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even if it has previously appeared under a pseudonym.

Going Slightly Mad

Expressions of Depression



An Anthology by

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This book is dedicated to my good friend Michael R. who has helped me to find the courage to face life, more than he appreciates.

By not supplying his full name I am respecting his desire to remain anonymous, but he knows who he is. Thank you so much, my dear friend.

Introduction

There is a movement, led by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, entitled Time To Change which encourages people to talk about mental illness. The intention is to help those who find it difficult to admit to having such problems and also remove fears of the unknown from those around them.

1 in 4 people will suffer from a mental disorder at some time in their life, so it is highly likely that you know someone affected, whether you are aware of it or not. Mine is called Avoidant Personality Disorder, which has been a life-long problem.

Mind and Rethink Mental Illness believe that talking about mental health can strengthen friendships, aid recovery, break down stereotypes and take the taboo out of something that can affect us all.

Towards this end I have collected together a number of poems I wrote during my worst times of mental distress. Maybe it will get people talking but at least it gives some idea of how someone like me feels at times.

The first piece is a retrospective piece, looking back at a time many years ago. The rest were written as and when the bad times occurred. How I could write at those times I have no idea, I can only say that it helped. This was how I dealt with it in the absence of any other help. Writing is cathartic. I recommend it.

If anyone reading this can identify with any of the feelings described, I feel for you but would say this: it can pass. I haven't had a really bad episode for some years.

However, if you are reading this in order to gain some insight into what the depressive mind can experience, I hope you find what you seek.

Going Slightly Mad

She sits on the floor
in the corner of the room,
knees tucked underneath her chin
encircled by her arms,
rocking, rocking, back and forth,
softly crooning some old song
eyes unseeing, fixed and glazed
lost in thoughts of long ago
escaping from reality
a life too full of pain to bear

too frightening to contemplate.

Somewhere in her secret soul
deep within her wounded heart
she knows she cannot stay here
Her family will soon be home
and she must pull herself together.

They must never know about
the secrets of her time alone,
the inner workings of her mind.
But just for now, this little while,
her mind lets go of reason,
flirts with momentary madness,
heeds oblivion's call.

And so she sits upon the floor
in the corner of the room
and wishes she could die.

Nov 2001

A Glimpse Into My Private Hell.

Like swamp gas from its foetid lair
that bursts forth into clean fresh air,
so my thoughts arise unbidden
from the place where they lie hidden
in some stinking mental midden,
bringing me to near despair.

These demons from their souterrain
now come to haunt me once again;
memories awash with sorrow,

love I only ever borrow,
fears about a bleak tomorrow,
percolating in my brain.

They seem so very saturnine
these dark and dreadful thoughts of mine.
Is some monstrous madness lurking
grinning greedily and smirking,
watching, waiting, slowly working,
making me it's concubine?

Why must my mind be so steadfast
and cling so grimly to its past?
Why can I not just cease this travel,
let my tortured mind unravel,
hear the judge bring down his gavel
giving me some peace at last?

Nov 2001.

Drowning

My subconscious mind once opened,
like Pandora's box, releases its evils.

For Pandora, Hope remained
for consolation, mitigation, reparation.

My Hope, a mischievous sprite
lifts me high only to send me
hurtling back to earth.

A malevolent Tinkerbell taunting me.

And yet I cling to her;
like one drowning I cling to her
but my grip is weak.

Dec 2001

Ride Out the Storm

Once again the mind descends
spiralling out of control
down
down
into a deep dark well

sorrow rises unbidden
filling me
till it overflows and runs
cascading down my face

unstoppable
unendurable

where does it come from
this grief
this sadness?
why won't it let me live in peace?
what reason can there be
for this sense of desolation
which tempestuously
overwhelms my reason?

Once again I must ride out the storm
stay hidden within
peer through the gloom
till the sun breaks through
bringing a new dawn
of tranquillity.

May 2002
Roller Coaster

This roller-coaster ride I call my life
has got me going every which way
wondering what each day will bring

A small boat on a choppy sea
tossed around by
mood swings bearing
little relation to events

Oscillating between rosy tints
and rosé stints
I struggle to keep
my head above water
my life on an even keel

Blue skies, grey skies
come and go
ebb and flow

No forecasts
no gale warnings
no newsflash

Just get up and - whoa!

May 2002

Sad and Pointless

Loneliness, a cancer
eats into the soul
extinguishing, destroying it

bit by painful bit

each passing day is longer
emptier, more bleak

each sleepless night is darker
quieter, and cold

all sense of being human
is lost within these walls
no voice, no touch,
no sight or sound
exists for reassurance

emptiness is all now
all vacant eyes can see
anticipating hell and
eternal desolation

as courage steals away
reality departs
and takes with it forbearance
of this sad and pointless life

June 2002

A Fragile Thing

How fragile a thing is the mind
Sixteen years of arduous crawling
out of the dung heap into the light
clawing and scrabbling, inch by inch
learning the meaning of blood sweat and tears
becoming too confident, thinking you're strong
till a few ill-chosen, innocent words
hurl you back headlong into the shit
sitting here shaking with re-opened wounds
bleeding afresh down my nice new persona
Oh Tinkerbell, you sorry sprite,
how long will it take me this time?

June 2002

A Single Word

Funny
how a single word
can tear your world
apart

turn it
upside down
inside out

for me
that word is
NUISANCE!

in seconds
it rips away
poise
maturity
confidence

revealing
the snot-nosed
snivelling
kid
beneath.

July 2002

Another Crazy Day

With closed eyes I see them
huge and repulsive
insects entering my brain
destroying rationality
demolishing my sanity
reason in freefall
doomed to crash and burn.

2002

Old Memories Awakened.

I found an old diary today.
which stole my peace, just briefly.
March sixteenth of ninety five
I wrote these words in bright red ink:

Have decided I've had enough.
When I feel I'm ready I'll just
kiss it all goodbye.
Life's a bitch.

I didn't do it as you see,
I was hospitalised instead,
but the memories that came to me
when I found those words and read...

I've thrown the diary away.
Such times of overwhelming grief
are dead and gone, or should be,
and deserve a decent burial.

2003

Diary of a Troubled Mind

Day I

Curled beneath the covers
trembling, thumb in mouth,
silent tears dampen the pillow.
Once again oblivion calls

as sanity
slowly
slips
away

Day 2

A mind bewildered, fogged, befuddled,
thoughts and feelings mixed and muddled,
from the confusion a thought emerges,
sobbed at first, it quickly surges:
I have - the right - to say no...
I have the right to say no.
I HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY NO!

Day 3

My birthday.
Celebrate? I don't think so.
One card, from my sister
- at least someone remembered -
with some of her poems
on how to be a better Christian.
Or something.

Day 4

It's all a matter of balance.
One wrong move and whoops!

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