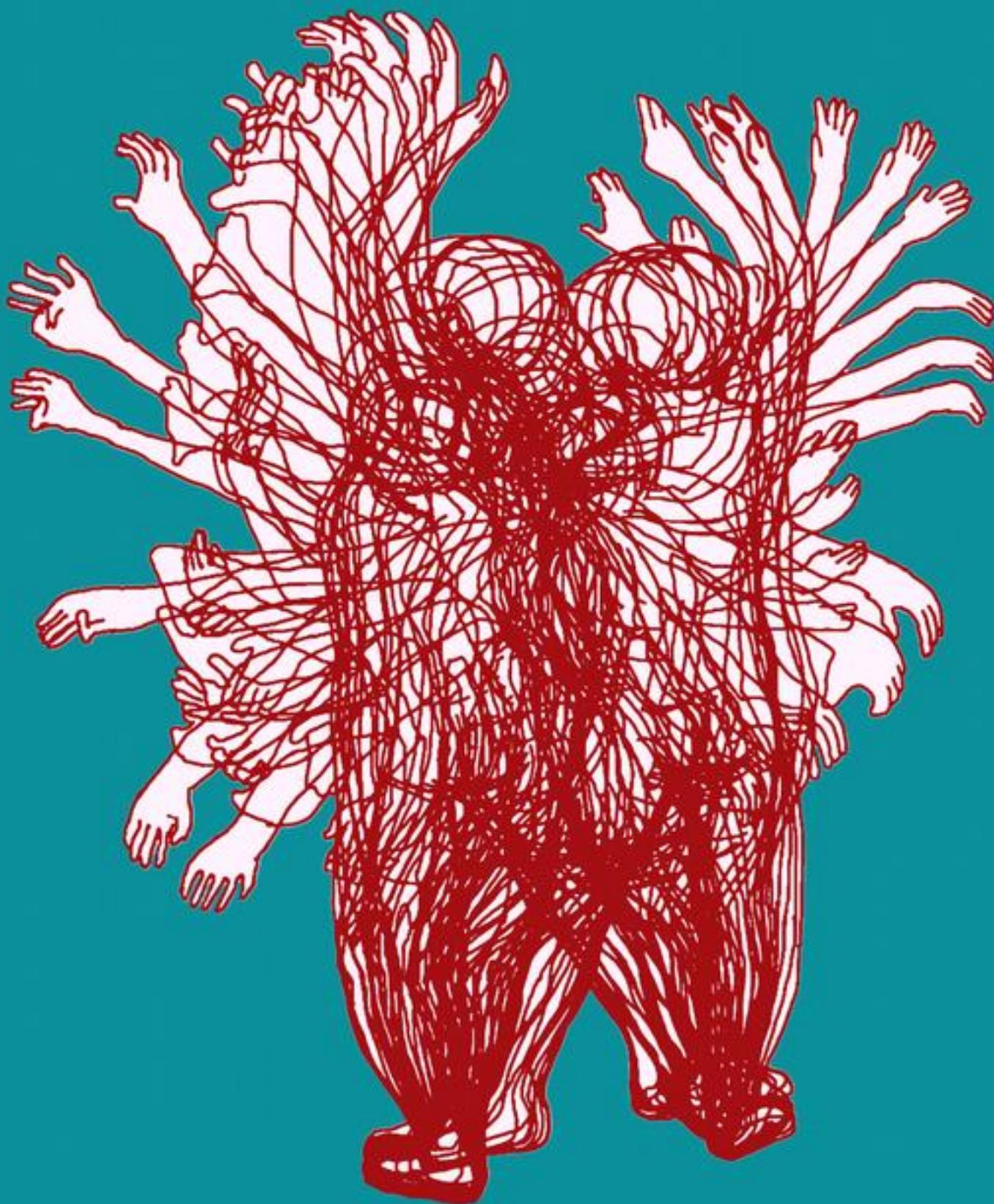


DWELL TIME



Editorial

Dwell Time arose from tragic death by suicide of one of our close friends in 2017. He was a passionate advocate of arts being a tool to discuss mental health and bequest us the task of raising awareness of mental health through our work as artists and curators. Art, poetry and sharing personal experiences have the power to communicate, educate and reduce the isolation, marginalisation and stigmatisation of mental ill health. A small edition arts publication is not going to change the world and cure mental illness but in talking about this subject that affects a huge proportion of the population; through art, poetry and lived experience, we hope that it will honour our late friend's memory and his request.

Mental health is still hugely stigmatised in 2019 and discussed nowhere near as much as it needs to be for a healthy society. Everyone has mental health, just like physical health, whether in good or bad shape at any particular time. We all experience the ups and downs of life; our ability to cope at any given time, although having many predictable factors, is often indiscriminate. NHS and Welsh Health surveys found that approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year and that in England, 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem in any given week. 20.6 in 100 people have suicidal thoughts 6.7 in 100 people have suicide attempts and 7.3 in 100 people self-harm. Almost 300 people died in suicide incidents on Britain's railways in 2016/17, according to Office of Rail and Road figures, including on the Penistone Line. We are also seeing a recent steep rise in mental ill health due to austerity, with severe and damaging cuts to the NHS, benefits and social services, with improvements to these in the future not looking likely. With chronically underfunded mental health services failing to meet needs, there is a real sense of necessity that we have these conversations and not ignore these problems in the hope that they will go away or that they won't affect us.

As artists/curators, we are not mental health professionals but we do have first hand experiences of mental health and we use our art as a way to express ourselves, to communicate and to cope. There is a growing body of research to show that art is a powerful tool in coping with mental ill health and it can be helpful in combination with talking therapies and medication as a holistic and individualised approach. As people with mental ill health, carers and parents of sufferers, neighbours, work colleagues, family, friends and passersby, we can learn from each other and through art how to be more understanding.

After the tragic death of our friend, we saw an article in a local newspaper about a community group called Men's Shed (now the charity Platform 1) and approached them to

see if we could work together on a project. They introduced us to Rowena at the Penistone Line Partnership and our co-curator Lenny and our idea for the publication developed.

An international open call for contributions was launched in March 2018 seeking drawings, illustrations, poetry and personal stories reflecting on mental wellbeing; about real life, raw feelings and survival stories; about the journeys more than the destinations. Each submission we received was posted on the blog and in January 2019 we made a selection to be printed in this publication.

We also ran a cut-up poetry workshop with Creative Minds Barnsley around the word 'change' which we took and read out on the Pensitone Line trains for our event *Interchange* for National Poetry Day 2018. Some of these works feature inside.

The contributions are as varied as the individuals and circumstances that made them. We see common themes of loneliness, darkness, journeys, transformations, hope and coping strategies which resonate between such diverse works and reflect the journeys we often find ourselves on.

There may be content in here that could be triggering for some people and if anyone is affected by any of the issues raised in this publication, there is a directory of mental health support services at the back. Please seek support if you're struggling to cope. It's ok to not be ok and ask for help.

Thanks

Many thanks to all the artists and contributors to Dwell Time. Many thanks to our partners Rowena Chantler and the Penistone Line Partnership, our funders and supporters Penistone Line Partnership, ACORP and Northern Rail, our *Interchange* partners Creative Recovery Barnsley and Hear My Voice. Thank you to Platform 1 (formerly Men's Shed) for introducing us to Lenny and Rowena and thank you to Alex Feather at Creative Minds for your early support. Thank you to Louise Atkinson at Curatorspace for inviting us to talk in Leeds which instigated the collaborations with Amelia Baron, Marnie Simpson and Bob Clayden who we are also thankful to. Thanks to our family and friends' ongoing support and to coffee, wine, trazodone, CBD and propranolol for helping us through.

Alice Bradshaw, Vanessa Haley, Lenny Szrama
Dwell Time Curators

If you have any comments or feedback about Dwell Time please get in touch.

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www.freespaceprojects.org
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<https://soundcloud.com/user-193270158>

Debbie Nicholson Wood

My parents were lucky. They grew up in families who survived the ravages of Hitler.

They may have lost relatives, (and some in the war before too) and their parents may have lost many of the things they'd worked for between the wars, but when things went wrong or were just a bit trying, they had to quickly learn to 'just get on with it'.

It's probably true that communities were stronger then. You could pop next door for a cup of sugar and you could usually find a shoulder to cry on, but you had to be 'strong' and you had to 'look after your own'. I can't imagine how tough it was for them, but I heard some stories. Like the time my Nan had to run for her life across a railway line with a pram and a couple of toddlers while under fire. Or the time my Grandad got blown off his bike by a bomb. (He survived with a broken arm but got back on his bike anyway.) And then there was the post war trauma that my poor mother suffered for years into adulthood because she grew up on the south coast of England where the German invasion was expected any moment.

After the war there was little to go around. If you had a roof over your head and food in the cupboard you were doing alright. God forbid that you dared want or hope for more than that. My parents had grown up on rations, egg substitute and tinned carrots. Occasionally in my early days I dared to turn my nose up at some of the things they'd got used to: "Eugh, not tinned carrots! You don't know how lucky you are my girl! When I was your age.....!"

Well I didn't know did I?! I was growing up in the sixties. Mum and Dad had managed to get a mortgage on a brand new little house on a brand new housing estate. We had loads of hiding places on the half-built estate to muck about in from dawn till dusk. If we felt brave we would cross the road and go to the meadows and play



in the stream. We had bikes and telephone boxes and ice cream vans and the Corona lorry. We had school dinners and a school nurse and a library in a van. We had a brand new school with massive playing fields to get lost in. We had a proper NHS and a local cottage hospital. I had my tonsils out there. I got ice cream every day. I didn't know I was born.

In the 1980s I and my classmates had the chance of free further education. We weren't going to have to leave

school at 14, do an apprenticeship then go to night classes after a day's work and do pub shifts at the weekends to pay for it all. If we passed our A Levels we were going to the brand new Polytechnic to get a degree! A degree! We could better ourselves; we could achieve even more. So, somehow without really trying, we became middle-class teachers and electronic engineers. We landed decent jobs and bought our first flats.

Then in the 1990s we had our own kids. So we moved to our first house and farmed the babies out to their grandparents, while we tried to hold down our ever increasing workloads. It turned out that it wasn't possible to give my kids everything that I'd had when I was growing up. We still felt working-class, but our kids had become middle-class. They had stuff. They had daytime telly and Little Tykes and bouncy birthday castles. They had Pampers and Postman Pat and the Teletubbies. They had after-school clubs and swimming lessons. But they couldn't really play out in the streets with their mates from next door, or throw sticks at the dog down the road. They had to have play dates instead. Oh God, play dates! More ferrying about. In and out of their car seats stowed in the back of the executive Ford Sierra we worked so hard to pay for. My generation may have had it good but we just about burned ourselves out.

No wonder. All that pressure on high-achieving grown ups who had learned as kids to 'just get on with it', suddenly finding that 'just getting on with it' doesn't cut the mustard. We wanted more out of life. To be listened to.

And now I'm older, the kids have gone and tbh, I'm bloody tired. Everything seems worse when you're tired. Stuff I stashed away, that I couldn't talk about, sometimes rears right up like an angry, unbroken wild horse. I find myself at 55 years old raging with a fury that I can hardly express. The guilt and shame that I feel for daring to be angry at all are sometimes so overwhelming that I don't know what to do with myself. Except to cry in the shower where no one hears and tell myself over and over: be grateful for what you have and remember how lucky you are. Because my girl, you're a child of the sixties.

debbienicholsonwood.wordpress.com

Sitting in a Thick Cloud by Emma Burleigh



I was reminded of something helpful a meditation teacher told me. When you're sitting in a thick black cloud of despair and self-loathing, he asked, is there a tiny hole of light in that cloud that you could breathe into? And by giving it attention, might it gradually expand?

Leisure, in the 21st Century by Spencer Brown

When life gets you down, burdened with worry,
And passes you by, cos you're in such a hurry,
Read 'Leisure' by W.H. Davies –
'What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?'

A hundred years since those words were spoken,
It's time its message was re-awoken.

We've never been so rich,
Yet we've never been so poor.
iPads, iPhones, iThis, iThat,
More, more, more!

If you had a pound,
For every time you checked your phone,
We've never had more 'friends',
Yet never been more alone.

Happiness and success,
How do you measure?
Nothing quite works,
Like life's simple pleasures.

Feeding ducks in the park,
A run in the morning sun,
Fresh bread from the market,
Bacon buttie in a bun.

The smell of an old book,
A barbecue in full flame,
Skylark song in summer,
A feisty Christmas board game.

Flicking on your favourite film,
Opening curtains on a frosty dawn,
Lazing with the Sunday papers,
A freshly-cut lawn.

It's the little things in life,
That leave the biggest mark,
That help us find the light,
When we feel it getting dark.

And though we have so little to spare,
We must make time to stand and stare.

Contact by Henry Noyes

I'm so used to the lampshade
I don't always notice the light
anymore, you know – you're

BRILLIANT, but even that
word is dull from the flicker
of your opinion, a light that's
never decided whether it's on
or in need
of fixing

(our eyes never contact,

I couldn't hold you when you slept (not that
the fuse was gone (or the switches were live
(but I couldn't tell if I was
holding the right wire)))

are we even ever entangled?

can we call the electrician
will you be acting up enough when he comes
will you be playing it down
will you be unhappy enough
to actually hit one of your switches

A Stormy Day Inside My Mind by Emma Burleigh



We're in Different Worlds by Paula de Sousa



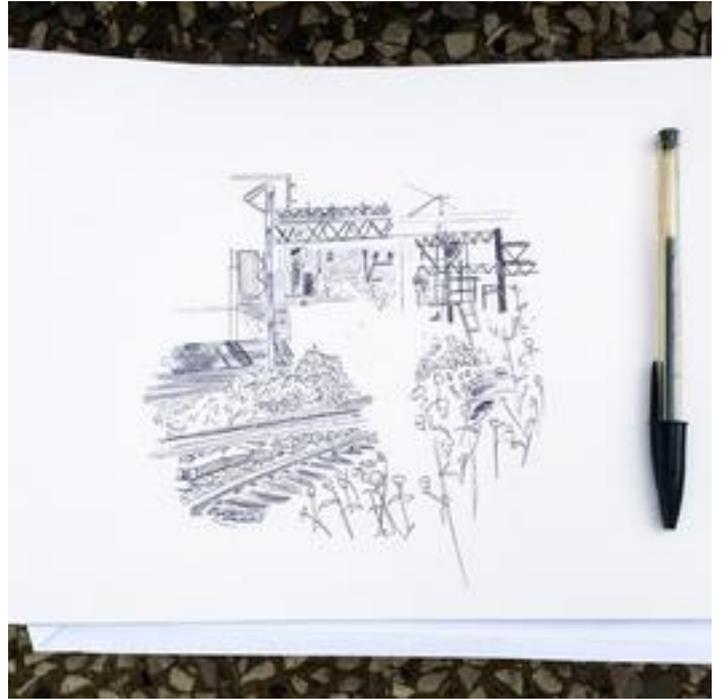
Out of the Blue by Vanessa Haley

I got angry again on Saturday
Out of the blue in self defence
After, I knew I had, though didn't quite remember
It's my shame
They blame it on the wine
Say I drink too much
Though these days I barely do
I got annoyed again then
Blame laid at the wrong feet
Because no matter how many times I tell them
I HAVE PTSD
They simply cannot see
How much it's changed me.
I hide it way too well
Don't talk in depth about this living hell
The rage, frustration and intrusive thoughts
Chewing me up inside
I cannot sleep, I cannot stop, there is no rest
I'm a natural born pacifist
Now filled with boiling rage

Ardwick Station by Oliver East

A couple of years ago, whilst exploring Ardwick train station, I found a ball point pen wedged into either side of the steps that lead onto the platform. I asked a few train spotters at Piccadilly if this was a "thing" trains spotters did, and it isn't, but these pens had clearly been placed there on purpose and had been there some time. I drew the views from both ends of the station without waiting for the pens to begin working properly; due to them being exposed to the elements they took a while for the ink to flow.

