

God Over Covid

It was a mid October morning. I remember waking up feeling drained and lifeless, thinking I was just a bit run down. I sat at my kitchen table with cereal and my diabetes medication, hoping my coffee would sort me out. I never imagined what would happen next.

The heat was sudden and unbearable. Inside of me something was burning, in my head, my feet, my chest. Plans went out of the window as all I could bear to do was lie on the sofa and watch TV. The life had well and truly been taken out of me.

Towards the end of the day, I finally felt motivated enough to pick the phone up and call a friend I'd not spoken to in a long time. I told her about the heat, the draining feeling that I couldn't explain, which is when she mentioned that taboo C word - Covid. I only mentioned that the doctors wouldn't see me because of it, for her to tell me that her husband had experienced the same symptoms as I had been feeling. He was rushed to A&E because it had affected him so badly, and he was still there as we spoke. That was three weeks ago!

As the night crept in, the feeling got worse and worse, until I found myself phoning for a taxi to A&E. The first thing the reception saw was me crawling towards them, groaning about the heat and the pain. It was time for me to take a Covid test, she said.

I sat in the waiting room for over half an hour, thinking about how I'd not believed Covid was real. It was in the news every day, but it wouldn't affect me, surely? There I was though, in a tiny room, with a doctor ramming sticks up my nose and down the back of my throat. Those sharp prods certainly felt real.

45 minutes later, the tests were ready. I've always been a positive person, and it turned out Covid was another thing positive about me. I was distraught, but the doctor assured me I wasn't alone. Where could I have caught it from though? How did I get this virus I didn't think was real? Now I had it, and I needed more oxygen, he told me.

I was hooked up to a machine and had 2 plastic pipes attached up my nose, but they couldn't fix my oxygen quick enough, I'd need to be on the ward for a week.

The reality of a Covid ward is harrowing. Hard beds providing no comfort for the sick and frail people who were afflicted with a disease they knew nothing about. Nobody was allowed visitors on the quarantine ward, so we were not even allowed the comfort of human contact in fear of our loved ones safety. The other three women on my ward had their own stories, all made more complicated by Covid. One had heart issues and was closely monitored, one was suffering with dementia and had the most trouble understanding what was going on. The final woman had only caught Covid while visiting a different patient earlier in the pandemic.

I was given bitter tablets to swallow down, not easy with most of your nose blocked by plastic which made my nose all sore and scabbed. If it wasn't for the good quality food from the hospital, or the overwhelming support of my friends and family sending care packages in for me via a brave friend on a motorcycle, I don't know how I would have made it through. Their get well cards and chocolate treats were all I had to

keep my spirits up. I prayed to God every day that I would be discharged from the hospital soon.

After a week, he answered my prayers. The doctor said it was time for me to rest at home, although not because I was recovered, but because of the sad fact that there were so many people sicker than I who were desperate for the bed I was in. Around 9 hours after I'd packed my things away, I was home, such was the struggle to get any car near to the hospital as the pandemic grew out of control.

At home I returned to find my friends and family had supplied me with meals and items to get me back on my feet. I want to say a big thanks to family, friends and partner for all the texts, phone calls, gifts and prayers. Without them I wouldn't be here.

All I can say to finish is this. Covid is real, I am simply lucky enough to have lived to tell my tale. God over Covid is what I say to get me through this difficult time.