

## Selected Poems on Depression

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### Abstract

*In this brief sample from a collection of poetry produced during a semester long Independent Study. I explore mental illness and its depiction in poetry. The collection draws inspiration from the works of Emily Dickinson, Thomas Hoccleave, and Allen Ginsburg. In doing so I wanted to showcase the changing perception of mental illness by poets and by myself. Focus is on questioning and understanding mental illness in a poetic format and concludes with a depiction of my own journey towards acceptance of my condition.*

### Creative Commentary

These poems are excerpts from a collection I put together as part of an Independent Study I performed last semester that focused on examining poetry about and by individuals with mental illness, particularly depression. I aim to try to spread awareness about mental illness through my poetry while also exploring my own relationship with depression. The collection was borne from these sentiments and also as a way to express and demonstrate the various ideas and styles I found from the authors I read during my study. "Chronic" is the poem that exemplifies these concepts the most. I created the poem for a presentation at the

English Association of Pennsylvania State Universities (EAPSU) conference during my Independent Study, and in it I combine the styles and ideologies of three poets from various time periods with my own experiences. The main concept behind the poem and the EAPSU presentation was to explore how the perception towards mental illness has changed over time which I achieved by changing style and tone in each section of the poem. Other pieces I've included from the collection are of a much more personal nature, and question society's and my own perceptions towards mental illness leading

**Empathy**

I've always felt for others far more than I should  
My heart goes out to people who will never receive it  
And I join them in sorrowful solidarity  
I've always felt for others far more than I should  
Never acting on those feelings  
And joining hands with clout-chasers  
I've always felt for others far more than I should  
Because it is a human instinct  
And I can't know whether it is selfish or selfless  
I have always felt very little for myself  
But does that make my empathy fake?  
And what is this apathy but real? Center my Soul

**Burst**

Then reconnect  
Born alone  
Then alive together  
Wayward connections flicker  
And let loose  
This body of mine  
Uncentered unbound and free  
The mind wanders alone  
Arrogant in its world  
The mind's apathy breeds tragedy  
But it continues not caring  
Or flares in molten wrath  
Leaving the body to cope  
With unseen wounds left behind  
From its mind's wanderings  
The passenger watches alone  
Privy to every action  
Seeing but not understanding  
Nothing is known  
Three are one  
But never whole  
Biological Actors  
Which is  
Me

**Facsimile Art**

Words on the page that I spread out  
Seeking meaning for myself and for my life  
Is there any value in metaphor?  
In vivid imagery?  
In poetic rhyme?  
Can my simple experience be elevated to art  
With some witty wordplay and succinct phrasing  
Does that make my experience  
My emotions more beautiful  
Or does it hide them behind a viscous code.  
Behind the Scenes at Bowers

**Chronic**

In time

God's wrath scorched my mind  
Wracking and reducing me to but a creature  
Writhing with a million curses  
Yes God's punishment cast away I  
Far from friends family and good health  
Leaving me to bear His weight upon my scattered mind

But Yes!

God's grace healed my mind  
Tempering its storm and restoring its health  
Intervention casting away the demons in my head  
It is for God's whim that I have suffered  
And for His whim I have been saved

And in time

My mind folded inwards on itself  
Collapsing contorting into me  
Deep underneath I sat a prisoner beneath it all  
Joy and fear weighing down  
And I bore its frigid heat  
A prisoner to my own machinations  
A self-made cell with a key I cannot place into the lock  
The vicious timid beast amidst it all taunted me  
And I wondered  
Where its mangled invisible body began  
And mine whole but crippled ended

And in time

They cast a line into my brain  
Searching for which chemical concoction  
May correct my incorrect thoughts  
And when their pills filled my dazed head  
I really felt nothing at all  
And I spoke  
And I spoke  
And I spoke  
To those looking to help  
And yeah I began to understand why  
Why we cannot face ourself alone  
Searching  
Seeking  
Fleeing  
My own wretched thoughts  
And now to a closing dream  
That with each day I draw a closer understanding

To this clouded miserable disorder bearing my name  
And in time  
I may hate again  
And in time  
I may love again  
And in time  
It may move again  
My precious trapping life

### Crawl

I've always been told to crawl before you walk  
To take baby steps before you do it for real  
To hit the t-ball before you hit the pitch  
To train before you compete  
Yet no one ever told me to do the same mentally  
So when my mind fell ill  
I tried to sprint ahead  
It had been whole before  
And with the right chemicals and conversations  
It would be whole again  
And when I stumbled flat onto my face  
When my mind left me stranded in a sea of gray malaise  
They threw me a paddle and told me to row  
And when I collapsed from exhaustion  
My arms heaving from frantic rowing in immovable waters  
I realized sitting in my blistered body  
Gazing at my cauterized hands  
Ruined by misguided energies  
That I had tried to run before I could crawl  
That I had denied what I'd always been taught  
Those pills those helping hands  
Couldn't make me run right away  
Truly they were braces prepping my body  
Holding it upright until I could make the first move  
Precariously suspended above a gaping cave  
For this will never go away  
And I must learn to live with my illness  
This is part of who I am  
This is Micah  
And now I think I am ready  
To crawl.

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