Like a lot of train stations, Ardwick has a history of suicide, and there is a plaque at the west end of the platform to one such victim.



olivereast.art

Young Man at a Window by Patti Mckenna-Jones

Rain splashes my face
Wet clothes chafe
Thorned- thoughts scrape
I can't escape

Remembered mountains
My family
Old curtains
My hunger

I spy through a window
On a family framed and clear
No -one knows
How to say my name here.

pattimckenna-jones.wordpress.com

Dwell Time by Mel Kirkham & Yasmin Baddley

In response to 'Dwell Time' we travelled the whole of the Penistone Line. During this journey we took time to reflect, think and be in the moment. There was a clear resonance with the reflective surfaces that divided us from inside and out. This was then worked with as a metaphor for thinking and being, how we are both connected to the life around us, yet disconnected at the same time.

www.t-heart.works

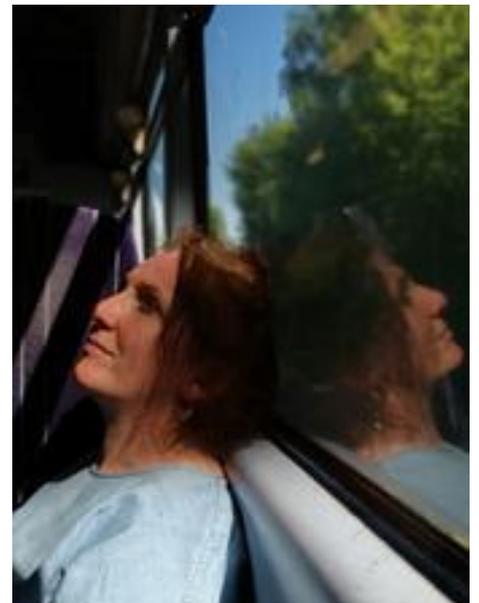
Reflections by Rebecca Saunders

Sometimes my memories will leak from my eyes
The reasons
The struggles
It's no great surprise
That life leaves it's mark
It's locked doors
Mislaid keys
Dusty top shelf memories
No other will see
Don't be fooled by my smile
These sad trails can be traced
In the depths of my eyes
And the tears on my face

Poetry on the Platform: Rail Reversal by Brian Horton

"Why walk backwards with your trolley?"
I asked refreshments man on the train.
"It's safer" he said in lofty tones
As to a man without a brain.

I tried it when I disembarked
At final destination
-Couldn't get through the barriers,
Got stuck on the station!



The Valkyries by Amber Agha

They're circling overhead
with bayonets of the past
sensing the fear the blood
They're circling around me
wishing me to fail
because then
then I shall fall into their arms again
Saviours they look to be
Of me
I fall into razor arms ready to cut me till I bleed
Ready to drain me till I die
Because death seems the better place to be

They're circling around me
sharpening their teeth
on memories of the past
poking and provoking me
why this dance
why this laughter
why me

They sense my fragility
they smell the blood
and come in for the kill
I fight back
get out my old ancient claws
sharpen those talons
I said I would never use again
but the nails are old
and they snap to the touch
hoping that the leeching will purge me of the shadows
that contaminate my soul
hoping that the leaching will cleanse me of the demons
that dance in my cells
hoping that the leaching will bring me home
and close the gateways to hell

They're dancing on my grave
that's yet to be dug
they're dancing on my soul
that's yet to even fly
they take my dreams and annihilate them
desecrate them
till they lie
in the mud
and dirt
once again those wings are clipped and I cannot fly
I do this to myself
fall for the sweet musk of the devil time and again
let him clasp me by the throat take me across
landscapes I have not wanted to know
and do with me as he will

least it's love I say
least it's touch

The angels fly overhead
watching weeping loving
I cannot see them
my eyes are shuttered out to the light even that which
is inside me is dead
my ears are closed I cannot hear them
just stories of the past some made up some not
play out and out in the mind
have I made them up to justify a pain that gnaws away
and has no real name
the pain of a generation that left a long time ago
do we make the world as it is or does it unmake us
do we create our own reality or do unseen forces
mould and bend our dreams from fantasy to nightmare
who is really holding the strings here
I thought it was me
I looked up looked above
and realised it was all a joke being played upon me
I will not die upon the altar of fear
I will not lose my dreams in seas of forgetfulness
we did have union once
we did come from love
and my natural home is in his arms
when he calls me home I will come
I will not wait eternity for his love
I will not wait eternity for his strength to guide me back
I must take the reins I must steer this ship
I must own my heart before it is diced again and fed to
the vultures up above

Stretching Into Bird by Kate Walters



www.katewalters.co.uk

Dark Matters by Dan Weatherer

10/9/18

Cast of Characters

Actor: Male/Female any age

Nurse: Male/Female – any age

Voice: needs to be of a similar age/sex to the Actor

Voice 2: needs to be of a similar age/sex to the Actor

ACT I

Scene 1

At Rise: Actor is spread and duct-taped to the floor of the stage, facing the audience. (Note: They can be restrained in a chair, on a bed or however you see fit, so long as they are unable to move, and the audience can see the actor's face.) The Actor is illuminated but the rest of the stage is dark.

ACTOR: I deserve this. All of this. (beat) I do.

VOICE: You do.

ACTOR: I do. (beat) I think I've felt this way for as long as I've been able to feel. I was a glum teen...

VOICE: Glum.

ACTOR: Inclined to shy away from the house parties, the drinking down the rec, everything social, really. I mean, I was there, at school, at college, at work, but not there at the same time. Does that make sense? My body was present, but me...nah, I was sat far behind the steering wheel. (beat) They laughed and said it was teenage blues, but when it continued into my twenties, my thirties, they laughed less. They acknowledged less, and I was left alone to wonder "does everyone feel the same way about life that I do?"

VOICE: Do they suffer like you? No, only you suffer.

ACTOR: I wonder, everybody has a different pain threshold, could it be that everybody has a different insanity threshold, and that mine is lower than most?

VOICE: Wishful thinking. (beat)

ACTOR: Wishful thinking on my part, probably. I think I'm just broken, inside my head, like the cogs skip now and then.

VOICE: You don't know.

ACTOR: I don't know.

VOICE 2: You'll never know.

ACTOR: I won't. (beat) I do know I'm tired from it all. I'm tired of feeling like the inside of my head is flooded. I'm tired of the crowded head, the racing ideas that make no sense to anything or anyone, but at their moment of inception, do so to me, only to be lost, trampled underfoot by another idea, and another, until it all becomes a noise and I can't hear myself amongst all of the voices demanding attention. (beat) Sometimes I believe I lost myself a long time ago.

Enter NURSE. The nurse takes a handful of tablets from a container and forces them into the actor's mouth.

Exit NURSE.

ACTOR: Numbed by years of medication Russian roulette.

VOICE: (whisper) Hello?

ACTOR: My senses dulled, my character tethered. I used to write. I used to laugh. I used to contribute. Now, I exist. I occupy a place, and that is all.

VOICE: (whisper) I'm still here.

VOICE 2: And me.

ACTOR: Now, I observe. I'm a passenger to my life. I watch the days, the weeks, the months pass by on what feels like a two-second delay. I see my children age, I don't watch them grow, because who they were then and who they are now is impossible for me to discern. They talk now, they talked then. They deserve a parent, not this pathetic shell.

VOICE: They deserve so much better than you.

VOICE 2: (whisper) You can't ignore us. You are worthless, and they all know it. Your kids, especially. Remember that.

ACTOR: The doubts, they never go away.

VOICE: (whisper) Never.

ACTOR: They can be quietened, but never silenced.

VOICE 2: (loud) And we return louder than ever.

ACTOR: And this is my life, now. I try to build myself back up to something resembling a functioning member of society. I try to do it for my children. I try to do it for myself.

VOICE: But you are weak.

ACTOR: But I am weak.

VOICE 2: And you know you will always struggle with life.

ACTOR: And I'll always struggle with life, with people, with being myself.

VOICE: Because you shouldn't be here. What do you have to offer anyone?

ACTOR: I don't want to be here. I'm exhausted, but I cannot sleep. I wake every night drained from my terrors.

VOICE 2: We are showing you the truth.

ACTOR: The tablets, they weaken me. The depression, it weakens me. I'm constantly see-sawing between the two, trying to find a moment of balance when I can feel the sun on my face and laugh with my children.

VOICE: Those moments are fleeting. They will become less.

ACTOR: I hold on for my children, I fight to be with them.

VOICE 2: But when they go...

ACTOR: I will silence you both for good.

www.fatherdarkness.com

Unknown Figures by Robert P. Ryan



Under the Sheets by Amelia Baron



18th July 2018
CLOSE THE DOOR

If eyelashes were to entangle and lids would remain closed,
Darkness would be enforced on us, our sights would be disposed.

We'd never see the sunsets, of magenta and lilac and gold
We'd never see the faces of our loved ones growing old.
We'd never know the oceans, waves crashing upon the sands,
We'd never witness the miracles of nature that grace this fragile land.
No chrysalis into butterfly, no changes of the season,
Or the dimples in the cheeks of those whose smiles not need no reason.
We'd never know the enticement of freshly fallen snow.
Never witness the power of art from the places we may go.
No brightly burning stars or phases of the moon,
The beauty in all the spectacles we see taken away too soon.

And what would be the torment if I stole your ability to hear?
The foreboding darkness and loss of connection evokes trepidation and fear.

We'd never hear the lull of birdsong, the lapping of the sea,
The sound of children playing or the crunching of Autumn's leaves.

We'd never hear the energy of music, the passion of Bowie and Queen.

Or the jukebox in the corner as we dance to Come on Eileen.
We'd never experience the words "I love you" whispered in our ears.
And we'd never know the sound of laughter that wipes away our tears.

So just imagine for a second
Image,
Pause.
For this is the pain that suffocates my brain, that forces me to close the door.
I no longer see or hear the wonders.

When depression ensnares me once more.

10th September 2018
DARKEST TIMES

The electricity's failed and the bulbs spark no more
The dark's all consuming like the rotting apple's core
And when candlelight flickers, the hope all but fades
The black dog's returned, his teeth razor blades.

And I've been here before, questioning life
Theories of existence show human's bitter strife
To conquer all power, to be mighty as god
Give meaning to others, be the light in the fog.
But I have neither answer nor question to ask
Exposed and vulnerable in the life that I bask.
And my body is weak but it knows it's to play
The support for the movements of my actions each day
To persuade me in leaving the security of bed
Where the gravity of reality can be locked in my head.
And the terrors at night are just terrors in the mind
But when I open my eyes I can't leave them behind.
But to trudge on through battle is like soldiers at war
But instead of grenades it's depression's valour
Exploding with deafening blasts of morose
Concealed in the wrappings of prescriptions and dose
But we've been here before, we've survived despite doubts

Like the promise of rainfall in summer's parched droughts.
So to focus on the kinships who's love has no bounds
Who's voices and laughter are the Eden of sounds
Who'll hold you in their presence and whisper the words
Dark times are broken by the chorus of birds.

The Changing of the Paragraph by Eddy Dreadnought

Begin here – on these points – stranded high above the sleepers.

The security of stasis. Except please don't bring me the chatty, the crying babies, the loud devices, the smelly, the drunk, the odd. Let me hide here forever in my own smell, silent, odd, invisible.

Not that you'd necessarily know this to look at me, I guess I look pretty enough normal if I was sneaked a second look reflected in the window at my shoulder, just another citizen closing down contact, being careful not to stare, being correct. Perhaps a bit down in the mouth.

And I'm thinking that to move from this point, you'd think you could go anywhere – but it has to be along the same lines. Its all sort of predestined. Right, along this page, then down. A small step to the next line – mind the gap.

Doze with your hair on the steamy window, your ears sticky from headphones, whining with tinnitus. Startled awake by a booming crackled apology about an incident on the line, or safety announcement – see it, say it, sorted. Change the paragraph, a controlled derailment like a bicycle chain.

Sorted, that'll be the day. Then my thoughts click into background music – give themselves a soundtrack – well, that'll be the day, when you say goodbye, that'll be the day – pause – when I die. At last the train pulls away in time to Buddy Holly. The successive carriage joltings taking up the slack. Their linking concertinas rattling arthritically. There you are, it feels like a bit of freedom conceded for you, although its already too late for your connection.

Freedom? Freedom when everything is engineered, designed, pre-fabricated, inherited, every thought pre-loved. Nothing comes from nothing, even the thrill of just thinking something is fresh and new soon passes and then what? An opposite train flashes past like thunder, rocking the compartment. Where did all that come from?

Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could, so somewhere in my youth or childhood I must have done something good. A tear comes at this sound of music. They never come in real life.

Just to stop all this I look out of the window and describe what I'm seeing to myself – a list like those American freight train cars that go on for miles – a station going by too quick to read the name – a hungover driver rushing up the platform – the little puffer billies all in a row – white painted stones – a pigeon loft – cars on a motorway – rooks in an industrial estate – an overgrown quarry – a cutting full of buddleias – new houses on a flood plain – a conveyor belt in a works – sewage sprinklers – a birch copse – moorhens on a reedy pond – piles of aggregate – drystone walling – a scrap yard – striding pylons – on and on until my mind is sort of refreshed, unmade. Not exactly 'Night Mail' but it helps.

After all I used to say to them its more difficult to stay the same than change, nothing ever stays the same, nothing ever could, just wait and it will change, hang on in there, think of all the collateral damage, the unintended consequences, something better will come along.

So I'd better start believing it for myself now. Wait for the changing of the paragraph.

Moth Man by Brian Kielt

This drawing is from a found image, but it spoke to me directly due to my anxiety. One of my coping mechanisms for my anxiety is chewing and when no gum is available, I found myself chewing my clothes.



www.briankielt.com

Journey to Recovery Through Art by Andy Hollinghurst

Lonely 2007

It can be a lonely place and I had the support of my family. When you have a deep depression, it isolates you and makes you insular, turned in on yourself and this can be a struggle for your loved ones. It's a feeling in the pit of your stomach an unease, a need for 'Deep Rest', yet you can't sleep or find solace. This sadness puts pressure on all around you, like a storm brewing over the sea.



Reconciliation

Janice and I were asked to make a film about depression for M.H.F.A. and during the filming I listened and heard for the first time the consequences of my illness on her, I felt sad and humbled that she had stuck by me, combined with a guilt that I held her back, yet we both agree we have emerged stronger.



So, it is when you begin to acknowledge that something needs to be done that you eventually find the way to start climbing out of this sadness, many, most do, so don't despair, its knowledge that is the key and the

right kind of help and support. I, having tried SSRI, medication somewhat reluctantly and self-help finally went to 'Mind' and received some counselling of the highest quality.

As I began to crawl through the cause's things began to make sense to me. For me, unresolved issues in childhood over my father's death when I was 14 and the 30 years following that, without any understanding of how this could affect my ability to be resilient and rational.

I was left feeling angry at my ignorance of 'Mental Health,' but also with a passion to support others. There was beginning to be light appearing over the horizon.

www.andyhollinghurst.com

The Weight of Dust by Donna Coleman

The weight of dust is heavier than you think.
It breathes through rooms like a silent ghost.
It congregates on objects, like families settling on new land.

It spontaneously causes coughing
and sneezing fits and doesn't apologise.
This dim grey blanket waits and waits to be removed,
growing, spreading.
How many days?
How many weeks?

I can blow on it to create a tiny hurricane,
but my arms are two week to lift it.
It is resisting me, so I sit down to rest.
Looking around I try to remember how this place was
before.
Was it always this grey and dark?
Where the curtains open so the sun could beam in,
worming my face and soul?
Could I walk here and there without having to create a
safe path first?
Was I always this weary?
I must try again.
Tomorrow.
Maybe I'll be stronger tomorrow.
Maybe I won't.
But the dust, it is just too heavy.

My word. What a Journey. by Sue Bevan

When I was fifteen, many years ago, I fell pregnant in a tight community in the Welsh Valleys. It wasn't the done thing. My mother must have been devastated, though we never spoke of it. Instead she marched me off to the doctors' to confirm her suspicions. 'Yes, Mrs Jenkins. She's definitely pregnant. About five months, I reckon. Have you thought about what you'll do about it?' I wasn't ever part of the conversation. And then she sent me hundreds of miles from home to see out my pregnancy in secret. As I say, it wasn't the done thing back then. When I gave birth alone in a bare hospital room, pretty much abandoned by the nursing staff, my daughter's adoption had already been arranged. Without my say. Without my agreement. I wasn't asked, of course. I was fifteen and did what I was told. Growing up in a family in which my mother frequently 'sent my father to Coventry', who was I to argue. Who was I to speak out. We all process out trauma in our own individual way, of course. But for me it's been through my writing, my solo show on the subject having travelled the world now – South Africa to San Francisco, Sweden and Prague to New York – and with many a tear shed on the way. Not just by me, I might add.

