

Discharge Plan
By Tammy Smith

I sit waiting on a hard red chair as old as my pain,
watch the minute hand on the clock
make its round past plastic faces
keeping train of hours I waste
staring at shadows form on green hospital walls like
foundation cracks undermining my structural integrity.
Here is a breakdown of my acute admissions:
Check-in longer than a child's list to Santa
leave a spiraling paper trail of
revolving door rhetoric
masquerading as progress notes.
My diagnosis rolls of the tongues of
mental health professionals
paying lip service to providing support,
until i become a cluster of clinical symptoms rolled up into a
long sentence and committed to a charted system.
I curl up in a tight ball on the edge of my hospital bed and cry.
When a nurse calls me borderline and
Rolls her eyeballs heavenward,
I want to die all over again.
The transference happens during group therapy
as we trade secrets passive aggressively,
hand each other tissues and compare scars.
I shift abruptly,
my chair scraping so discordantly against the floor,
I lose my grounding.
Bored to pieces, I envision a life on the outside where
hours are not marked by med lines and snack breaks and
artificial light unmasking transparent reminders to
move me past the point of staying sick and tired.
I decide I want to get better.
If I embrace wellness and I accept recovery,
I can return to this center and help others.
I sleep on the chance I still have dreams worth chasing.
At day break
I take measured steps to the breakfast table where
I chew thoughtfully on all my possibilities and spit out the left overs.
I break bread with my demons and resolve to forgive myself.
Swallowing my pride,
I ask Staff for second helpings.

Give it all your might

By Nicholas G. Poth

It starts off young
You don't know what's going on
The results I could have sung
A real life fight
You figure it out
And you give it all your might

The days come and go
Some are bad
Some are good
I'm gonna know
You have to fight
Give it all your might

Some people said he'll never get better
Sometimes I didn't know
But you have to have a foundation
Reap what you sow
No time to fool around
Your principles are sound

So I never gave up
Pull yourself up
Don't slow down
I'm not going to frown
The goal is always in sight
Give it all your might

Then you breakthrough
It's a new world
So much to grasp
You look back and say
I'll bet you today is my day

Move on down the road
Things look brighter now
It was a heavy load

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But it didn't cover or cheat
Victory is so sweet
Only one way
Give it all your might

My Journey
By Rachel Stanton

Having mental illness,
It helps to know my fears,
About them I do pray.

At time sit hurts so bad,
And other times I do not feel.
I feel like my world is evil,
My soul a shrinking shell.

But having mental illness,
Has softened my heart a bit.
So with others now,
The pain I can finally split.

I have spent many times,
Locked up and away from peers.
Only to be burdened,
Tortured and wracked with aching fear.

But part of me says hang on,
To the tiny glimmer I do still feel.
If I give up to soon,
I'll be swallowed up for real.

So far I have come,
Though many toils and turns.
Now I'm working on my livelihood,
Both the ones I know and need to lean.

My Shadow
By Shanna Rae M.

I've grown so much
because of you
sometimes I didn't
know what to do

but I refused
to hide in shadows
know there was
more to life

Than just my mental illness
Which sometimes
Caused me pain and strife

I became a stronger person
Using coping skills I learned
And I didn't have to suffer
When words sometimes burned

I grew up on the shadows
Playing games within my head
But all the while still growing
And I followed where "you" led

I'd always clung to hope
It was my saving grace
And soon I realized
That having mental illness is not a disgrace

Sure there were times
When I felt like giving in
But I had a support system
With whose help I'd always win

So I learned to give
Myself a chance
And not to do it on my own

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My “shadow” and me
We somehow got through it
And now I’ll never be alone!

Untitled

By Reuben ben Yitzhak

I am mentally ill,
an apparition stalking the dark
hallways of a demon-filled mansion,
haunted by the memories of collapsing
into uncomprehending pain that descends
further into a death-like blackness.
In my heart, I believe I can no longer be restored.
Still in the operating theatre, I am anxious,
waiting for the pin prick, for the anesthesia.
And then I hear the roar of winds
clasping the mouths of distant caverns
and sink rapidly into unknowing darkness.
Now a patient etherized upon a table,
I am Shelley’s gothic thought experiment in electricity
waiting to awaken a newborn revenant.
At first, I am hardly able to communicate a solitary thought
and shuffle day by day along this mortal realm.
I have no memories or desires.
But the days and months accumulate and evince
Over and over again time’s indomitable will to change,
as a vitalizing force reanimates my spirit,
and i reenter society by degrees,
finding moments of union
in and outside my home and in myself.
I live each day between two immensities,
fear and gratitude,
keenly aware of the fragile gift my sanity represents.
I remain mentally ill,
But my memories and my humanity
have been returned to me.

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