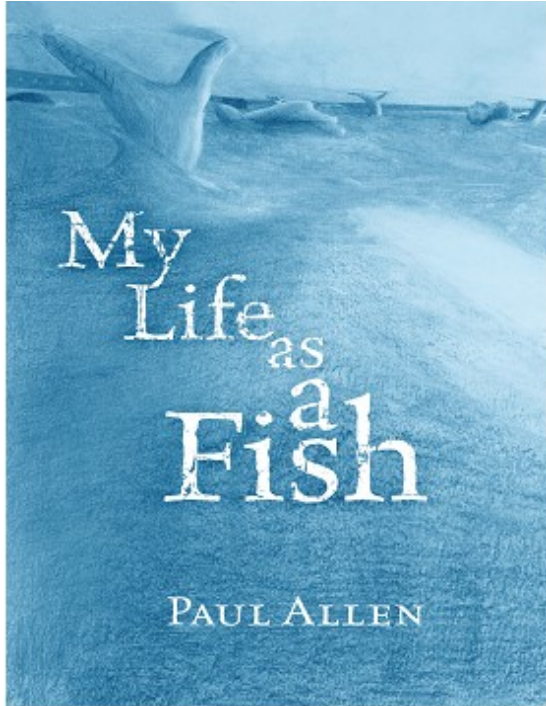


My Life as a Fish

Hi there! My name is Paul Allen. On 20th November 1994 I suffered severe head injuries in a transport accident. The result threw me into a comatose reality that changed from merely shocking into a diabolical struggle for survival against an overwhelming enemy.



Altered states of reality is often the stuff of fiction, but in *My Life as a Fish* it's fact. Not only has Paul Allen travelled back from severe brain injury, he has recorded the journey for us in vivid detail. With wit and insight he lets us into the horrifically real world he inhabited while unable to communicate in this world. Here, in a ruined city, humans are forced to breathe water. With illustrations also by Paul Allen, this book is essential reading for the medical profession or for anyone who deals with brain injury patients. But by any standards, *My Life as a Fish* is an impressive achievement.

Robyn Friend

This is not only a thrilling story of nightmare and miracle, of love and hope, but it is instructive and enlightening as well. Oh, and funny.

Tim Thorne

Once in a while a story comes along that exemplifies the indomitable nature of the human spirit. Paul's is such a story. Having suffered horrendous head injuries and subsequent traumas, Paul recounts his recovery with verve and imagination.

What makes the telling significant is the fact that he struggled not only with his physical injuries but also with a loss of a sense of his own identity and language. Often in the early period after the accident he asked for friends to ring Paul Allen and tell him that something bad had happened. His language was confused and he was often disorientated. Yet with enormous determination and courage and the help and love of family and friends, Paul overcame these immense difficulties.

This is an inspiring story that offers hope to all who suffer similar injuries and gives valuable insight into the experience of victims. This graphic and perceptive account is told with disarming modesty and great humour.

John Norris, Retired Dean of Humanities, University of Tasmania, Launceston

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