But today I find myself discussing with a venue manager the possibility of bringing the show to his theatre space. I share my story with him. He asks about my daughter. Did we ever meet. Did I return to school? How did I cope. I answer everything as best I can. Just as I do after my show each night, when audiences want the real story fleshed out. He listens. He agrees to the show being booked. He offers to buy me a tea. Moments later a man approaches, tentative. He's overheard some of the conversation but didn't get it all. He asks me what the show is about. I begin to explain. 'When I was fifteen, I had a child who was taken for adoption...' And I continue. But he seems agitated. I ask if he's okay. 'I was taken from my mother and adopted,' he tells me, his eyes full. 'There were three of us, and we were all taken away when I was about six months. They separated us, so I never knew about the others when I was growing up. Then when I was thirty, I suddenly discovered I had two sisters. It was terrible. I never knew.' He went on to tell me of his mother's emotional and physical abuse from the man he assumes to be his father. And then he tells me of his own emotional, psychological and sexual abuse at the

hands of his adopters. It's a lot to take in. I don't let him know how it makes me feel, and at least I have the comfort of knowing my daughter was raised by good, loving parents. He tells me his mother had died back when he was in his teens. He's still looking for his father. Or rather, he'd like to. He doesn't know where to start.

'Have you spoken with anyone about all this?' I ask. 'Yes,' he says. 'You.'

'I mean, somebody professional. Some support. There are people out there who can help you. There is help.' Even as I say this, I reflect on the fact that I was in therapy for years, and still I'm only part recovered. Maybe that's how it is. Always. For some.

'Have you?' I ask again.

'Where do I find somebody?'

I look into his eyes.

'If I help find somebody...do you think you'd like to talk to them?'

I'm aware I don't want to push. This is his path. His choice. His life.

'That's really kind of you. Will you really do that? For me?'

'Of course I will.'

'Please. Yes. Yes, please.'

I weep afterwards. After I've left him. While I sit, cold, in the car, shivering. After he's brought over a mince pie for me to have with the tea I've ordered. After we've shaken hands, and I've held his in both of mine for a moment, and then for another.

I've never been keen on mince pies. I don't normally eat them. I don't really like them. But I ate this one, as he sat there taking bite after bite from his, chewing it over and over, eyes fixed on the plate, one knee shaking with nerves. And I have to say, that bundle of sweet fruit wrapped in short pastry and sprinkled in fine sugar...that pie tasted sweeter than any I've ever had. That night I wrote him a poem he'll probably never see. But I wrote it anyway.

FOR HIM

I watch as you catch a falling star and put it in your pocket.

You'll keep it, you say, for every day.

Rain or shine.

Weightless, it settles between the seams, carries you,
Warming your thin skin, melting the ice.

And you lighten.

Dreaming by Saima Kaur

I have a gorgeous daughter with severe autism. I often get told how calm and cheerful I seem considering the difficulties we face as a family. I've only just realised that one of my coping strategies is to daydream. To dream of worlds that are full of magical creatures and the drama of nature; places where we play and dream and dance. These drawings are doodle of my daydreams. The angles, proportions and narratives are all happily higgledy-piggledy, daft and dreamy; adding just the right amount of magic to what could be a difficult life. So, these doodles are for all of us who find 'real life' a little difficult. This is for you my love, my beautiful love.



Trying So Hard Series by Bobbi Rae



Kidding Around on a Train by Gill Melling

I wish that I was small enough
to trample on the seats,
and sit under the table
engulfed in eating sweets.

I'd fall asleep upon the floor
and quickly roll my apple core
into the aisle and wait to see
it crushed by people's feet.

I'd have a story read to me
by someone soft and warm.
Quiet but don't be fooled,
it's just the calm before the storm.

I'd shout and laugh and mess about
and be a total pain,
and just when there's a moments peace
I'd do it all again.

Untitled by Greg Przybyszewski

I fell in love with myself
I had no other choice
I was offering the best deal

I had almost the same interests as I
we spoke about the same subjects

we laughed at the same jokes
cried watching the same movies

we've been friends for years
closer than brothers
sharing bed and bathroom
our love flowered late

not until I reached middle age
did I fall in love with myself

I now carry my own photo in my wallet
I cannot bear to be parted
from myself for too long

This Is Me by Lucy Simm

9 years... I've waited 9 years. Don't make me wait any longer. As I lie there under the bright lights of theatre, no jazz hands in sight, numb from the waist down, powerless to hold the baby I've wanted, hoped, wished for. My voice muffled by the chatter of the sea of blue people. I want to hold MY BABY. I've waited 9 years... don't let me wait any longer.

Wanting, longing, hoping, praying, wishing, heartache, grieving... and finally JOY. This thing I thought would never happen has finally happened. Travelling on a fertility journey can be a lonely road. I

internalised the grief of not being able to conceive naturally as it was too painful to share my disappointment with the world. I had to be joyful for everyone else... when I felt joyless.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome hit me like a freight train and I was floored. I had to build myself back up from ground zero. Creating a new me from a blank canvas. Finding an alternative route to fight my way through the clouds. Peeling away the layers of the onion to get to the real me. It wasn't an easy road, but my inner warrior wasn't going to give up without a fight. A painful journey but I don't feel hard done to. I feel empowered. I feel I've found my strengths and certainly my weaknesses. I learnt to battle through adversity. I became a better version of me.

Pregnancy was the dream I clung to and when it happened, I embraced it with every ounce of my being. I was now one of the lucky ones. That's where my creativity resurfaced from the depths and exploded like a firework. My sacral chakra and creative brain went into overdrive and all I wanted to do was create... "things". Despite adversity I had created a living and breathing human being... so what next?! I felt anything was possible.

Motherhood is an amazing gift to me. I find it incredibly hard like everyone else, but I also know how blessed I am to have my little boy. He has brought a rainbow of colour into our lives. He is my greatest teacher. He inspires me to be the best version of me I can be and to



continue my path of self-development to be the best Mum I can be.

Serendipity landed at my door when the opportunity arose to share a studio. Having the support of three incredible creative mothers gave me the confidence in both my creative and mothering abilities. Two years ago, I heard about an amazing initiative called Mothers Who Make, supporting creative mothers to do both jobs which are undervalued in society. A trip to Mothers Who Make in Manchester and I just knew I needed to bring this to my hometown of Halifax. Women supporting women, mothers supporting mothers, artists supporting artists... it's what I'm passionate about. My creativity has flourished from my own support network, so I knew other mothers needed that support too.

The next project for me was to build my own business. Have the confidence to put myself out there in the big wide world of the web. To come out and say #ThisIsMe. To be proud of who I am and how far I've come. As an artist and creative person this is such a hard thing to do. Laying yourself bare. Opening yourself up to vulnerability and criticism. As an artist my inner critic is well voiced, but my outer voice is often squashed, hampered, shut down, ridiculed, unheard. Like thousands of women who have gone before me I struggle to be me. But being me is who I'm meant to be. I've worked hard to find the authentic me and my voice. THIS is who I'm meant to be... THIS IS ME. luminosityandsunshine.co.uk

Kaleidoscope by Sue Gardiner

I was tired of living,
Frightened of a future
Which felt like this.
Each day unforgiving,
A monochrome world,
Full of shadows.
But I had to go on believing
That the pain would stop,
And colour return.
Surely, I was deserving
Of some hope and joy.
And happiness.
And now I see a kaleidoscope
Of colours so bright.
A rainbow across my heart.
The future is full of hope,
Simple pleasure in all I do.
I see everything through a microscope,
Enlarged and glorious, floating on a crystal sea.
So heartfelt thanks to my family
For helping me to cope,
Come with me on my journey
To the rainbows end.



Anxiety, an Unquiet Mind by Sue Gardiner

Insomnia by Sue Gardiner

I long to sleep like a baby,
Pure, untroubled, deep.
Instead I lie here restless,
Counting sheep
Sleep is a hidden treasure
Or so it seems.
All I can manage is
Vivid dreams.
I toss and turn and fidget,
Count the hours till day break.
All I can do is lie here,
Wide awake.

suzieartist.wixsite.com/collage

Transformation by Ben Barton

Today this carriage is a chrysalis
For twenty minutes I'll restock and move on
from my first instar.

Winter-hardy, like shutters closing inward
My mind calms.

The passing scene, many into one
Green, a gentle stream
With each, I begin to molt
Taking breaths from inside this shell.

By the time the train pulls in
I'll have transformed: a new me
To face the outside
Brighter, still unshaven
though colour in my cheeks.

First stop, the station platform
Next, the world.

www.benbarton.co.uk

Need to talk to someone?

If you need to talk to someone about any mental health issues you or someone you care for is experiencing, there is a directory of mental health support services on the inside back cover, page 55.

Untitled by Laura Harris

Your mind is a powerful tool, which we take for granted. You don't know just how important it is until you lose it.

At 16 I was a podium dancer in Cyprus. Carefree and taking life by the horns, living each day like it was my last. Fast forward a year and I was sectioned, locked up in a psychiatric ward for adults, as there was no space in the children's ward. I felt like a caged bird who had lost her song. The week before I was taken to hospital, I hadn't slept for 4 days and thought the house was under surveillance by the Mafia. I was delusional and holding my Bible up to my pet cats. She didn't want to, but my Mum had to relent and call the mental health team who came to assess me and took me to hospital.

The first night I was there I was petrified and praying constantly when one of the support workers said to me "some people worship snakes," and just to make me even more terrified she said, "Do you know Elvis died on the toilet?" From then on, I was frightened every time I went to the toilet.

My family were heartbroken and came to visit every day.

I hated it there to say the least and one day I seized my chance of getting out of that hell hole. I asked if I could go out for some fresh air. The staff allowed me to with a couple of workers. As soon as I got downstairs, I sprinted down the long driveway with the staff in hot pursuit. They didn't stand a chance as I was so fit, and they were middle aged and gasping. I got to the end of the driveway and ran into a petrol station. I jumped on to the back of a motorbike and badly burnt my leg. The owner was furious and told me to get off, I jumped off and asked a young lad in a nearby car to give me a lift. He agreed and took me home. He must have been very anxious when I told him I had escaped from the local mental hospital. When I got home the ambulance arrived within minutes to take me straight back to the ward.

This is just one of many times I have been admitted. I was later diagnosed with bipolar. I have learnt that we take our mental health for granted and losing my mind is one of the saddest and hardest things I have had to deal with!

Ways to take care of your mental health:

- Get enough sleep.
- Don't worry about what people think of you.
- Have a couple of hobbies you enjoy, reading, writing, swimming. The list is endless.
- Stay away from drugs and excessive alcohol consumption.
- Eat well. Lots of fruit, veg and nuts. If you can't eat well take vitamins.
- Get regular exercise it really helps your mental health.
- Get outside in nature, it clears your mind.

Caregiver by Cynthia Morrison

Dearest Chad,

The void of your presence is hauntingly oppressive. I am learning new skills to pass the hours of my days. The paintings I have created certainly are not of museum quality, but they do their part to distract my trials. At our first meeting I considered of you as not being just another patient, but a divine creation and missing fragment that ensured my absolute jubilation.

Strolling along the banks of the River, delivers such sweet memory. I close my eyes and feel the coolness of the river water as it fell upon the base of my neck when you drenched the cherries in the waters before you fed them to my lips.

Fruits of season enveloped by towering fingers,
The next drop gathering to descend lingers,
Shadowing leaves flutter reaching to greet autumn,
Remnants of cherry seed navigate to River's bottom.
A River of granite that meets the mighty sea,
Flowing in memory of enchantment spent with Thee,
No better days than these are in my life,
None better, only the day that I become your wife.

For what reason you have departed from my existence is not mine to question. Perhaps the place that you now stand is free from social demand. If so, then when I rejoin you, I shall take one knee. Preserve your love for me as you await my arrival into eternity.

From now until forever,

Your adoring caregiver

The Benefits of Being a Sieve by Ben NCM

For some, a pause in their journey can offer a rare moment of quiet contemplation, a chance to plan an alternative route toward their destination or an opportunity to get off the ride altogether.

Other things can provide benefit by not being stopped. Like a sieve which is having water poured into it from above, I let things pass through me. Whatever it is. I don't hold onto anything because I can't. I'm a sieve. It's not something I'm capable of. It's not my purpose.

That's not to say that everything is in one ear and out the other. There'll always be some sort of residue or trace left behind, however temporary, along the surface of the sieve where the water hit it, and that is where I came into contact with an experience head on, looking straight at it as it touched me before carrying on its way through.

I try not to hold onto any powerful experience or emotion running through me, whether it be beautiful, terrifying, hopeful, sad etc. Of course, I try to feel it fully in the moment, and savour it in real-time, not file it away to be unpacked and perused over another day. I try to be 100% present. Right here. Right now.

Looking long-term, I'd rather focus on what kind of residual mosaic will be left upon my soul after being touched by so many different hues of experience and having some sort of overall shape or form in mind today as I go forward. A life-time piece of internal art which many people hope to only complete when they know they are experiencing their final hours, comfortable and wanting for nothing, surrounded by all the people that love them.

Seeing myself as a sieve I think was a strategy I had to adopt because I feel things too much. I needed a way to carry on feeling the essence of things but not have to block out those things that were too painful or too beautiful for me to contain.

Holding onto things, even amazing things, trying to preserve them inside me forever always becomes too much, and something eventually gives way because I'm not allowing whatever it is, to carry on its way. And so the concentration inside increases as I harbour the experience/emotion against its will, and at some point it will become toxic to me.

Listening, Waiting by Julie Shackleton

I didn't know I had the gift of listening. I didn't know I had the gift of waiting. These were revealed to me at a later stage of my life. But the listening is such a part of me that when I acknowledge its existence it slinks away and hides again. Because I've always done it. And it adds a layer of tension to me that manifests itself in anxiety and all the friends of anxiety.

I hear footsteps outside and realise I'm listening. Who is that are they coming to my house is it the post man. A split second of listening.....and waiting.

The quiet rattle of the clothes dryer as my husband tries to take a t-shirt off the radiator in another room. I shout out "they're not dry yet", "what aren't?" he replies. "Those t-shirts on that radiator". How did I know what he was doing? Because I was listening, and I didn't even know I did it. But it had revealed itself to me and for that brief moment my life made a kind of sense. There was a kind of calm and understanding of myself and my world, that was then swept away and hidden again as it was absorbed back into me.

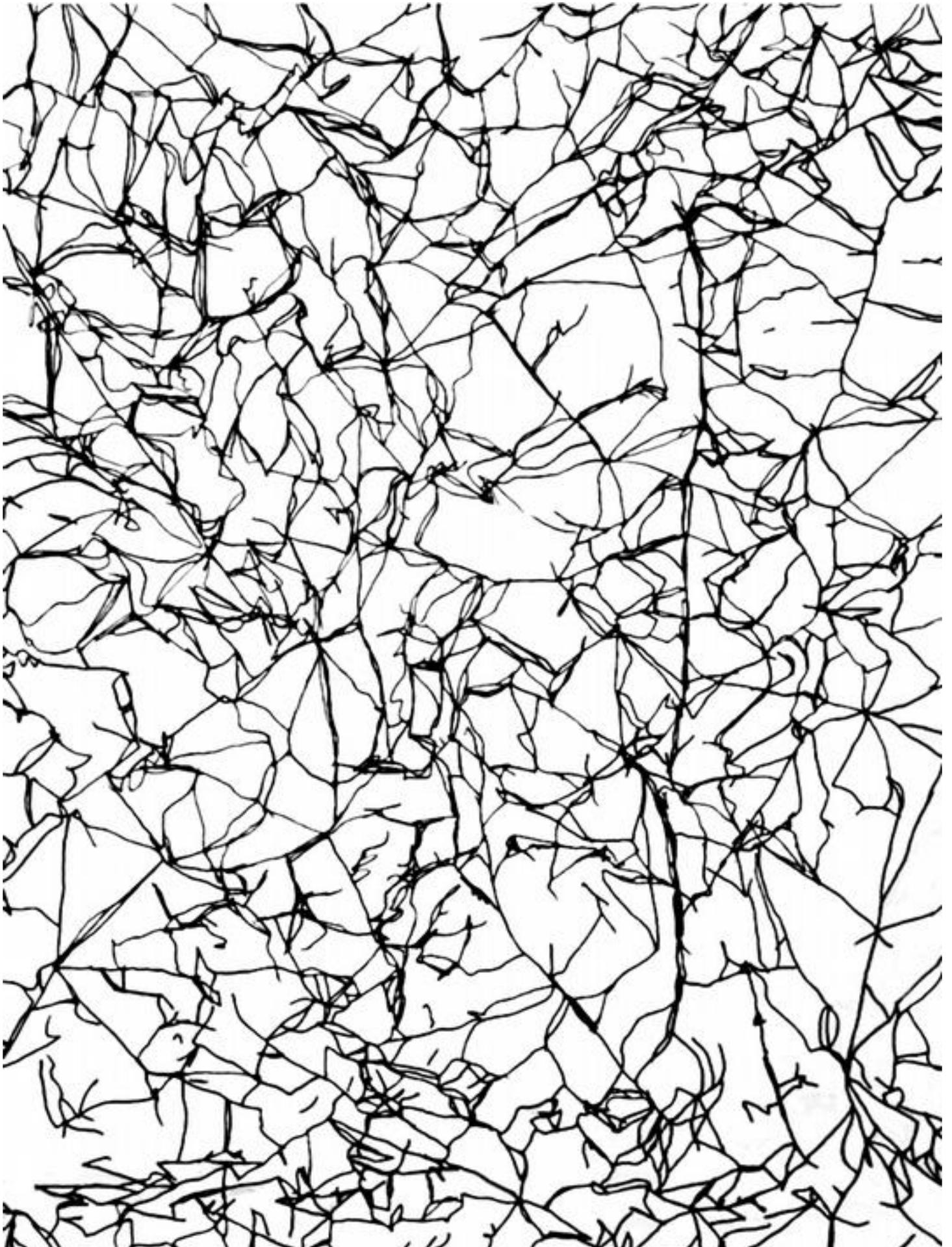
I hate the listening. I want it to go away. But it never will. It will live with me forever. It was forged in me as a child who had no control over her world. Just as I had no control over the curly hair I inherited or my need to make art.

