



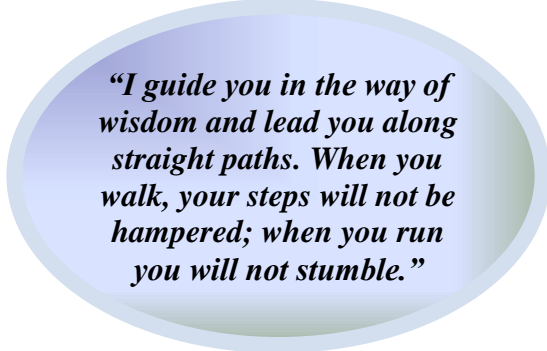
LOST BOY
"bipolar dreaming"

by Jocelyn Price

Forward

I am writing this book about my son Cameron who committed suicide nearly five years ago. He had suffered from bipolar disorder for many years. It is his journey from despair to paradise. I started writing it in the form of letters to him, but somewhere along the way I found that I had things that I wanted to say to people which could not be written down and addressed to Cameron exclusively. I want the contents of this book to go out there not only for Cameron, his family and his friends, but also for all those people in the same position as I was those many years ago, when not much was known about bipolar disorder. I would like you, my readers, to share this journey with Cameron and me - Cameron through the letters I have written to him and me with the many other things I have felt myself compelled to say. It is not just a book about bipolar. I hope it will be a book also for those people out there who have ever had depression, or have ever had to deal with a mental illness. There is a touch of sadness in some of the pages, especially regarding his diaries. I have only put down some excerpts from them – to put everything down would have been too emotional for me and too depressing for my readers.

But on the other hand in my letters to him I have also written of happy times – times which will always be remembered. I can almost hear Cameron saying to me, “Mum, why don’t you simply go ahead tell it like it was!” and that is just what I have tried to do. This book is a mixture of many things – sadness and happiness, indifference and compassion, despair and hope, loss and recovery, lows and highs. These are all part of the shadow world for a person like my son who had to live with a mental illness. I know that for me Cameron’s story will be never-ending. I will go on remembering things about him that I had forgotten or failed to put down while I was writing this, but it can’t be helped now. Nevertheless I sincerely thank you, my readers for bearing with me, and I do hope that you will enjoy Cameron’s story just as much as I have enjoyed writing it.



“I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run you will not stumble.”

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Bipolar Dreaming

Dear Cameron

It is nearly five years since you crossed to the other side of Life. Such a lot has happened in that time – good things and bad things. But it all boils down to one fact. You are not here with us any more, and even though I think of you every day I have to remind myself of that. I have everything you wrote over the last few years, and together with what I have written since you passed over, we might just be able to help other people out there who suffer, just as you did, with bipolar disorder. Also I know that for years I did not understand what you had gone through. Perhaps I was too wrapped up in my own life or I may have put it in the “Too Hard” basket. Who knows? But now, Cameron, we are in this together. OK? So let’s get this show on the road.

Cameron, did you ever have any idea just how much of an impact you made on people you met? Nobody I know was ever indifferent to you. Even people I talk to today remember things about you – Things that I had long forgotten. Surely that must mean something!

During the last 12 months of your life when you came to live with me at Forrest Beach, do you remember when we used to sit out on the verandah? The mornings were the best – you with your book and coffee, and me with my Sudoku and green tea. We used to listen and watch the tropical birds in the trees. We would also hear the “screaming birds” (curlews) under the house. Eventually they would come out and wait for us to give them their daily treat of bread and honey.

One particular morning stands out in my mind. You had just been speaking to Jaki on the phone and you were so happy. You thought everything was going to be all right, despite the divorce. Later on that day you had an appointment with your Case Manager in Ingham and you were looking forward to that. Then Jaki rang again. I don’t know what was said but your mood suddenly altered dramatically. The look on your face changed from one of happiness to one of despair. I saw it at once but even if I wanted to, I knew that I could not help you. But still my thoughts and heart tried to reach out to you.



The next thing I remember you went inside and came out with paper and a pen and you wrote the following poem. You called it

“Bipolar Dreaming.”

I dream that one day
I will fly down the highway
On a Harley - free as the breeze
and experience
The vibrant colours of Life –
The blue of the sky –
The green of the trees and
feel the soft rain on my face as I ride.

I dream about my children –
My beautiful daughter and son;
I want them to be as proud of me
as I am of them
And above all I want them to believe
that I am not a loser.

I dream of having a job
Where my workmates don't make cracks
about my mental state or think
that I am some sort of a freak.
I dream that one day they will learn
and try to understand
that I am a human being too
with real feelings.

