

*'Tossing and turning, sweating and burning up, I was semi-conscious, trapped in a hell-binding flashback from years ago. They fell all around me, just as though they were leaves falling from an autumn tree, browned with mud from the wounded earth.*

*The afternoon was lifeless, with no singing birds and no whistling winds. Perfectly still. Riding through the autumn forest on horseback, I felt a sudden chill, unwanted and unnerving, strive through my body. Confused and slightly scared, I made my way through the brambles and bracken, avoiding branches which seemed to reach out to me, hearing footsteps closely following. 'Stay Strong'. Reliving this nightmare over and over, I was struggling to hold on and pull through; was I ever going to wake from this, or stay in hell forever?*

*Suddenly, I awoke: dazed, confused, and worried. What was happening to me? Wiping the sweat from my brow, concentrating on getting my heart back into a normal rhythm, I attempted to drag my-self out of bed, towards the pitcher of dirty wash water. I had to visit this place again. I had to return, for my own peace of mind. I wanted answers. The forest was my destination... '*

Gemma Powell