The poem I wish I never had to write:

The Fight You Never See

They tell me, just ask for help,
as though help waits kindly by the door.
They do not see the hours spent
preparing for another war.

At work, I sit beneath bright lights,
my body keeping its own score,
while every task demands a price
it never had to pay before.

I ask for fairness, nothing more.
A little understanding, room to cope.
Yet meetings gather, forms appear,
and simple requests become a slope.

I remind them, gently at first,
then firmly when they choose not to hear,
that rights are not a favour granted,
and the Equality Act still lives here.

I carry evidence, explanations,
letters stacked like shields and spears.
Each accommodation justified
through exhaustion, doubt and years.

Then comes the doctor’s waiting room,
the battle for an appointment slot;
the race to reach someone at all,
before another chance is lost.

And when at last I sit and speak,
describing symptoms strange and wide,
I watch confusion cross their face
as I explain my life inside.

The words are heavy from repetition:
post-exertion, pain, collapse, decline.
Explaining that what seems a little effort
can steal tomorrow's strength from mine.

Then comes the Blue Badge application,
another hurdle, another stage.
As though mobility were measured
only by the distance crossed on a page.

I explain again that walking once
is not the same as walking twice;
that every journey has a cost,
and every outing bears a price.

Still more forms. Still more proof.
Still more strangers to persuade
that invisible does not mean absent,
that hidden wounds are no charade.

And then the DWP gatekeepers,
guarding judgment behind a screen,
asking questions shaped for bodies
that have never known what ME can mean.

Again I tell my story slowly,
again I fight to make it clear:
that surviving each day is labour,
that disability is already here.

They call it assessment. I call it proving
my reality once more.
A life translated into tick-boxes,
while dignity waits outside the door.

Yet through it all I keep standing—
or sitting, resting, pacing, adapting—still.
Not because the fight is easy,
but because surrender costs more than will.

So if you see me tired and quiet,
know the struggle reaches far beyond disease.
For alongside every symptom carried
are systems navigated on bruised knees.

The hardest part is not always the illness,
nor the limits my body must meet.
It is fighting for fair treatment
from every person, desk and seat.

And still I persist.

Not because I enjoy the battle,
not because I have strength to spare,
but because fairness should not require a fight,
and because I deserve to be there.