The listening and the waiting were outside my control but in the control of parents whose behaviour frightened me and whose behaviour I had no hope of understanding. And it sounds worse than it was. I was not abused sexually or physically, apart from the hands of a builder slapping me on the back of my thigh as I ran upstairs. I had a good life of provision and foreign holidays. We were well off and had standing in our community. But that listening, and waiting have forged for me a life of waiting, for the thunderous stomp of the builder up the stairs to wait for that thigh slap. That has led to a life of waiting for circumstances beyond my control to manifest into something more than they are.

The listening and the waiting have created in me a life of anxiety, depression, self-medication by alcohol and a belief in my own invisibility that means I cannot see the greatness of my actions or the greatness of my skills. I am 58 years old.

Crumpled Paper by Alice Bradshaw

www.alicebradshaw.co.uk



In the Mix by Amy Rowe

When you sign the dotted line and begin employment it is understandable to believe that your former school days of playground games are over. The workplace canteen may seem to serve school dinners but this time it is entirely your choice to buy into them. Those scuffed shoes and forgotten jumpers are now your responsibility and teacher's lectures have been replaced by an air of expectation emitting from your boss. No playground games though. Right?

It's Monday morning. Staff meeting. Bright eyed and caffeine fuelled, the team assemble enthusiastic about the fresh week ahead. Everything is under control, things are looking good. Colleague A starts 'work-talk'. Colleague B responds first, eager to be involved. Colleague A feels threatened; they are wary about Colleague B's ideas and haven't quite forgiven them for eating the last piece of office cake last week. Discussion turns to debate, and things get heated. Both have good ideas, but one needs to be selected. They need an outsider's opinion. They look at you.

Piggy in the middle. Playground days are back.

I've always struggled with being a people pleaser and just reading the scenario above fills me with dread. I remember once being asked my opinion on colour choices for an event flyer after two colleagues I worked closely with had alternative opinions. I can't recall either of the choices as my mind flooded with anxiety at the thought of upsetting one by dismissing their suggestion. I loved my job and knew from experience which would be the most appropriate option but the responsibility of the outcome of the dispute made me want to run for the hills. Suddenly my job lost its appeal, not because of the work but because of the atmosphere created by differences in character.

Luckily this dispute was settled easily, but similar situations are a daily occurrence and can have a huge influence on your feelings about your job. More often than not, workplaces are a community of diverse individuals meaning character clashes are inevitable. Even if you have no direct involvement, atmospheres can quickly become suffocating and fill you with unease. Accepting this fact and learning how to manage yourself when friction occurs is essential to maintain your job-satisfaction and wellbeing. Luckily, there are numerous resources out there to guide your responses to these difficult situations. As a starter, I've compiled a collection of simple pointers that I hope will be as beneficial to you as they have to me.

- **Acceptance:** Within any team or community the key to success is drawing on the range of skills each member has. to contribute. If everybody was the same, then there would be no variation in skills and abilities. Differences will inevitably throw up some tension but accepting that people are not going to agree on everything all of the time will enable you to realise that sometimes this can be the best way to gain a broader perspective when tackling a problem and beneficial ideas may surface that may not have been considered before.

- **Awareness:** Be constructive if you do share something that may have an impact on others. Even small details such as your tone of voice can have a huge bearing over the way your communication is received. Intentions don't always get interpreted the way they are meant to so consider individuals and think how you would feel in their shoes.

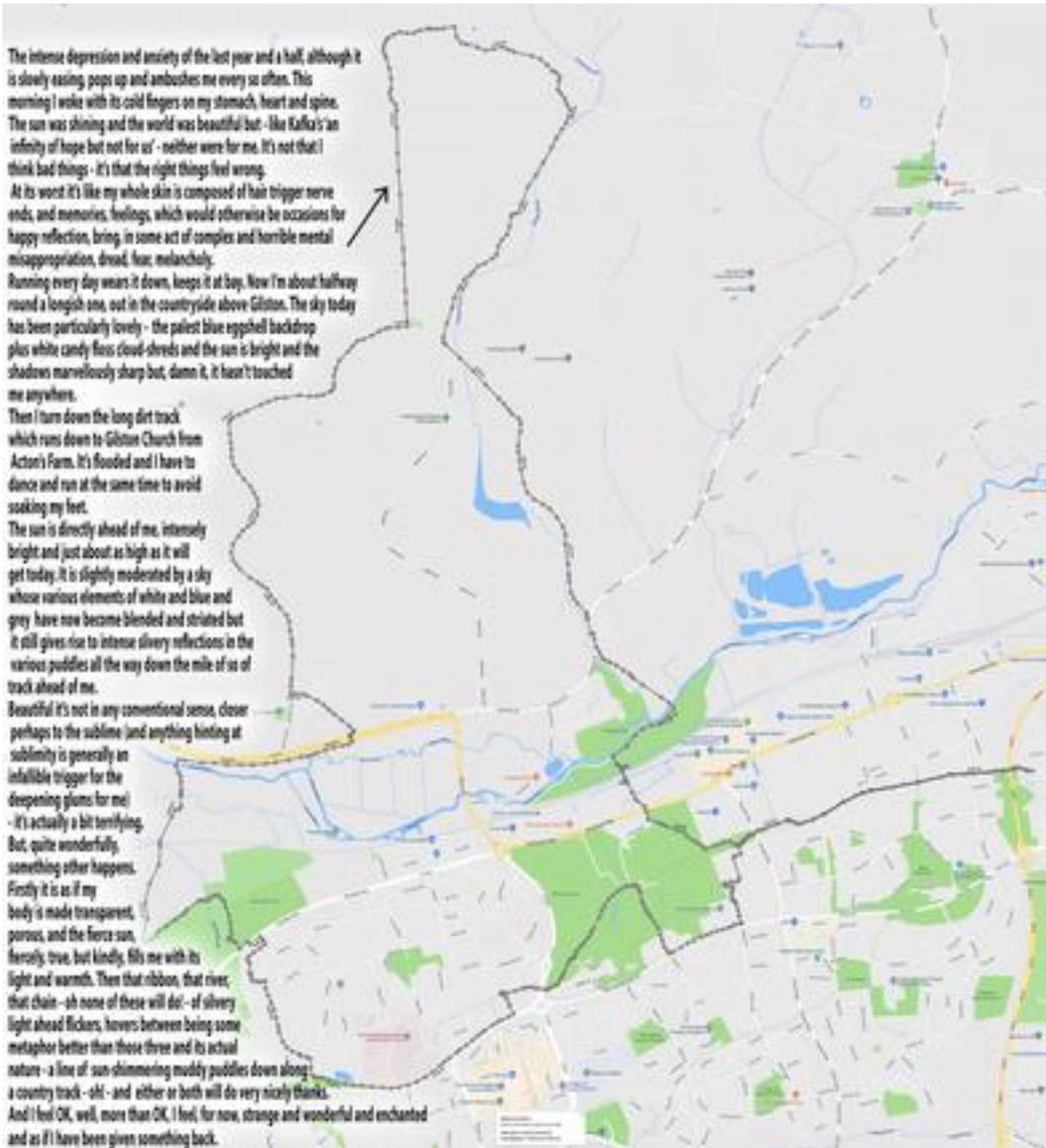
- **Accountability:** Never agree with someone because you feel obliged or are afraid of upsetting them. If you don't feel comfortable ensure that you consider why this is and what the correct thing to do in the situation would be. You are responsible for your actions, therefore when making decisions, ensure that you are accountable for them and have gained all the information needed to make an appropriately informed choice.

- **Distance:** In the heat of the moment it can be easy to pass a comment we might later regret. If possible, avoid getting involved in other people's disagreements. Even when it is a close friend involved, they need to fight their own battles and learn how to manage uncomfortable situations. One more thing...don't play messenger. They have a habit of getting shot.

- **Focus:** As difficult as it may be, remain focused on carrying out your role as best you can. If disputes amongst others are impacting your ability to do so then seek advice from your manager or other senior figure. They may not be aware of the disagreements taking place so informing them will allow any situation to reach a resolution much more quickly.

Most importantly, keep reminding yourself that working alongside others is a huge privilege. Not only do you gain an understanding of the wider impact of your job role within the organisation but also a sense of community in which support and skills can be shared. The diversity in knowledge and backgrounds can be hugely beneficial to the overall success of an organisation. Inevitably, differences or miscommunication will result in some friction at times. The sense of unease and anxiety, even when not directly involved, affects everyone in different ways. The key is to manage your own emotional well-being in response to these scenarios to ensure that the quality of your work is not compromised.

Today's Run by Michael Szpakowski



countryside above Gilston. The sky today has been particularly lovely - the palest blue eggshell backdrop plus white candy floss cloud-shreds and the sun is bright and the shadows marvellously sharp but, damn it, it hasn't touched me anywhere.

Then I turn down the long dirt track which runs down to Gilston Church from Acton's Farm. It's flooded, and I have to dance and run at the same time to avoid soaking my feet. The sun is directly ahead of me, intensely bright and just about as high as it will get today. It is slightly moderated by a sky whose various elements of white and blue and grey have now become blended and striated, but it still gives rise to intense silvery reflections in the various puddles all the way down the mile or so of track ahead of me.

The intense depression and anxiety of the last year and a half, although it is slowly easing, pops up and ambushes me every so often. This morning I woke with its cold fingers on my stomach, heart and spine.

The sun was shining, and the world was beautiful but - like Kafka's 'an infinity of hope but not for us' - neither were for me. It's not that I think bad things - it's that the right things feel wrong.

At its worst it's like my whole skin is composed of hair trigger nerve ends, and memories, feelings, which would otherwise be occasions for happy reflection, bring, in some act of complex and horrible mental misappropriation, dread, fear, melancholy.

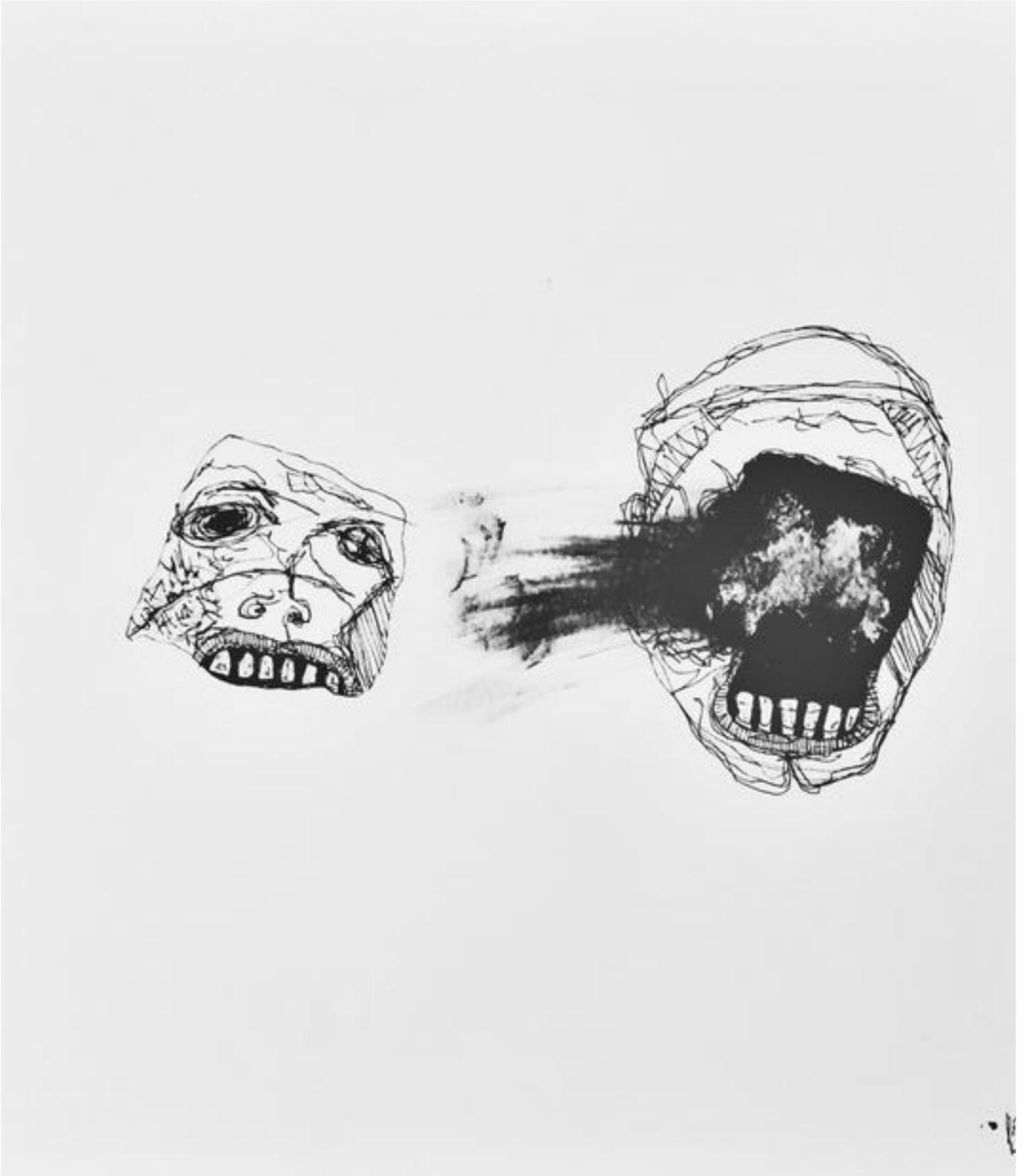
Running every day wears it down, keeps it at bay. Now I'm about halfway round a longish one, out in the

Beautiful it's not in any conventional sense, closer perhaps to the sublime (and anything hinting at sublimity is generally an infallible trigger for the deepening glums for me) - it's actually a bit terrifying.

But, quite wonderfully, something other happens. Firstly, it is as if my body is made transparent, porous, and the fierce sun, fiercely, true, but kindly, fills me with its light and warmth. Then that ribbon, that river, that chain - oh none of these will do! - of silvery light ahead flickers, hovers between being some metaphor better than those three and its actual nature - a line of sun-shimmering muddy puddles down along a country track - oh! - and either or both will do very nicely thanks.

And I feel OK, well, more than OK, I feel, for now, strange and wonderful and enchanted and as if I have been given something back.

North Face by Christopher Marsh



www.christophermarshart.com

Shine On You Crazy Diamond by Nicolette Loizou

"When I die I'm going to give my body to science," said the girl with the dark patches under her eyes

"What if they don't want it," I said and she stared at me, a tongue lolling in her wide mouth.

I slammed down the pudding and plastic spoon. She's mad and I'm not. I slam myself down on the rock-like bed. The nurse calls me to take my blood pressure yet again but disappears as I make it back out onto the boiling hot ward. Underneath my clothes I am sticky.

