# Chapter 7

## Saturday 20 August 2011—Tuesday 13 September 2011

After the stroke…..

I was the center of a House episode. Not an episode. A series. Specialists puzzled over my symptoms, juggled my medication and consulted colleagues in search of that elusive breakthrough, the one that would explain it all. Meanwhile, an unknown scriptwriter, the phantom menace, wreaked havoc over my organs, creating one problem after another. My body was decaying from the inside.

Things began to blur. Up or down? Left or right? Life or death?

The blur was fuzziness. A fog on your swimming goggles – impaired vision but not blindness. Oh how I wanted to be blind. I wanted to be comatose – to let my body fix itself while I dreamed of sunlit coastlines and campfires under stars. But the coma never came. Instead, I was invaded by the all-invasive question. The riddle that mattered most of all: Do I live or do die. Do I fight or is it enough?

My ICU admission, now etched into memory, had unleashed a tsunami of complications that lead to six‑months hard‑time, imprisonment within the confines of hospital. To me, the paralysis represented a new beginning. Not the kind that an alcoholic finds upon casting away the drink nor the kind that follows fireworks and resolutions. It was a beginning to be loathed. Despised for the terror that would follow. I found myself longing for death – the sweet release of passing and the simple knowledge that I would not have to fight any more.