I dream about a relationship
somewhere down the track;
I dream of meeting a soul mate
who will not try to mould or
manipulate me.
I want us both to be honest with each other;
I want her to know the REAL me –
Not the one at the moment
trapped inside a vortex of drugs
and pills and pain;
After all they say that there is
somebody out there for everyone.


I *dream* of the fellow sufferers I have met
in hospital over the years;
I have learned to know how they feel;
I *dream* that they too will get out and have a go –
Just like I have tried to do;
Even if they are told they are nothing
I want them to know that they are
really somebody!
I say to them,
“Have a go, Mate, and to hell
with what others think!”

So these are my dreams –
My kids, a job, a happy relationship,
A “Harley”, my fellow sufferers finding peace.

But mostly I *dream* of being a worthwhile person –
Just being me and able to cope with day to day Life;
For a start this will do;
Then I’ll have it all, Mate,
And my life will be real!”

I cried when I read it, but I want you to know that your poem has been distributed throughout North Queensland to people suffering from bipolar disorder and depression. The feedback from people (including your friend Pastor Diane) has been absolutely tremendous. So on that sad morning at Forrest Beach, nearly five years ago you did not know that you would help so many people!

Cameron, I love you and I am so proud of you!



***“Just walk beside
me and be my
friend”.***

Heaven in Chaos 'Cos My Angel Wears Tattoos

Dear Cameron

I always knew that you had a wicked sense of humour- like when we used to walk along the beach you would stride so far ahead of me that I used to yell at you, "Hey, Cameron! Wait for me! Who do you think you are? A trainee Ayatollah or something!" (No doubt this was to do with my Afghan heritage.) But we did have some good times on our beach walks, didn't we? In time I did learn to walk faster to keep up with you. But then again you probably felt sorry for me and slowed down a bit.

Your sister Shona told me about the following episode just a little while after you had passed. She was having a night out with some girlfriends in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, and as expected on a Saturday night it was very busy. She couldn't find a parking spot so she said her usual, "Hail Mary full of grace, please find me a parking space!" She finally found one and then she set off with her friends to enjoy themselves. But somehow she got separated from her friends and, oh dear, she had forgotten to bring her mobile phone with her! She then tried to look for the car, but because all parking places look the same she couldn't find the car. So, what to do next? She told me that she shut her eyes and said, "Go on, Cameron, do something! And do it now!" And believe it or not you did! You showed her where the car was and soon after, her friends turned up! What a drama! But the night was not over yet. One of Shona's friends decided to drive home and guess what? After driving around for hours she found out she was lost; and there was no Refidex in the car. So again, what to do? Her friends said, "Go on, Shona, ask Cameron for another sign!" She did and when the girls looked out the window they spied not one poster – but two. Guess what was written on both posters? The words, "Sign Boy!" How amazing! And, of course, just past the posters was another sign with directions on how to get home! Pretty amazing stuff, eh? You were certainly on the ball that night! I'll bet you are still chuckling over it.

Soon after that incident something amazing happened to me. I had a great idea that I would write a rap song about you. I talked to Nick, my grandson and his dad, Malcolm, and it was agreed that I would write the words and the boys would write the music. I thought this was a terrific idea as both boys were excellent guitarists and already I could see our names in lights after we had become famous. I must confess that I didn't know much about Rap music so I asked my other grandson, Alex, to give me the names of a couple of Rappers. He came up with Eminem and Snoop Dog, so I went out and bought a CD by Snoop Dog. One of the tracks began with, "I've got a motherfuckin' story to tell! I've got a motherfuckin' story to tell!" Being over 70 years old, I was a bit shocked at this language but I thought to myself, "If I'm going to write a Rap song I might as well get used to that sort of speech!" After all, the Rappers out there are raking in heaps of money! I figured that if I was going to be famous at my time of life, I had better start! So that night I took a deep breath and began on what I thought was to be my new career! I started with, "Listen all you motherfuckers out there, I'm gonna shock you from your head to your toes! I'm gonna shock you from your

head to your toes!” That would do for a start. Then I went to bed and tried to dream up some inspiration in order to continue my Rap song.

About 4.30 the next morning I was woken up by a resounding crash in my room. I turned on the light and found books scattered from my bookcase all over the floor, and a heavy ornament of a parrot (which I used as a door stopper), smashed and it was lying in the corridor outside my room. I did not know what had happened. At first I thought that my cat had caused the damage but the books and the ornament were far too heavy for her to move. I came outside and searched the house but nothing else had been disturbed. Then a thought came to me. It could have been an angry spirit. I knew such things were possible because some of my relatives in Brisbane were Spiritualists and I believed in the spirit world also. So I rang my aunt and explained just what had happened. She then asked me what I had done to upset you. I told her nothing at first, but then I remembered the Rap song I was in the process of writing. She went out of her brain for a start, but when she had calmed down a bit she told me to give up the idea of the Rap song, because obviously you didn’t agree with it and so I did. (I can’t say I was sorry to do it – in fact I was rather relieved!) After that everything pretty well returned to normal, so I’m sorry about that, Cameron. But wow! You gave me one hell of a fright!