The girl with dark patched flops into one of the painfully uncomfortable chairs of the psychiatric ward. I am stuck with her. If I leave she might start crying. Dry less tears as she mourns a life stuck in the Mental Hospital for Beautiful Girls. Who calls it the Mental Hospital for Beautiful Girls? I do. None of us may be supermodels but we are all beautiful secretly behind the ligature scars. I read the booklet that they give new people to the ward. There is a whole page called Not Allowed. Not Allowed includes (takes deep breath) lighters, knives, razor blades, nail varnish remover, hairspray (who takes hairspray with them into a hospital?), plastic bags (everyone is hairy - Veet just doesn't cut it for whole legs and guns. Of course! Guns. When I was thinking of letting go, the quaint term for killing myself that I say to my parents when I don't want to hurt them I was just thinking where's my gun. Everyone's got one. Haven't they? And then I see her. First thought, I think she's acting. Tiny little body. Regulatory beautiful face. Bobbed blond hair that I later find out that belongs to the year she was first sectioned (2007). Like me she's hairy. She steps around on the balls of her feet like a cat. The nurses tell her off. She does look absolutely ridiculous. Next to her I feel less mad. I follow her onto in the courtyard and I sit next to her.

"I wet the bed again last night," she said. A nurse walks past her unable to disguise her contempt.

She points to a folder and I pick it up. Out falls some photos.

"Here are some ones when I used to be a prostitute," she says impassively and I look at them. She's smiling in them. Red lips and a cat-like face. Nothing like the ghost before me today. "And here's was when I was with Steve and he gave me a wrap of speed...and here's one when...when we went dancing to happy house."

Her voice tails off. Jesus. You should be paraded around schools telling kids don't do drugs then I tell myself off for thinking such an unkind thought. Her medication gives her bladder problems. I am lucky my drugs don't do that much to me except flatten and batten me. Although there's not much chance to practice in an all-female ward I think there may be even a chance that I might be able to have sex. When I get out I think wistfully.

I wonder if she'll ever get out. So ill. She's so ill. Without doubt the worst on the ward. She pats her stomach...its bulging with the effects of the medication. She has not visitors in the three weeks I have been in but she points to a photograph of a girl who I learn is her sister. "My sister is in India..." she says her eyes gleaming edging up to me that bit closely that I cannot bear it. "She's training to be a doctor...she delivered a baby girl and then she delivered a baby boy," she said her face lighting up. Then she gets up...crouches on her hands and feet and leaves the room. I am angry for her. Whilst her sister gads about playing at being Florence Nightingale the other side of the world her own sister gets no visitors...just must be about the loneliest person I have ever met in my life. You shone like the sun.

The night is fierce. I cannot sleep. There is noise outside. There is only noise when a patient tries to harm themselves or someone else. I step into the corridor. The door to her room is open. I feel my body stiffen. Liz, the second worst on the ward, comes up to me.

"They took her to hospital," she said.

"This is a hospital," I said.

"No....a hospital with proper doctors and nurses," she said.

"She tried...to kill herself," I asked.

"Oh no...Abigail is well, couldn't you tell she's pregnant." *Shine on you crazy diamond ...shine on.*

Need to talk to someone?

If you need to talk to someone about any mental health issues you or someone you care for is experiencing, there is a directory of mental health support services on the inside back cover, page 55.

Medication Time by Andrew Pullan



Morphine by Roderick Huw Evans

Long lost hours of mild oblivion
space potato in a mental maze
with no awareness of my condition
just my own, morphine induced haze
watching Burkhas, short & tall
passing through my temporary abode
no rhyme, no reason do my eyes discern
just constancy on consciousness bestowed

As I lie, connected to my survival paraphernalia
I observe the doctor recording his notes in his office
while a six-foot frog adorns the settee, watching him
peacefully
and I see no disconnection, no blemish on the surface

Beside the reception the orientals trip in & out
a wee locker there for a token, a wee glass to take a sip
they flow consistently with no clear purpose
too far away to know their trip

my nightmare
'heard of the Scottish wee-free?
As my functions are retuned
Not yet, as I asleep be!
Morphine, you must be spurned.
Normality for me
Once I am dechurned.

Change by Mr Anon



Untitled by Danny Verno Smith



www.saatchiart.com/vernartist

Stress by Ben Gaffrey

As soon as I wake up... as soon as I wake up they sweep in. Like being aware of my breathing I can't ignore it. I squeeze the pillow over my ears and shout: "Get out of my head! Get out of my head!" There's no one here to hear me anyway.

Black cloud, thunder storming, lighting up the corners of my mind, pouring a trailing skirt of rain over my body, melting it into a muddy stream, like too many boots have trodden on me. This homebrewed storm / there's no off-switch for. I lunge out of bed, catching my ribs in the mirror, my skin white, underside of a mushroom white, the overgrown mound of pubic hair, hangover eyes, and I quickly cover it all up in a dressing gown, and then I search; fish through my pockets, rummage around my desk, surf through notepads, flick through the to-do list, ticking everything off and still, still it rages, flooding me.

I'm outside now, sucking at a cigarette, hugging myself in the cold. I look through the windows of University apartments. Most have shut the blinds but few are glowing and open, and I watch a man crooked over his desk, writing, and after a woman twist and snap into rubbery yoga positions. Catching both their eyes I smile, they smile back, it feels natural, and we're connected by time: each of us distracted by our own lives but appreciating our distractions. I watch my breath billow for a moment, tracing the night, curling away with my troubles, with all these pointless burdens. Balloons. Then I return. Up the three flights of stairs, unlock the door to the flat, walk the corridor and shut myself into my box. I hack up a clump of brown, sticky stuff into the sink, and I feel light, light enough to become magnetised. I feel the pull. The burning in my head returns, it throbs, like it's been branded from the inside. The thoughts of failures. Those people, inside the windows, working, progressing, whilst I stall, stale myself. I spin, see the wastebasket filled with crumpled papers, the airier folded with crisping clothes, the piles of unread books that I swore I'd read, and I collapse onto the bed. I burrow into the covers, into myself; a failure, and everything's a failure here, in the place where everyone's a success.

Then it hits me. I stare at the ceiling, at the bulking square light segmented like a chocolate bar, like a solar panel. Is this why I'm here? Validation? And the questions begin: why aren't I good enough without it? Why do I need that sheet of paper that I've paid with this stress and that £10,000? Will this cut out these bad

thoughts? Leave empty spaces in my mind as cleanly as a collage? Can I be cured?

"What's my problem? I can feel myself breaking, steaming from my ears, so why won't I do something about it? I sit in the shared kitchen now, writing this all out. The orzo's baking, the smell of carrots and onions stewing, a chunk of chorizo rolling about my tongue. The hum of the air vent, the clicks of the oven as it adjusts its temperature, half-drunk wine, red lipstick at the rim of the glass, recipe book splattered open, specs of dried sauce freckling the page, tobacco folded tight in its pouch, keys with contraptions attached, clattering as I pocket them. Is this so hard? Just to live. To just live without the rules I set myself? To escape my prison. But again, just on this thought – prison – I feel the cage rise up around me and I can't get out. I'm stuck. And I just add more bars whenever I add more rules. I shake them, rattle and scream, but I can't even curl my fingers around them as more sprout to fill all the gaps, so if you were looking at me from the outside all you would see is a metal box, and maybe hear a faint muffling sound. That's me. That's my sound.

Still, in this cage I'm doing what I want, I'm where I want to be, I have all the time in the world to do it, whatever the thing is. Isn't that enough? Why isn't that enough? What am I looking for? Can I find it here? On this page? For the first time in my life I'm unsure. I'm unsure of everything. And I'm scared.

Back on Track by Brian Webster

I know a tsunami of troubles washed over you,
You were drowning in self-doubt.
I watched you struggle to survive in today's world,
Needing help you were too proud to shout.

Problems seemed to hang like a shroud,
Your battle with society had done its worst,
But with all your families help,
You were able to lift the curse.

You can now rest at last,
Setting your mind free to dwell.
The mental stress of just living,
Have been beaten by the Doctor's bell.

Like a train you're back on track,
Shunted out of your depression.
You look uplifted, alive, reborn,
And the journey started with your confession.

Transformation by Nazanin Moradi

My body of work is an attempt to describe the illusion of stability; I grew up in a time of political repression, confined by the post-collision of modernism and Islamic nationalism – conditions that cast people into new unknown situations; from construction to dislocation, and from disillusionment to courage and endurance; and in adaptation to the unknown potential of the future. Emotional feelings of love and abandonment were torn and shaped by these shifting forces, propelling me forwards toward an unstable state.

I use my body as a tool to explore the built unstable environment. My practice meditates on the physical and psychological impacts of space upon the self. Working across costume making, performance, printmaking, and painting I examine in particular aspects of the area that are usually part of my memories, lifestyle, and urban life. My work is an attempt to uncover the dialogue of my existence to predict a fantastic, fantasy future. It rises a fresh view against structural infused. Among them is the need re-

emerged mysteriously, for imagining the unimaginable things. This movement is an examination from the self to something higher or even opposite, and back to a renewed understanding of self-expectations.

I once died, or maybe I was not dead, just my brain was unconscious for a while, but my contribution is about my own mental health and a family member. For a first time when I committed suicide in a road traffic accident, I was struggling with depression symptom and bipolar disorder. The accident happened in one of the dark and under construction roads in the Middle East. My car crashed the signs on the road, and after turning a few times, the car departed into the middle of the field which was meant to be a square. I finished my life. I saw my body from a top of my body, and I was out of my body, I do not know what I was, but my body throughout from the car during the incident and was on the ground, but I was higher. When I got rescued, I saw the movement of people trying to help me running around, but everything was like a silent film, I could not hear anything, and eventually, I ended up having two operations one lung and spine. I was in the coma for a while.





I believe the only things I fight for was a power of the Home; I wanted to go back home all the time even though I was unconscious in a hospital bed. After few days my mother found out and came to the hospital. I noticed her, I felt her, I saw her, but she just saw the piece of meat on the bed. The day after she came back again, I was alive. I was eating breakfast without any help while no one could imagine it the day before. Ten days after I left the hospital and sent a text message to everyone that I love them and how sorry I was that I wanted to go forever. The year I committed to that action I suppose to come to London to study, but because of my health problem I was not able to sit on a plane therefore, my brother came instead of me. Finally, after two years I came to London, but after a year my brother finished his university and decided to go back to Iran, and it was a time when my family went through a dramatic change and disorientation. My father left home and got remarried, my mother took my sister and ran to Europe, and my brother and I left alone in two different places. He went through the same suicidal car crash as I did but with a difference that he did not fight for survival. He did not have mother and sister to hold his hands and ask him to come back to us. He did not have a feeling of Power of Home to rescue him, and he died alone in a dark countryside road.

After a year I had a dream of someone in my family giving birth, and the baby is my little brother. I contacted my father to ask if her wife is pregnant and he said how do you know because we found out about it recently. It was a time when my depression got worse, and I went through manic time which lasted for years. I started seeing and hearing things. I wasn't able to distinguish what is real, what is unreal and what is a

dream. For example, once my brother came to me and told me a story:

"I went to the fatherhood; I felt a moment of sadness though as I watched our step-sister playing at the seaside, so many memories of our childhood came to me. I lost so much of my life to my body. I feel death has stolen my life. Where did my boyhood go? Where had all those years gone? As I passed by the Persian Gulf beach, I promised myself that from that moment I would live every day as if it was my last day, despite there being no more days left. I watched our step-sister building a sand castle in the sand, taking so much care and pride in her work. She said to her mother that the walls of a castle would withstand the power of the sea when the tide came in. Her mother smiled at her, as she knew that the waves would destroy the castle. The child was so innocent, and not understanding the power of nature. The tide eventually came in, and our sister watched with tears as the walls of the castle slowly fell. After a while, she started to build a new one in the hope that next time it would not fall. As I watched her, I saw my childhood; I had tried to create my castle, thinking that all of my plans would stay intact when the death monster took over me. Death is so like the sea; its moods can change from calm one moment to monster waves the next."

Previous page: ***Your Void is Everywhere***

This page: ***Your Search for Loneliness***

Next page: ***In the Absence of Intimacy Equally Suffer***



A Nice Thing for My Mother by Rachele Salvini

Mark's made an unknown woman smile for the first time when he was six years old and he was picking his nose on the train. He was sitting between his grandmother and his mom, who was tightening her trembling fingers around a wet tissue.

Mark looked at the girl sitting in front of him. She had just seen him digging in the depths of his nostril. His grandmother told him off, hissing that a real gentleman must not be caught doing certain things. The girl smiled. His mother, instead, kept quiet.

It was so rare to see a smile on his mother's face, that Mark decided he would do his best to make every other woman happy.

When his classmates would pull girls' hair or cut their Barbies' heads, Mark always came up to them. He cheered them up and made them laugh, pretending to fall and get hurt.

When he grew up and started dating Josie, Mark treated her as well as he could. He spent time with her everyday, even if he was busy preparing his final act. He called it a nice thing for my mother.

He wanted to see his mother smile. She was usually quiet, too busy with cooking and cleaning the house for him and his father or locking herself up in the toilet. Mark was used to her muffled wail.

Before turning seventeen, he had been too small and weak to accomplish his plan and see her smile once and for all. But now, thanks to all the baseball practice after school, his shoulders had squared. His back was as hard as a shell, his legs quick and sturdy, and the muscles of his arms ready to wield any kind of object suitable for the purpose.

The chance finally arrived on a night of September. It was torrid, too torrid for the beginning of autumn. Mark was lying on his bed, reading. He heard his father slamming the hallway door and dragging himself to the kitchen with his usual pace of drunkenness. Mark closed his book slowly. He was extremely calm. As his mother's screams filled the kitchen for the umpteenth time, Mark bent down to grab the baseball bat from under his bed.

He walked down the stairs, but he stopped abruptly when he felt the bat slipping in his sweaty hand. He stood still, paralysed, and he heard everything, every single scream. He could not take a single step more. He heard his father slamming the door and leaving. His mother was crying, but Mark closed his eyes and climbed up the stairs to go back to bed. He knew he couldn't make it. He had always known.

His father disappeared. Mark kept on opening the door before every single woman, helped old ladies carrying grocery bags and made everything possible to see his partners smile. But as their lips twitched and opened slightly on their teeth, he would think of his mother's mouth, still sealed in a sombre line.

Mother with Pouch Catches Baby by Kate Walters www.katewalters.co.uk



Mapping 1 by Janice Howard

She was nervous about the hedges. They'd been cut and didn't look the same. You could see over the tops now into the next field.

I let her support herself on my arm. I realised that in all my adult life we'd never walked through a woodland before. I had to slow to her pace but I was happy to do so.

I remember thinking how strange it was that she was so timid, frightened of everything. The puddles had frozen and the ice had cracked. It was as if she had never seen ice before. I didn't want her to feel how anxious her reactions made me. I knew I had to relax if she was going to.

The ground was uneven and I had to be careful to avoid the furrows. It would be easy to slip and break an ankle. It was safer to keep to a well-trodden path, apparently, there was security in it.

Stop pulling, relax and keep talking.

It was the talking that I found difficult. She'd once said she didn't know what to say which at the time seemed odd, it annoyed me. I kept trying to use my voice to reassure her but I was aware she could probably hear how nervous I was.



Laura Potts – But then parts of you

are dead. I sent the world a postcard from a fusty window that said

I am wearing my grief.

Sling clothes into the bin: your socks, your skirts,
the notebook in the pocket of the moth-eaten dress;
pearls, perfume,

that locket –yes– the one etched with that lover's name
you would never speak, but traced with warmer words
in the tepid curls

of firelight. Death in his Sunday finery asleep in the hall.
I call. *Mother*. Hear you still singing while washing
the dishes.

Now. Minds do many things. Canteen food garden gate
passing-bells rings. A wind slips beneath the door and
I hear you humming,

a voice swollen with the years of rolled-up sleeves
and tired eyes. The cries of a child at its mother's knee.
See,

I remember Wordsworth, Tennyson, Keats, dripping
from your tongue in a terminal bed. *Mother*, I said,
years from

the child in your arms. *There are parts of you dead.*

Bottle and Bible. Now this is pleasurable. Somewhere
on the other side of the night I am hearing you say
The fields are alive

when the moon is bowed. Your name is stirring
in the trees and is gone. No. Look what you're doing.

Look at me now.

