

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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