always OK*

**– Laura –**

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