Always Here by Damian Robin

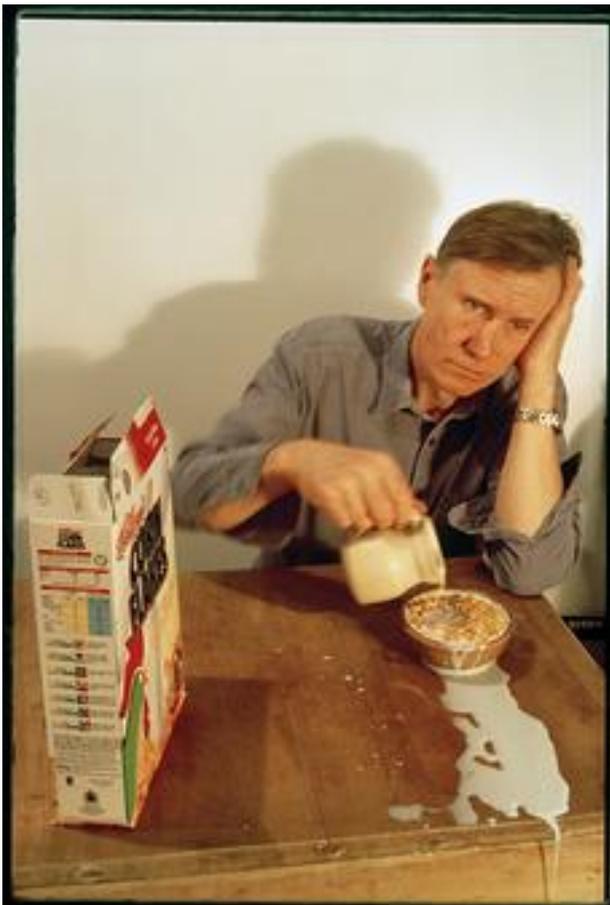
At service stations, tray in hand,
Or out a window, road-laced land,
Or on a platform in our shoes,
Or online phone to check the news,
Or as we pause from busy swell,
Time still passes, here we dwell;

The stops to fuel in sidings, docks;
The waiting zones with quiet clocks;
From tidal rush of traffic trips;
From massive moves of planes and ships;
When going home or overseas,
The beauty of such calms as these;

Aircraft, trains and boats in queues,
Cars at lights ... look at the views –
The skies – the countryside – the seas –
The city slipping through the trees –
The balanced weights of rhythmic measures –
The waiting gold of rising treasures –

As we pause in travel's spell –
Though time will pass – still here we'll dwell.

Sad Dad by Hannah Honeywill



Wake Up and Smell the Coffee by Mary Lee-Slade

Invisible.

I take my caffeine fix as the clock tardily ticks,
watching as they breathe in my outs and breathe out my
ins.

Who are these people?
What are their names?
I wish I could take a sip of what's in their brains.

The giggling girls snapping selfies and slurping cocoas:
Do their Snapchat stories tell the truth or do their
chocolate smiles mask their woes?

The sullen chap in the blue jacket and old fashioned
glasses:
Does he see the world as I do or are his opinions like his
lenses?

The head-scarved lady with the seven-strong brood:
Does she ever feel lonely or pray for solitude?

My cup's now half-empty (or maybe it's half-full)
and the people rotate on the cafe carousel.
I drink it all in and savour their essence.

The expressionless woman carrying her haul:
What's in her bag and will it mend her soul?

The two laughing lads sitting close together:
Are they lovers? Because the fire in their eyes looks like
they crave one another.

The Plain Jane with the pram:
Why do they see you? Perhaps it's the excitement of a
being that's new.

With the dregs in my drink, I stand up to go.
"Thank you, love," says a voice as I exit the door.
Is it me he's talking to?
Am I visible after all?
I turn my head to return his call.

But as I look at the man in his apron and hat,
My optimistic excitement falls flat.
He's talking to Jane with the kid in her arms,
Unable to resist its chubby-cheeked charm.

Who are these people?
What makes them tick?
And will they ever notice me taking a sip?

Recognition by Robert Roth

1992. As would be expected, I arrived at the Sheraton Hotel in Buenos Aires and the first thing the man behind the desk asked me was whether I was a movie actor. Since January I have been stopped at least thirteen times and asked if I was an actor. No one quite knows the actor's name—it might be more than one person—it is always someone just on the tip of the tongue—there's usually a snapping of the fingers as the person tries to figure out who I am—though sometimes they do identify me by movie if not by name. New Year's Eve at Judith Malina's party a woman drunk and somewhat obnoxious

A digression: They have chocolates and drinks in a cabinet in my room. I thought they were gratis. But in fact it was \$3.25 for potato chips. \$7 for a small box of chocolate. \$11 for cashew nuts, etc. My brother is upset because he ate the cashews! Just stumbling out of bed could cost a bundle.

The woman at the party said to me that the movie I was in was lousy, but that I was pretty good. I felt insulted that someone would be that cavalier with my work so I made some comment back. A man then asked me if I had really been in a movie and if so what was my name. I told him that the movie had generated such hostility that I didn't want to talk about it any more. A few weeks later at a restaurant a waitress asked in a most respectful way that a couple at another table would like to have my autograph. Another time—here I'm only giving the most notable encounters—three young black women saw me and immediately huddled together. I was delivering newspapers into a building and one of the women followed me to the building. But as she was about to enter I was just about to leave. I was standing one step above her—she looked startled—I made a playfully menacing face at her and she ran to her friends screaming—all three huddled together shrieking as if they were in a horror movie. I went over and said something. They shrieked louder combining horror with the giddiness of being approached by a celebrity. They mumbled “ghost” and dashed by me in a screaming clump and ran into the building. Just a couple of days before I left New York a man came over to me and said he admired my work and shook my hand. I was deep into my own head and somewhat unnerved when his hand entered through some protective field I had placed around me. At first I thought he might have seen me give a reading or somehow knew of the magazine or had read something that I had written. But in truth he had just seen me on a VCR the night before while watching

Ghost. He had seen me walking on Twelfth Street just a few days before and had decided to approach me the next time he saw me. He said I was also very good in Taxi Driver. The man at the desk in the hotel said I was terrific in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest with Jack Nicholson. Ghosts and lunatics all. My charisma is pretty intense.

Many years later, I went to England to be at the launch of five mini operas, aptly named “5 Operas” [<https://www.flickr.com/photos/szpako/albums/72157670738115225>]. It took place at a community center in Epping, Essex, a town outside of London. My friend Carletta Joy Walker and I wrote the libretto for one of the operas. The great British composer Michael Szpakowski composed the music for all five. It was one of the most gratifying experiences of my life.

On the way home, at Heathrow Airport, as I was streaming through a gate with thousands of other travelers, a custom official tapped me on shoulder and asked very politely, “Were you here making a movie?”

Blurring one truth with another I answered smilingly, “Yes. Things went very well. Thank you so much for asking.”

Take Me Away by Nick Maynard

‘take me away’ –
the train seems to say –
‘take me away
from all this...’
No ticket I fear,
could move me from here
from the rumbling sound of all this.
My pain seems to wake,
in the screeching of breaks,
and the mumbling sound of it all...
An engine gilds into view
I’m reminded of you –
When we met and we parted
from here.
It’s the beginning and end,
my lover – my friend –
and the trains trundle by just the same...

Ode to my Cancer Journey by Jackie Smith

Part 1. The fear and the funny

This year started off with words no one wants to hear
Grim faces in the consultant room filled me full of fear
The doctor relays the news that I have cancer
That's not what I expected is my tear choked answer

Leaflets and appointments in hand
Detailing what treatments have been planned
Drive home with a mindful of trepidation
New year had just passed and having to tell family,
friends, colleagues, filled me with frustration

As the news spread the love and support, I received
was beyond my expectation
Flowers, cards and words that have filled me with
motivation
Sympathy has not been sought and not been received
Just words that have encouraged me to get through
this and not let cancer succeed

Chemo a word you don't expect to be part of your
everyday vocabulary
Six months of three weekly therapy
A cocktail of drugs to kill the bad cells
Ten days plus of feeling like hell

Hair fell out after second chemo treatment
Bald at 50+ was not in the life choice agreement
Bandanas have been my choice of head gear
At least me head shape is not as I feared

Toxic body, toxic poo
Make sure no one follows me at least 3 hours after
going to the loo!
Drugs to help you through the chemo effects
Including steroids which I am hoping don't result in
muscles that are too big to flex

My last chemo treatment is due to come to an end
But the journey continues a little longer my friends
Scans will be done, and results relayed
Let's hope it's the results for which we all have prayed

Part 2.

Scan results day
Has the chemo worked and blasted the tumour away.
Nervous smiles as my name is called
Everything crossed even my toes.
Consultants head down flicking through notes
No expression as he clears his throat

We are pleased to say the chemo has been successful
The tumour is no longer detectable
The journey continues just to ensure
Any stray cells are captured and shown the door
A bit more treatment to have to swallow
Surgery is planned and Radiotherapy to follow

New procedures maybe ahead
Some that fill me with a sense of dread
But the end of treatment is in sight
And all this will have been worth the fight

Part 3

At last the day of surgery
The next stage of this journey
Early start to the day
Up at the crack of dawn as they say
Nil by mouth so no breakfast for me
Not even a sip of tea
Stare at the toaster but not today
Hoping my food craving would go away

Castle Hill Ward 16 was my destination
Found it easily without any frustration
Booked in and all ready to start
Nursing staff guiding me through each part

Consultant, anaesthetist, gained my consent
My trust in them one hundred percent
Injected, just a small scratch
Wish I had a pound every time they say that

Tubes inserted, scanned and filled with nuclear dye
It turns your skin blue for a while
Ready and waiting watching tv
Wish I had been watching England's semi-final victory

Instructed to get dressed in stockings and gown
It was my time to go down
Walked through to the treatment room
Trying to shrug off my sense of doom

Staff checked paperwork to ensure they have the right
person
Don't want to wake up missing the wrong organ
Lie down for one more injection
Take a deep breath from this oxygen mask no time for
reflection

Dreaming but voices telling me to open my eyes
Feeling battered and bruised mouth really dry
Babbling words of no sense after surgery
Back to the ward for my recovery

Eat, drink, a pee and you can go home today
Performed all three I am glad to say
Consultant informed me all had gone to plan
Filled with joy I thanked him and shook his hand

Homeward bound
Exercise plan in hand
Surgical stockings to wear for a week
It was torture in this summer heat

Recovery is going to plan
Time again to wait for results of surgery and scans
Sometimes this journey has been close to hell
But I am winning and will soon be ringing the bell.

Part 4.

The seasons have passed since my cancer battle started
The Beast from the East and no heating left me
downhearted
Summer arrived with temperatures smashed
My hot flushes made summer a blast

Prescribed Tamoxifen to keep the cancer away
5 years of 1 a day
Hair growing back, its currently short and grey
Think I will probably keep it that way

Radiotherapy was the last stage of treatment
15 sessions to help ensure I never get back the demon
I counted down each day
When I didn't have to undress and have my breasts on
display

There is a bell that you ring on your last day of
radiotherapy
3 rings as a gesture of the Cancer Warriors victory
The final day of treatment has arrived I can yell
Yes, it's my time to ring the bell

Doctors, nurses, volunteers, the support teams too
Have made this journey easier to get through
A chat, a laugh, a smile was never too much
Each one providing that common touch

The cancer battle takes almost a year of your life
The gift at the end has no price
It's time to end my cancer story
And for me the cancer battle has ended in glory

*Dedicated to family, friends and all the staff at Queens,
Castle Hill and to all the Cancer Warriors.*

Poet by Donald W Falconer

I am what I couldn't say,
what I moved out the way,
what the world didn't want to know.
I am where I couldn't go.

It didn't pay the rent,
and people didn't believe,
It didn't give me a cent
but still I didn't leave.
And they kept asking
what I did for a living.

Inside I would cry a tear
and I give them another face.
The world made me fear
that I was out of place.
But still I carried on
with all my dreams gone.
I am what I couldn't say,
what I moved out the way,
What the world didn't want to know
I am where I couldn't go.

Like a bird needs to fly,
we can all find our way.
Like a mind needs to know why,
we can all make a play.
Sometimes we just need to lead
to find out what it is we need.

And now if you ask me what I do
I will not sigh,
because my feelings are brand new
to give a reply.
Now with my words I will sing
that I am only the beauty that I bring.

I am what I couldn't say,
what I moved out the way,
what the world didn't want to know.
I am where I couldn't go.

Need to talk to someone?

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On the Train by Klara Cservenka

Things were getting intense in my hometown, I couldn't move without being watched and followed; their surveillance was scrutinising.

Nathalie had always been a good friend, even though it transpired that she too was working for the government. Why had I not realised that earlier? I'd even seen the FBI and KGB books on her bookshelf but had never put two and two together before; how naïve!

She must be in the position to shed some light on my situation, to understand and offer some kind of insight, sympathy and advice.

I had to go to London to see her; she was my last hope.

I knew that as it was, I was making their job of surveying me easier by staying in my hometown, and didn't present them with too much of a challenge regarding the paths of travel that I took, for them to track and monitor me: the library, the beach, the estates, the back streets; my futile attempts to give them the slip and to relax a little without their eyes on me.

I didn't know what to expect when I'd attempt to leave Brighton, even if it was for just one day. Would they panic and arrest me? Would they stop me from leaving, or just simply refuse me a ticket?

I didn't want to alert them to anything unexpected that I was doing and needed to appear calm. I spoke with Nathalie on the phone but kept it brief. "I'm in trouble, can't really discuss it now. I'm coming to London" I tried not to let the anxiety spill into my voice, tried, through my panic, to sound casual.

So now they knew. They had been bugging my flat and my phones for quite some time. They would now be preparing...

Would they take me away in the night? Whilst I slept? I packed my bag and slung my torch around my neck in case they bundled me into a dark space at night. My head was throbbing.

'On the Train'

That morning I woke up, gathered my items and left the flat. As I walked through town it was quieter as if in anticipation of my movements. I turned a corner. An agent gently walked past, quietly observing. Another agent across the road nonchalantly pretended to be occupied by tying his shoelaces.

I got to the train station. Two agents were waiting there attempting to act aloof to my arrival. I headed past them and onto the ticket office. Eerily there was no queue. They were expecting me. I acted like nothing was up, "day return to London please".

The agent dealt with me efficiently and professionally; acted like a true station worker.

I went along with it. So, they're letting me get this far. With tickets in my hand I headed to the barriers expecting them to be rigged so they don't open due to a faulty ticket or the like. The barriers opened. Surprised and pleased I walked through, onto the platform and quickly onto the train which was there waiting specifically for my arrival...

Trying So Hard Series by Bobbi Rae



Triangular Sandwiches by Brian Horton

Gurning reflections in tunnels,
The end of them always surprised,
A journey to nowhere, just for the fun,
No rush to hopes not realised.

Smiling at others wasting their lives,
Sweet certainty said what was right,
No drudgery, drabness or deadlines,
We'd laugh at them as we alight.

Now, train rides are such a reminder,
Of diddley you and diddley me
Eating triangular sandwiches
And burning our lips on the tea.

Eating triangular sandwiches
And sharing those smiles with me.

Railism by Richard Shields

Throughout the *Railism* collection (2014 - present) there are different series of paintings; some are of curators Shields has worked with, others respond to the environments encountered on train journeys and some are references to other areas of the artists practice.

"The idea to paint on a blank train ticket originated as a portrait of my young nephew and niece. The uncertainty of the tickets destination emulated that of the future journeys awaiting my young family members. The relevance of a blank train ticket bares different significance to each sitter."

Below: **Self Portrait**

Next page: **Wheech, Ghosted**

richardshields.blogspot.com





Scheduled Not Scheduled by Lenny Szrama

A singular event, sets wheels in motion
The beginning, the end
A relative notion
No knowledge, No choosing
No magic potion
A silver bullet, A Fuji view
Flying faster
Passing through
No stopping, not here, not there, not you
Jumping on, jumping off
No people, No crew
No time for distress
Say no, Say yes
A kaleidoscope view
An optical express
In chaos, a commotion
No faith, No devotion
In confusion, its emotion
Standing or crawling
Falling or stalling
Living in fear
Fascinating, enthralling
Hopes are dashed
Smashed, if not crashed
Sometimes railroaded
A world undecoded
Like a gun, loaded
Impacted, Imploded
The right time, the wrong time
My time, Dwell time
No up, no down
No bottom, no top,
To fall or to drop
The end, stop.

Poetry on the Platform: Where to Sit by Brian Horton

Face forwards and you look towards
A dream you'll never find,
Sit backwards, then all you see,
Are mistakes you left behind.

