Why Did My Brain Make Me Say It?

'I love the variety of subject matter in Sarah's book and the many different ways she finds to approach writing her poems. Humorous, thoughtful and surprising at times. She is a poet whose work deserves to be widely read.' — BRIAN MOSES

'In this collection you will find people, creatures, fun, sadness, stillness, noise, puzzles and brain-tickling cleverness. You will discover a confident playfulness, keen observation, delightful twists and impactful last lines. There's not a letter out of place.'
— CORAL RUMBLE

troika

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To Jake and Zac, with all my love
(You just lost The Game)

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Introduction

When I was asked to write an introduction to *Why Did My Brain Make Me Say It?*, I worried about what I was going to say. What *is* this collection all about? What *was* my brain thinking when I wrote these poems? What if my brain made me say something stupid in the introduction which I would regret once it was in print?

But that's the interesting thing about brains, as well as the wonder of poetry – they can both do the unexpected. While the title of this collection comes from a line in my poem *'Faux Pas'* – where the speaker is bemoaning an embarrassing slip of the tongue at school – it can also be a question to ask ourselves when we write.

Why does *my* brain come up with one way to describe something, and my friend's brain with something else entirely? We could both be looking at the same thing, or experiencing the same event, or given the same prompt – and we'd still create completely different interpretations of it. Why does a particular idea – perhaps a hairdresser being faced with Medusa's alarmingly lively locks, or a packed lunch getting progressively stranger as the week goes on – suddenly pop into your head, seemingly from nowhere? I'm still trying to find out, but putting them into a poem seems like the best way to deal with the chatter.

Oh yes, one thing I do know about my brain is that it can be very noisy – probably to make up for the fact that it's also very dark in there. This is due to my aphantasia, which means I can't create images when I think. I didn't realise until I was an adult that most other people could 'picture' their thoughts in their heads – I suppose I thought this and 'mind's eye' were just figures of speech, because they made you think of something you could see in real life!

Brains are funny old things though – everyone's is different. Mine has this talkative inner voice instead of a mind's eye, but apparently that's another thing that not everyone has. I think not being able to form pictures in my head might explain why I particularly enjoy playing with how to present poems on the page, or how they sound when read aloud. It might also mean I'm a bit more tuned into the spoken word to compensate – this could be why so many of my poems are in first person, or have a lot of dialogue.

However your brain works, I hope you enjoy some of the ideas that came from mine.

Best wishes,

Sarah Ziman

Hi-ku

Howdy! Hey! Salaam!
Top o' the morning! Hello!
Wotcher! Whassup? Yo!

Packed Lunch

On Monday,
I opened my lunchbox and I had:
A ham sandwich,
Some cheese and onion crisps,
And an apple.

On Tuesday,
I opened my lunchbox and I had:
A cheese sandwich,
Some ham and onion crisps,
And an apple.

On Wednesday,
I opened my lunchbox and I had:
A ham and cheese sandwich,
Some apple crisps,
And an onion.

On Thursday,
I opened my lunchbox and I had:
A sandy ham,
Some crispy onion,
And a cheesy witch.

On Friday,
I had school dinners.

Opposites

My hair's curly / Hers is straight
I wake early / She sleeps late

I'm a dog fan / She likes cats
I wear hoodies / She wears hats

I do ballet / She does judo
I say Scrabble / She says Ludo

I like maths / She likes art
I win races / She won't start

I've got brown skin / She's got pink
I sing solo / She'll lip-sync

I want sunshine / She wants snow
If I say yes / Then she says no

I crunch crisps / She bakes cake
I'm a veggie / She eats steak

I've got brothers / She's an only
I like peace / She gets lonely

My hair's curly / Hers is straight
She's my friend / I'm her mate