

## In Patience

A diagnosis saved my life. It wasn't the right diagnosis, but hey, it set me on a path that led me to stability and dare I say it, happiness. There wasn't much to it. I was in the midst of a psychosis episode when I ended up in the emergency room where they gave me papers on schizophrenia. I was coming off a marijuana high and I thought some less than conventional things, but schizophrenia? Not exactly.

Timelines since then have been difficult for me to remember. But by the end of this memoir, I think there might be one set in stone. As of now, I will do my best not to get it wrong... and try not to qualify my words, too much.

The goal of these organized thoughts is to bring light to mental health issues and hopefully give some insight into my own life. A blessed life.

When I say blessed I mean effortless. In the early years, there was little in between me and success. And success looked like flowing around obstacles with ease. My parents didn't always have the money they do now, but they were also never poor. In debt maybe, but budgeted and focused. We had presents at Christmas, Easter even. There was and still is a sort of enchanted nature about my upbringing.

A good example of that is me taking care of the dragon egg my mom gave me. It was orange, had spikes on it, and in retrospect, even some lettering. I looked passed those blue words and kept the egg warm and in the dark, as instructed only to check on it with eager anticipation on a regular basis. I was seven. My point is, many children around the world were experiencing different, more real-world things at that age.

Moving on, the search for lizards took up a lot of my time as a boy. At least until we moved to Seattle. I wrote about lizard hunting in college (I got a degree in creative writing.) I also wrote about the Pog, a now probably ancient toy, that Alex and I found at the bottom of an original Doritos bag. This was before they had all the other flavors I think. Just red. We argued over who was going to give it to who. He won and sadly I have since gotten rid of it.

I collect things. Letters, birthday cards, boxes, coins, you name it. Mementos have enormous value to me because they are like single words that have an entire book's worth of information sitting in them; an idea to unpack later. Am I attached? To some things, yes. Like my stone carving collection. I love them. They have been through countless battles that all ended in unity and peace. Late-night conflict under a dim light, the animals worked out their issues with words and violence.

Nine-eleven happened when I was in fifth grade. Justin, my brother, was in seventh. We both were affected in different ways, and that can mainly be attributed to our age. But both of us were impacted as I'm sure was the rest of the world. Mass violence became a less distant thing in our lives and as it seems kept growing ever closer. I don't know how to word this other than to reference fiction. It was as if Saruman's army made it to the Shire in some capacity. The foundation of our reality shook. The world was not at peace like me in my room at night playing soldier and diplomat. It was a reflection of that, or better those interactions were a reflection of reality.

Why am I talking about all this? For someone who grew up with me, they might relate. But for someone who didn't, you can take it as a sort of emotional and historical account of my life back then. And this context is important.

Mental health. We've all got it and we all have to maintain it. That maintenance is different for many, and the same for some. For me, before my episodes, diagnosis, and treatment, that maintenance looked like a full schedule of school, soccer, friends, and family. It kept me stable or as stable as a teenager can be with all the hormones and new life realizations floating around. I had a temper, maybe average, and the ability to listen greater than most my age. I think this ability is what led me to where I am today. A kooky guy trying to untangle the flying spaghetti monster or another esoteric idea that I will hopefully somehow communicate. This idea is close to me, and I hope you realize that the equivalent in your world is as close to you.

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I learned a language that I have since forgotten. I guess if I started smoking pot again, I might figure it out. But for some reason, by knowing that language, it superseded the language that I learned growing up. The languages were distinct but did have some crossover. Kind of like generations. The old bleeds into the new.

We live in our bubbles singularly and in groups. Sometimes a gesture can mean something to one person and nothing to another. A wink, a shrug, a laugh. The same goes for our internal bubble. We can miscommunicate with ourselves. And that is where mindfulness comes in and it keeps sneaking back into my life.

I read this book called *Wherever You Go There You Are* a couple of times. I am currently reading it for the third time and have come across a quote worth sharing. "Awareness is more like a vessel which can hold and contain our thinking, helping us to see and know our thoughts rather than getting caught up in them as reality." And caught up in reality we do get from time to time.

Speaking for myself, I have three distinct times where I got so caught up in my reality that I ended up in the psych ward for it. Let's say countless other times too with lesser consequences. I will get into those stories but I'd like to lay some groundwork first.

Inner turmoil can be like duality, a battle of light and dark. Back to fictional references, it could be seen like Gollum/Smeagle clawing his way through the prickly thicket that was his mind. When the language left me, I was left to my own devices. I might share some of the notes that I made at the times I was most confused and most sure at the same time.

Spirit and god could be interchangeable but I'm sure to some there is a distinction. To me, there is not. We are made up of physical matter that spirit created so that spirits could inhabit said matter. And while inhabiting the matter there is as little control over your thoughts as to where the wind blows leaves off trees. A sad thought because it kinda means free will is bologna. But what's one person's synaptic opinion, like a leaf falling from a tree, as he observes the fall through this life. I am in control of this crazy ride in one way or another though.

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Lies we tell ourselves. I am fit. I am fat. I am this. I am that. These definitions rule our perspective realities to a point where it is borderline ridiculous. Day to day we build our persona, and without careful analytics, that persona becomes egotistical. Is that inherently bad, no. Are these ramblings inherently useless, I hope not.