12.53 Birmingham New Street by Chloe Belcher

Spaced out, looking out to the people around me. All in conversations, a humming of voices. I'm sat with my head looking to the floor as usual, wondering how it can be so easy to get lost into a place that isn't real. I imagine these people's lives, their jobs, and their families. What did they do last night, were they with family or a late night at the office? I'll never know the truth and the illusions appeal to me.

Train delay. Great, the sighs surround me, and disgruntled travellers begin pacing. The typical screen staring, hoping the numbers will tick down to the original timings of the 12.53. Expected, 13.02. Delayed, 14 minutes. What's happened? Expected 13.07. The station begins to flood with people waiting for the Birmingham new street train, lucky for those who come late; they will still be on time.

13.12 train arrives. A flurry of passengers getting on the train, rushing for available chairs in the hope of not standing for journey. I've got a seat and the train is in motion. Countryside views and a comfortable seat, finally. Almost at New Street, passengers have started standing to wait at the doors; children's voices flood the carriage with excitement of the day out coming. So, I'm faced with the unforgiving crowds of the bullring shopping centre, trying to weave through without knocking people. Crammed up onto an escalator and up we go, finally I'm back outside away from the chaos.

So, I've spent the day with my brother and it's time to home. The train is soon, and I hope not to be delayed. Human sardines, 2 carriages and sitting in a luggage rack. Personal boundaries none existent, and an apology from the driver of 2 carriages missing. Brilliant. I feel like a caged animal, sitting awkwardly within this space that doesn't fit, the journey feels longer, and passengers grow weary.

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Below the Belt by Simon Bolton

Me? I just help out here at the Boxing Club. Caretaker I suppose you could call me.

I come down here, perhaps twice a week, especially since the wife died, just to have a look around, have a Hoover out and clean the toilets and the general things that you do and it looks after itself really.

Strange place to come if you're not feeling too... you know. Well that's what you might think. Boxing? All that violence and brain damage and stuff. Well it's not like that at all. Listen.

We used to have to go to the Youth Club for boxing, once a week. Not so nice as here, this is great, this place. I heard it was all done by the members, raised the money, even built the place themselves. There's community action for you.

Bit too old now for the sparring but it's good for the exercise. And good to see who's here and catch up a bit. I'm really keen on community. We moved here a while back, everyone friendly and welcoming; well most, you know.

Anyway, where we used to live, very like here really. Big houses down one end, not so big houses up the other. Different shops, different people, different lives.

I joined the Neighbourhood Watch, bit rough where we were, so I thought I'd do my bit. Went to a few meetings, lots of posh people looking out for their end. Good people, trying to help. And the Lady Mayoress; very nice. Very welcoming. Seems interested. One night she says, "I want to do something for you."

"Oh aye," I say, "and what might that be?"

"The Council replaced all the High Street Christmas decorations last year. The old ones were getting on a bit, strings of lights and so on. All safe, they've been checked. I thought, instead of getting rid of them we could offer them to you, you know, to decorate the outside of people's houses. Brighten things up a bit." And I said, "Well, that's great, thank you very much, that's very thoughtful... but what we really need is money to do up the Youth Club."

"You'll have to go through official channels for that I'm afraid. It can take rather a long time but these old decorations, they're just taking up storage space. You can have them for nothing if you can collect them."

And then I thought, "Ebay!"

So, we went and got them in Fred's van. Loads of stuff. And we put it all up on-line; except Old Fred, he wanted the waving Santa.

"I'm going to move that hand down a bit," he says with a wink, you know what he's like.

Anyway, we made a good bit for the Youth Club, got some paint, repaired the kitchen units, sanded the floorboards, brightened it up, just like she said. Very pleased with ourselves.

But the next meeting, the Mayoress says to me, "I'd like to do something more. A competition to see who has decorated their house the best. There'll be prizes."

And I think, Christ, I'm going to have to tell her, we've sold all the bloody decorations. The only thing she'll see is Fred's wanky Santa and she's not going to give him a prize for that.

And then she says, "Of course, the winners will have to come and collect their prizes from the Town Hall. I'm a bit busy, we could drive round quickly, I won't be getting out. Perhaps it would be better if you did the judging instead?"

"Phew!" So, she never found out. We sent old Fred round in the end, with strict instructions not to say what he'd done to Santa. He got a nice bottle of whisky. Didn't last long. Heh!

The benefits of this place? There's the fitness and the discipline. It's great for the kids you know, brings them in, keeps them off the streets. Lots of smiling faces in here. You want to say, "Come in and join us!"

The camaraderie. That's what I'm here for. You know Prince Harry. Had a hard time with his mum and so on, very sad, very public. And he said, "If it wasn't for amateur boxing I would have gone outside and hit someone!" Great one for the boxing he is. It's all about community. That's the number one rule of boxing that is.

And if you're struggling, like I am, it really is.

Object Constancy by Elise Fuller Broadway



I have been told that I create false memories for myself.

I hadn't gone to a psychiatrist in my life; he stared in disbelief at me when I told him. He asked me this again at least 3 more times over the course of our appointments, and my answer was always the same. But I began to doubt that too. Some think there is a heaviness laid upon the backs of the ill when they are diagnosed, but for me it was relief to finally be attached to a slew of titles: PTSD, Borderline Personality Disorder with Avoidant PD characteristics, OCD, and a panic disorder. This means that my illnesses were borne out of genetic and environmental factors which attached a truthfulness to memories that had been in question for years. It all seems very troubling, but a diagnosis bears a tangible connectedness to our present societal reality; something tethered and definable. A way to put my mind at ease for the time being.

This is what the diagnostic manual (DSM-5) tells me.

When you come to the realization that your perception of social, sensory, and temporal interactions with the world do not exist correctly, loneliness comes into sharp focus.

Over the early summer of 2018, isolated for over a month in my London flat, I realized that I had collected scores of British yellow dusters; items nearly alien to me as an American having only lived in the UK for a year. They were (and continue to be) my 'transitional object', a common trait of those with BPD who never fully developed object permanence as a small child. I needed to bury myself in them; their softness, their domesticity, and their repetition. They are loving in a way I can possess.

From this I created a quilt. One of many that will multiply in size until I can never look at the colour yellow again.



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Bamboo Junction by Tania Robertson

Bamboo Junction

stuck again at Bamboo Junction
his thick red beard grins
at the lads chortling
something bog-snorkeling funny
when weary in her seat slumps
forward four kids and counting
each one pushing out her hips
wider than the last

broad-shouldered Sweaty Betty
studies How to Kill the President
opposite Far from the Madding Crowd
splattering coca-cola
she jilts Oak for Apple
her twins gyrating necks twist
in headphone heaven while
England rumbles past

next stop Kingham Welcome
Home to kings of chav
nestling their gold teeth beneath
crumbling yellow-stoned eaves
a tea-trolley trundles up hot
pink lipstick handles something
sweet. Change! Real change?
Why, we're all plastic now, my darlin' heart

across the aisle e-book lovers
glance slyly at the other's screen
scenting out secrets
at a whiff of the keyboard
bliss in an instant
click-baited then mated
digitally divorced while
England whistles past

gazing through glazing
buzzards freewheel above
cables cats-cradling the earth
this turf at Canal Junction
Oxford where ancient
piebald stallions snort
dreamily on grass
whinging as they fart

tracks shoot round the bend
orchards stretch out waving
the travellers in before
London city of madness
mayhem misery and money
capital of mischievous mythical Albion
stirring uneasy while
England thunders past

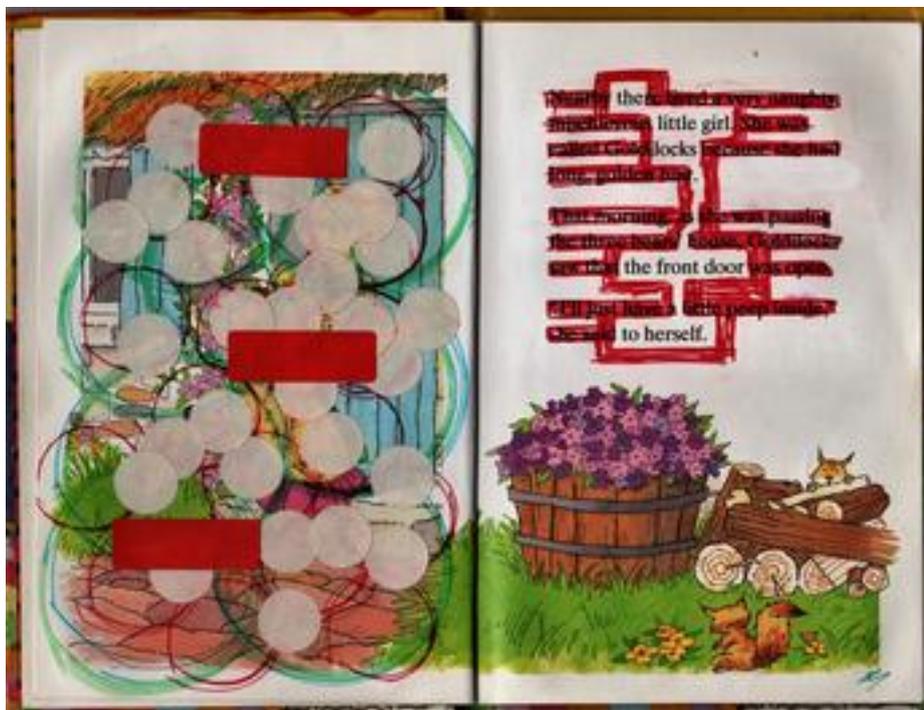
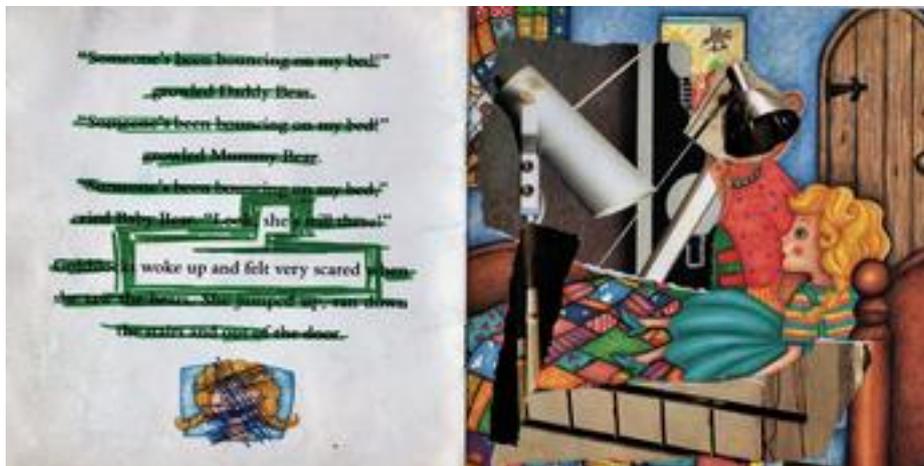
Bamboo Junction

Unfunction/Function by Hannah Honeywill

Unfunction/Function is a 1970s dining chair that I have reshaped and finished using furniture making and restoring techniques. It is a freestanding piece that takes on a human state. It deals with the human body. That body could be my own body, ill bodies; un-championed bodies... bodies that are often placed in the shadows. This sculpture is from a body of work I have made as a reflection on my personal experiences of understanding how a body changes due to disease, and how these changes affect that body's representation in society. These physical changes operate in a contradictory visual paradigm: they can be so obvious but at the same time can be completely invisible.



Shut Up by Janina Karpinska



Alter Ego by Alison Little

I am so sensible, so responsible
Offering guidance, stable as a rock
The family, in narcotics they dabble
My lectures keep them from the dock

I am the Fat Controller
My husband is my Bitch!
Around me, they see nothing fowler
On a mission to make us rich!

I must continue to dominate
Ensure I am in charge of everything
The self-appointed boss, no debate
No one must question the logic I bring

Telling tales of fake family suicides
When queried over my stories being real
I set about the process of swaying tides
Elaborately, I claim in drugs they deal

The Family see from eyes free from drug consumption
An evil relic motivated by control and corruption

Soon her control structure will be exploded
The list of convictions to be brought overloaded

Her assets will be taken from the door
She will be the fat controller no more

Jon Wilkins – The Worry Tree

As a device in mental
health circles some bright
spark has developed the
smashing idea of the worry tree
where, if you are anxious about
anything in particular you come
up with an action plan and when
you have that plan in place you
say to your doubting self can I
do anything about this worry?
And if you can that's fine, but if
you can't the answer is so simple,
you throw the worry away. So
along with being asked if you have
thought about harming yourself due
to your illness, or even ending your
bleak filled life you now have to
nurture the roots of the worry tree
before you throw your worry
away and are so miraculously
Cured.

Precious Illusions by Anna-Maria Amato

When I get asked about what I do when I'm not working, or producing art, I withdraw with embarrassment. For my honest answer would be I dwindle, daydreaming and listening to music. The same music. On repeat. I will attach myself to the lyrics of one song and play it till I believe that I am in it. That it is my song. 100+ times. And then I think, that despite having gone to art school and worked in that field for years, that I should become a musician. Considering I hate performing in front of people to the point that being a musician for me is almost as ridiculous as being a musician and not being able to play an instrument.

My thought patterns were so unhealthy. Every type of therapy, conventional and not so conventional, had left a trail of worksheets and hand-outs, which were now all filed together in a 'happiness' folder, to 'refer back to'.

A common talk/lecture/passionate shouting match with my mother covered many of the same points. I wasn't trying. I wasn't living as I should. I could do better. WHY WAS I SO NEGATIVE?

The song for the day was 'Precious Illusions' by Alanis Morissette. I had heard this song before but never engaged with the lyrics as I did then. Nothing described me better. These precious illusions did not let me down.

Much of the time I felt that there was no point in trying to change, because they don't give you a scary diagnosis, label you with a super scary name which is apparently life long, if you really can live a happy life.

But then I considered, WHAT ON EARTH was stopping me from trying? Why was I scared to try and change? Even if it was futile the alternative option was no worse. Right? Was I just lazy? Demotivated? Or, quite possibly, HOPELESS?

The thing about hope, is, that the main resource you need to have for it, at least for me, is a good imagination. Visualising your way out of a situation or feeling. That is where these precious illusions came in. But that needed to be over now.

To be in the moment and act was the way forward. To be better and feel better. The hope that I need to move forward, is that I can. Because others believe and so, so can I.

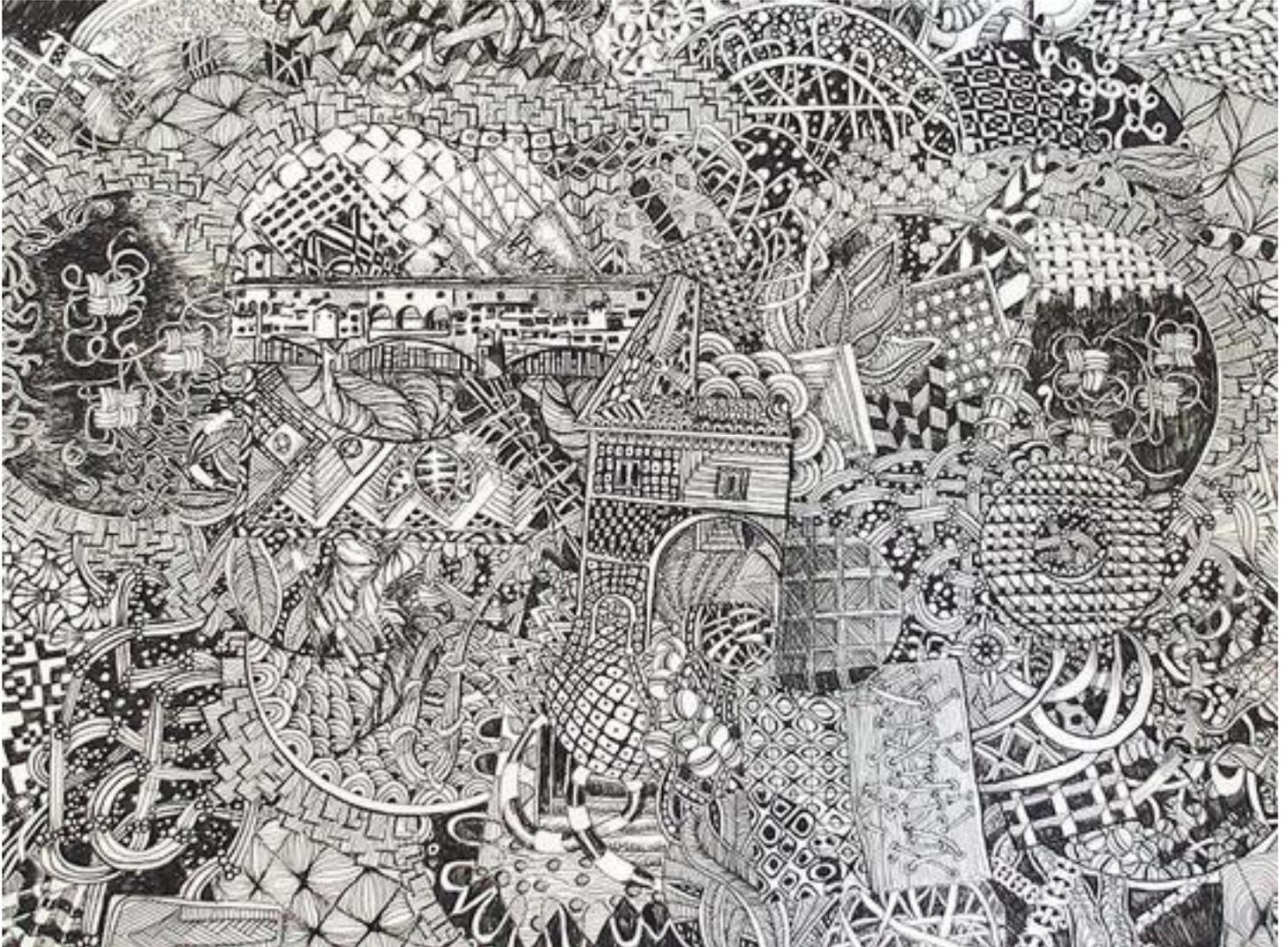
annamariaamato.weebly.com

Florence and Death by Jessica Russo Scherr

Florence and Death is a very tangled and detailed drawing I did while trying to process the loss of someone close to me.