The next day I wrote a poem for you and called it

“Heaven in Chaos ‘Cos My Angel Wears Tattoos.”

We loved you then
When you were here
We love you now
That you are there.

How is heaven this morning, Cam?
I’ll bet you’ve swapped your wings
For a set of weights and more tattoos
And other way out things!

When many angels visit you
Do they look at you with dread
When they see your tattooed body
Do they believe you’re really dead?

And when they see you lifting weights
On their white and fluffy floor
Do they raise their hands in fright
Or cry, “Oh please no more!”

And when its time for smoko
And their harps they try to play
Then you bring out *your* music
And scare them all away!

Oft on still and starry nights
When we feel your presence here
You've thrown your angels' wings away
But we know that you are near!

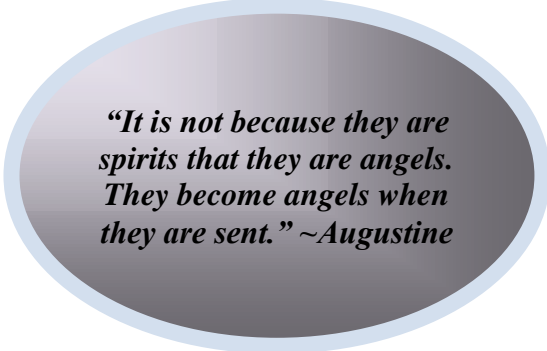
Then we see a brighter light
And we know it's "orright. Mate!"
Mr. Big has pulled you through
That far-off pearly gate!

You don't need wings and harps and things
That's OK for a start;
All you need is love and faith
For Sir can read your heart!

Enjoy your weights and music, Cam,
And your tattoos – well, we'll see
We now know Mr. Big loves you
Because He's set you free!

We loved you then
When you were here;
We love you more
Now you are there!

So, Cameron, like the poem, I love you more as each day passes. And I know that your sister Shona does, too!



***"It is not because they are
spirits that they are angels.
They become angels when
they are sent." ~Augustine***

Dreams and Stars for Cameron

Dear Cameron

I am sitting here at my computer with Princess at my feet. As usual she is licking my toes and then trying to bite them. But that's Princess! Do you remember when you first met her? She was only a kitten then and we were living in Brisbane. You had come to stay with me for a while and I remember one night we were watching the movie "Gladiator" with Russell Crowe. You were lying on the floor on a bean bag half asleep when suddenly Princess jumped on your chest. You let out an unholy yell and I nearly killed myself laughing.

I've had Princess now for nearly 11 years and we've shared some great times together. She has moved house with me many times and there was always something interesting to remember from nearly every place we lived in.

The most outstanding memory I have of Princess was just after you had passed over. I had returned to Forrest Beach after your funeral. But I could not find her anywhere. I searched and searched and I finally found her under your bed. That was OK, but when I went to feed her she refused to come out of your room. I tried coaxing her to come out but she would not budge. So I had to take her food and water into your room. I also had to take her litter tray in there too. During this sad time I had quite a few visitors and we often went into your room because a lot of your photos and things were still there. But whenever anyone came close to your bed Princess would miaow and claw at their legs.

This bizarre behaviour went on for nearly six weeks and not only with one set of visitors but with every visitor. Nobody was excluded.

Sometimes when my visitors had gone and often before I went to bed I would stand at your door just to see what Princess was doing.

Mostly she was under the bed but every so often I found her sitting on top of your bed staring upwards. She looked as if she was concentrating intently and her ears were moving backwards and forwards. I felt sure that you were both talking to each other. Even now occasionally at night she will sit at the end of my bed and look upwards. I love you both so much for letting me share in these little interludes.



One night I had such a wonderful dream about you and Princess and me. We were all sitting together on a mat on the floor in your room. Suddenly the room seemed to get smaller and smaller and the furniture seemed to move all around the room. I didn't know what to make of this and I confess I felt a little bit scared but you said "Don't worry, Mum, you'll be OK", and with that, the mat we were sitting on rose from the floor, floated through the furniture and the walls and the next minute I knew we were in the air above the house looking down on the lights of Forrest Beach. It was so-o-o exciting! Higher and higher we flew till we could not see any more lights below. We seemed to be enveloped in soft fluffy clouds and then something amazing happened! Our mat turned into a beautiful white horse with wings! You told me that the horse's name was Phoenix – named after the Egyptian bird which had risen

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