

Change.

In behind the quiet hum of systems and boards of keys
Lie complex stories of people, of roots, of family trees
Of bonds unbroken, though tried and tested in real time
Forever connections that warmly whisper "you are mine."

See each figure, each line is critical to define a nations picture of the whole

But is it only numbers we should rely on to echo a child's soul?

Behind the patterns, graphs, powerpoints and displays

There are countless moments slipping away.

Lives filled with messiness, muddle and magic, sibling connections frayed, fraught and tragic

But I will never forget, the presence of my person, their hand I so held tight

The memories of laughter, growth, of arguments and fights

A safe place for me to try on, love, joy, anger and despair

A best friend, an enemy, the only other who can care, where I have been and what I dream, are
truths no chart can reveal

The hope, the ache, the fear but still the connection I feel

To a sibling relationship that may be recounted but it cannot be defined or assigned meaning on a
page

As it's forever in motion, filled with emotion, impossible to gauge the meaning held in our hearts

It sets us apart from laptop screens.

So, remember this as you sift through data sets, to search and explore

It is there not just for direction but something more

It provides a beautiful snapshot static for all to see

But my life is a movie, a motion picture personal to me.

Data can perfectly trace our patterns and progress, and not to reduce nor simplify, but to amplify

What matters most

And there is a duty to present, represent and treasure

Each story awash with beauty, pain and pleasure.

For behind every screen, every row and cell
Are lives intertwined, countless stories to tell
Of nights spent dreaming, dazing and daring together, of days brimming with care
Of our bonds that endure, no matter where.

Every data driven decision, has the potential to shape
The children of our nation, I patiently await
Change.

Remembering, in everything that we do. It is never just the data
It's the human too.

Together we can, in data and discussion, strive, learn and defend.
To keep what is precious, to grow and never let end
The ever-evolving ties the bonds, and love that strays and stays
Through chaos, through care, through countless days.

It is our purpose, our truth, our way, to honour the stories, each and every day.

About this poem:

'Change.' was developed as part of the 'Sibling Café' project: a collaboration between academic researchers, care experienced co-researchers, social care practitioners and a poet.

The poem was written by Craig Houston (University of Glasgow) in collaboration with Dr Katie Cebula (Project Lead); Dr Christina McMellon; Thomas Bartlett; Oriana Coll; Chloe Sharkey (all University of Edinburgh); Kate Richardson (Stand Up For Siblings); and Laura Sharpe (The Promise). The poem was named by Oriana Coll. 'Change.' explores the intersection between national administrative data held about care experienced young people's sibling relationships and the reality of the lives reflected in those data. The work was possible thanks to our Sibling Café visitors – care experienced individuals and their supporters – who trusted us with their stories and views which shaped this poem.

You can find out more about the Sibling Café Project here: <https://edin.ac/4dnZUwo>



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