

Tara C. and her experience following a flight with British Airways

I flew back from the USA to London on BA, to catch a connecting flight back to Dublin.

I began to feel very ill on the flight. When I got off, I was stumbling, nauseous, dizzy and disorientated.

I went to the BA help desk and asked for help. They were firm in their response.

I am no longer a passenger-there was nothing they could do to help. I just stood there, almost unable to function.

I called D. and told her my symptoms. I could not get to my connecting flight. She suggested I find a place to lie down. I did. I seemed to have lost my balance; I stumbled around, and finally I lay on three seats and slept for hours.

When I woke, I got onto a Dublin flight and, although I still felt very ill, managed to get home. I fell into bed and stayed there for eight days. I was feverish, nauseous, and my body was weak. S. came to visit - she took me to the doctor. I'm not sure what she gave me, but I slowly got better.

I was never right after that-I did not think of it; but my health, stamina, and focus on my work were not there. I knew my workshops were not as good as before. I thought I was burnt out - I went back to the UK soon after for good.

I had a weird episode a few months after flying back—ended up in A&E. I thought I was dying-I couldn't breathe, heart rate was berserk etc. I was kept in for a day or two and then sent home. They thought it was the heart. I had an angiogram a few months later. Put on beta blockers.

I deteriorated generally after that-never really worked again. I wanted to get away from the city's noise and hustle and bustle and moved to the countryside.

I have never felt so ill and disoriented... And the days lying in bed in Dublin-I was almost delirious. I have never experienced anything like it. I remember being unable to walk straight while going through a passenger tunnel, to get to a seating area at the airport. People must have thought I was drunk.

I still have very brief moments during my day when I can't remember how to do something. I also have difficulty with certain artwork or photos, in making out the image. It takes my brain a few seconds to compute the info, before I can see the image,

I still muddle the order of letters when I type. Some days are worse than others. Yet I never muddle figures...

(Note: All names withheld for privacy reasons but are known to the publisher)