It deals with guilt, regret, grief in both a tangible way with text and a manic and obsessive fashion through the tangled patterns. The work took over a year to complete and documents the journey from sickness, to death, to grief.

www.bluelavaart.com



Limericks by Lenny Szrama

With much regret I must leave you
For I am no cycling hero
For although you promise much
For me you're no crutch
And my hidden wounds make me a weirdo

Come join the great hero ride
Money floods in like the tide
But you'll never get a chance
If to our tune you don't dance
And you're mental, so you we must hide

Crossing the high mountain track
Laden down with a great pack

With mud covered boots
It's time for photo shoots
Mental health, you can stand at the back

As you aim your questions with stealth
Coz you think that I have lots of wealth
When it comes to my work
That question I shirk
Coz its embarrassing to say mental health.

With much regret I must leave you
For I am no cycling hero
For although you promise much
For me you're no crutch
And my hidden wounds make me a weirdo

Holiday Fling by Susan Plover



Forgotten Coast by Lita Doolan

Empty shell head trying
To replace
The pain
The last thing you seen
In a jelly bean
That dances
And takes a chance
On a man
Or woman who can
Just ease and blow
And know where to go
And survive this coast
Keep it real
To make you free
From the sea
and the shell
You know so well

The Platform by Robert P. Clarke

There are jubilant shouts of joy
As friends and family meet once more
Been a long time coming
The tears of Joy as the train pulls in
Waiting on the platform for loved ones

After the visit
Sad farewells
Waving goodbye
Sharing hugs and kisses

The train pulls off
It'll be another year
Stay in contact they promise
by phone and more
Miss you lots x x
Until next time...

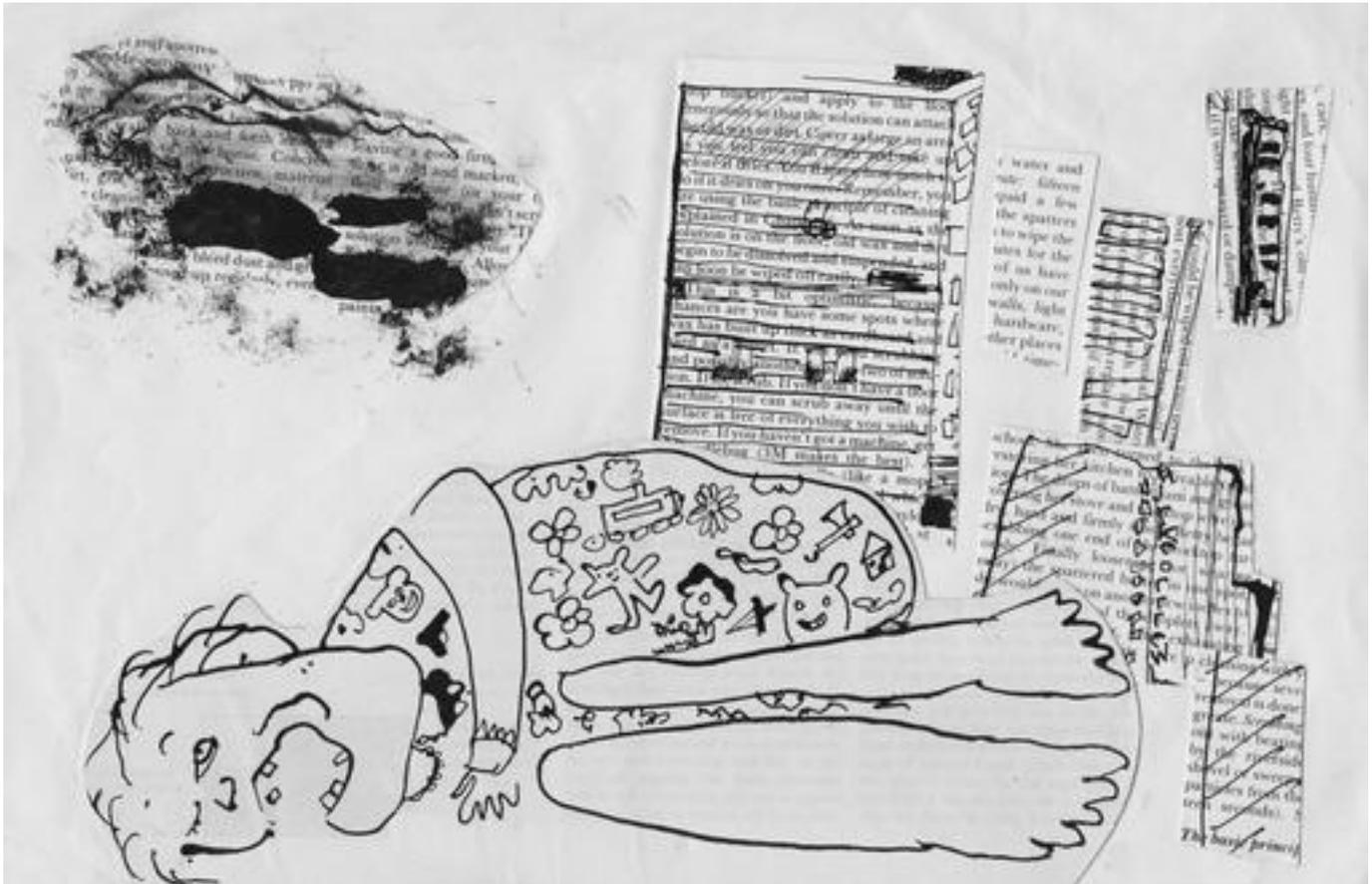
www.artroam.com

Paternoster by Dianne Murphy



*...we need compassion
and love to be free...*

Silent Scream by Katya Robin



Thank You For The Lift by Paula de Sousa



Change by The Train Lady

SIMPLE PLEASURES

Ladle a bowl of goodness

CHANGE



GOOD FOR THE SOUL'

Rough with
the smooth

inspirational

A fresh
OUTLOOK

SEEDS OF HOPE BRINGS



Change by Vanessa Haley

B

It

Just for fun

LIVE

A

Smorgasbord

LIFE

you use light,

TO WATCH OUT FOR

CHANGE

DELIGHT

*Be a
free spirit*

clarity

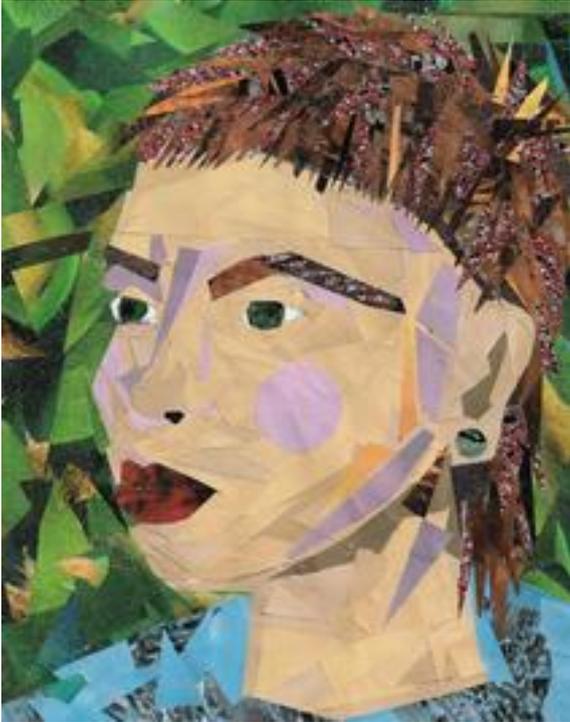
LIFE

SIMPLY DOES NOT GET BETTER THAN THIS!

VANESSA

H

Self Portrait II by Emilia Wilson



am someone who has Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (as well as depression, anxiety, fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis) on account of being subjected to multiple traumatic instances stemming from early childhood and continuing into my adult life. The fact that my trauma started when I was just 2 years old makes me feel like I was never given a chance to become the real me. On account of my trauma, and because it started before I ever had the chance to truly establish a sense of self, the ideas of identity and belonging are often lost on me.

Part of my PTSD involves avoidance of places, people, and activities that are reminders of the trauma. As a result, over the last five years of my life, I have been constantly on the move – travelling from St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria, British Columbia to Dawson City, Yukon Territory. To put that into perspective, I have traveled the equivalent of crossing Europe 6 times). I have lived in both houses and tents; I have experienced homelessness. I have slept on beds and couches, in vans, abandoned buses and buildings, and under the night sky. The reality of such a tumultuous living arrangement, coupled with my PTSD diagnosis, is that the ideas of belonging and of community have become skewed to me.

With my PTSD, I also experience episodes of dissociation involving both depersonalization and derealization; I often feel as though I am drifting through time and space with high levels of anxiety and a sense of displacement. I lose attachment from my

immediate surroundings, feeling both a loss of the sense of self and that the world is unreal. With dissociation, I feel divorced from my own personal self by sensing that my body sensations, feelings, emotions, behaviors etc. do not belong to me. I've had a difficult time feeling connected to the places I've been and the people I've met throughout my life. Even the most familiar of places and faces will often appear alien, bizarre, and surreal.

Moreover, I often ponder if the identity I hold now would be the same without my experiences of trauma and intrapersonal strain. I constantly am asking myself: Who am I? What does it mean to be a person? How does one identify with themselves and how does that identity fit in with its community? Is identity formed by belonging to a particular group, by performing a role in life, or by background and biology? Is one's personal identity contingent and changeable? Similarly, is belonging simply calling somewhere home? If so, what happens if we are forced to move or are subject to a major change in our environment? Can one belong to a community if they don't have a fixed address?

It is my intention to encourage discussion surrounding these topics in the arts, while overcoming the negative stereotypes that seem to loom over those with disabilities. I believe everyone should be given the chance to authentically exist and succeed in the world regardless of ability, age, gender, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation, social status or economic status. I believe that it is important to foster the acceptance of those whose differences enhance our lives.

Furthermore, the subject of mental health has been in the closet far too long. It is extremely important for people with mental health issues to be able to freely discuss their experiences without the shame and stigma that is too often accompanied by them. Speaking up about our lived experiences can make an incredible difference to the lives of a countless number of people – it can literally save lives.

As someone with PTSD, I have become enthralled with the theme and exploration of the philosophical concepts of identity and belonging – in both an interpersonal and intrapersonal context. Experimenting with the relationships between colours, lines and textures, I allow myself to be present in the moment by reflecting on my emotional and physical self. Each art work I create is a self-portrait in and of itself in that it is a visual display of my own state of mental health, gender identity and expression.

Change by Victor



Change by Alice Bradshaw

FUEL FOR RECOVERY



Handful
couldn't improve,
what was the point?

STRESS

I took a break,

SHORT CHANGE [supposedly]

Albert Einstein's
definition of insanity (doing the same
thing repeatedly and expecting a
different outcome).

RING THE CHANGES

The shift of focus

3 cloves garlic,
chopped

most enjoyable

170g tomato paste

Mentally refreshed,

2 tbsp extra virgin
olive oil

mental hiccups along the way

Handful chopped
fresh basil

restored

mind.



Lost Inside by Teri Anderson



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Addaction www.addaction.org.uk

AA www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk 0845 769 7555
(24-hour helpline)

Andy's Man Club www.andysmanclub.co.uk

Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk 03444 775 774 (Mon to Fri, 9:30am-5:30pm)

BEAT www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk 0808 801 0677
(adults) or 0808 801 0711 (for under-18s)

Bipolar UK www.bipolaruk.org 0333 323 3880

Campaign Against Living Miserably (male-identifying)
www.thecalmzone.net 0800 58 58 58 (5pm-12am)

Childline www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111

Combat Stress British Armed Forces Veterans Support www.combatstress.org.uk 0800 1381 619
(24hrs)

FRANK Honest information about drugs
www.talktofrank.com 0300 1236600

M-Power www.male-rape.org.uk 0808 808 4321 (Fri 12-2pm and Mon 6pm-8pm)

Men's Advice Line www.mensadvice.org.uk 0808 801 0327 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Men's Shed www.menssheds.org.uk 0300 772 9626
(Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

Mind www.mind.org.uk 0300 123 3393 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm)

National Centre for Domestic Violence
www.ncdv.org.uk 0800 970 2070

No Panic www.nopanic.org.uk 0844 967 4848 (daily, 10am to 10pm)

OCD Action www.ocdaction.org.uk 0845 390 6232 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 5pm)

OCD UK www.ocduk.org 0845 120 3778 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

PANDAS Pre- and post-natal depression support
www.pandasfoundation.org.uk 0843 28 98 401 (9am-8pm)

Platform 1 Huddersfield based men's mental health charity platform-1.co.uk

Prevention of Young Suicide www.papyrus-uk.org
0800 068 4141 (weekdays 10am-10pm, weekends 2pm-10pm and bank holidays 2pm-10pm), pat@papyrus-uk.org or text 07786 209 697

PTSD UK www.ptsduk.org

Rape Crisis www.rapecrisis.org.uk 0808 802 9999 (daily, 12pm-2:30pm and 7pm-9:30pm)

Refuge www.refuge.org.uk 0808 2000 247 (24-hour helpline)

Respect Domestic violence helpline
www.respectphoneline.org.uk 0808 802 4040 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) info@respectphoneline.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness www.rethink.org 0300 5000 927 (Mon-Fri 9:30am-4pm, not bank holidays)

Samaritans www.samaritans.org 116 123 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year) jo@samaritans.org

SANE www.sane.org.uk 0300 304 7000 (4:30pm-10:30pm every day)

Support Line: Mental Health www.supportline.org.uk
01708 765200 info@supportline.org.uk

Survivors Male rape and sexual abuse helpline
www.survivorsuk.org 020 3598 3898 (Mon-Fri 9:30am-5pm) help@survivorsuk.org

Victim Support www.victimsupport.org 0808 168 9111
(24-hour helpline)

Women's Aid www.womensaid.org.uk 0808 2000 247
(24-hour helpline)

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk 0808 802 5544
(Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 4pm)

*Take a moment from your scroll to work,
To hear from people on a different ride,
Take a moment to look beyond the blur,
And maybe then you'll look inside*

Marnie Simpson presents poetry from *Dwell Time*,
exploring issues of mental health in today's world
through virtual spoken word.

Scan the QR code or follow the web link to have a listen.



<https://soundcloud.com/user-193270158>

Dwell time: The time a train spends at a scheduled stop without moving. Typically, this time is spent boarding or alighting passengers, but it may also be spent waiting for traffic ahead to clear, or idling time in order to get back on schedule.

Dwell Time is an arts publication of selected contributions reflecting on mental wellbeing, published for the Penistone Line Railway in Yorkshire.

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