

DEPRESSION

BLACK DOG

BY MARK

They call depression the “black dog”. It hunts relentless, waiting years if needs must for its chance – some time of weakness, of loss and sorrow, or of simple exhaustion, when it can sink its jaws into the flesh around your ankle and drag you down. All the way down, and then further down still. Sucking all colour, taste and joy from life, and draining you of all energy, confidence and desire. Until you believe that this despairing darkness is the true reality, and any happiness you imagined you ever felt simply an illusion designed to deceive you. Allow that fatally twisted belief to embed itself, and you are irredeemably and irretrievably lost.

But the dog is in your mind only, and its power and hold over you can be made to melt away as the sun burns off a morning mist – freeing you to stretch back into the light where all your possibilities still lie ahead of you. It takes time, and determination, and discipline, and the helping hands of others. But, most of all, it takes your own belief – some kernel of faith you must nurture and preserve against all assaults – a steadfast self-knowledge and commitment that you want to, and can, and will defeat the bastard hound and banish it to the furthest reaches of the hell in which it sought to entomb you.

