Lemon in the elephant’s eye

1Ruth Chalkley, BEd (Hons), 2Giles Hudson, 3Julie Devon, MA, 4Nikita Rachel Shepherdson, DipLCM, 5Rebecca Frances Gilling, BSc (Hons)

1Neurology patient at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield, 2UCAPD Teaching - Headways Forces Support Group, 3Design - Creative Practitioner, 4Vocal coach, 5Postgraduate student in Psychology

Corresponding Author:
Ms Ruth V Chalkley
Cleveland, TS10 2QW, United Kingdom
Email: rvchalkley at icloud dot com

Submitted: 13-JUN-2020   Accepted: 2-JUL-2020   Published: 10-JUL-2020

I learnt today a strange thing
that the poor beast, suffering,
the manacle deep embedded in its leg
begged in sounds,
begged in blinking
for release from pain.
Six worked;
a team to save the pachyderm,
time was of the essence
as shock and fear set in;
the limb was being tourniqueted
by chain.
The beast was covered,
sound of saw muffled,
lemon squeezed,
she did not resist.

We too,
limited by others and ourselves.
Created by our experience.
It's called the Elephant Chain Phenomenon.
I now know why
they put lemon
in the elephant’s eye.
We can choose our distractions, 
good or bad.  
Opportunities, a sunshiny day,  
escapism, the rainbow.

It's within my control,  
my choice to be made.  
When life gives me lemons… 
I make lemonade.

**Note:** This poem was written by a group of people during the Coronavirus pandemic, some of whom live with long-term conditions. The group was formed as a means to support each other to maintain good mental health and social connections by taking part in different creative activities. This poem was part of a session focusing on creative writing.