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I started writing poetry on my own accord when I was 19. I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder when I was twenty-something. Still bad with timelines. My dad told me many people with this disorder use poetry and rap to communicate complex ideas because their brains are moving at a mile a minute. The play that poetry gives the writer and reader makes for much more space to interpret but in turn makes it less accurate than, say, prose. Unless that is what you are going for of course. Inaccuracy.

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Remember when I confused you earlier with the mention of some strange and common language? Check this out, "People would talk to me, and I was convinced there was another language underneath what we thought we were saying that everyone was using without even realizing it." Close to spot on in my book. This quote is from another called Maps to the Other

Side. The book is a quilted together account of epochs of life with bipolar. I have come to find, after reading a couple of texts, that the lives of people with bipolar are as distinct in their differences as anything. What I'm saying is a bipolar diagnosis is not as cookie-cutter as you might be led to believe. Just the same way someone might need to eat certain foods to get healthy while the next person needs to eat different healthy foods to do the same. As goes with mental health. The same diagnosis does not always mean the same treatment.

I think now the story I tell myself about what happened during those short circuit days is something of the sorts: I was talking to people but not connecting like I thought I was. I *thought* I was communicating on a spiritual level with a group of people who exist among us, speaking the same words, with the same and more meaning to them. I might have been the last to know this way of life. While in it, communication was rapid and contiguous. The story didn't miss a beat.

Playing off of that, I'd like to revisit my proclivity to rap. I remember learning that the sounds of a rhyming thing can stick in the memory better than most things.... I'll have to look that one up. But anyway, for me, that is what rapping did. It stuck to the page but those words were up in my head bouncing around sorting themselves into strings of meaning that somewhat reflected my experiences. Bouncy words for turbulent times. It helps that I went to school for creative writing. I don't think I would have been able to articulate what I went through if it wasn't for the help of education.

I wrote a book in sixty days (no big deal). It was a short book, composed of short-short stories. One short a day was the recipe, and I cooked them up for about sixty days. Some of them even turned out good! My wife, father, mother, and more edited these little daily snippets. It was fun and humbling to read their comments. I titled it Seeds because each story was the seed to a larger one. That is how communication works in my mind. A word turns into, well, a tree.

When in a manic state, rapid and recurrent flash floods of information happen with each word in each sentence uttered by the person I am talking with. I won't have you believe that all of it was causing me to drown in my mind, it wasn't. At times I was at the cusp of high level solving humanity's problems. And at times I was in the trenches chasing fairies. Not a figure of speech. Either way, I'll have you believe that no change that occurred wasn't fluid and natural in my experience, regardless of how it looked from the outside. That is to say, I didn't wake up feeling like a different person but once in my life.

What my actions looked like to my family translate into fear for them. Fear for me and my future - what they had imagined versus what was now possible. It was catastrophic. And perhaps I'm not painting the best picture yet but I will. I will get accounts from friends and family. And I will give you my full account as well. For now, I'll immerse myself in books and materials that will help illuminate the darkish corridor of the 4 am empty psychiatric ward hallway where I found a friend and myself to be a little saner than previously thought.

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Seeking help is not easy when you don't know you need it. I honestly know that if it weren't for my family and friends, I very well may be on the streets, very confused. I think every time I went to the hospital I was chauffeured by my family, and or the ambulance.

I remember waking up in the ambulance, I hadn't slept in a couple of days, and I met this nice man with a smile. I felt safe. Safe enough to fall back asleep. I don't remember being checked into the hospital for the third time. Just sort of being there and vowing to remember how I felt and thought right then. And at the time, those feelings and thoughts were being taken from me. I mean that was the goal, right? To align me with the stability of thinking somewhat like others. But I knew and still know that what I went through is both valuable for you, and others who have gone through similar things.

Not knowing how to communicate an entire internal world to someone you love in the time they expect takes a toll on one's confidence. I remember the first time I went through some tribulation and came out the other side, I thought to myself, "What can I believe?" I knew that much of what I experienced was incommunicable in the state I was in. And I knew that much of it was probably not real.

After they tested me for drugs, and the results came back negative, I felt as if I was there, at the hospital, for a different purpose. I had smoked weed the night before, and a good amount. But the tests came back negative. To my understanding, THC can go out of your blood fairly quickly, but in my mind, that was a sign. Another sign was that I was in a section of the hospital where other people were having drug problems. I thought I was there to pray for them. Prayer was not something I did regularly, but at that moment, I was there to hold them up.

The weight was heavy to the point where it hurt. Hurt so much that I began moaning. I moaned in agony, and for some reason when I looked into my Mom's eyes the pain went away and we both laughed. She doesn't remember that. I do. I decided I wanted to leave the hospital then. That I had done my job. So we told the nurse, I signed some papers and home we went. It was later that I learned my time was nearly up before I would have been admitted into a psychiatric hospital for my own good but not on my own free will. I was eighteen and legally accountable to the state.

The ambulance ride and the prayer session were the last and first episodes respectively. I don't know why they all go together in my head, but that is how I will be writing them while doing my best to draw some sort of distinction.

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My fiancée, soon to be wife (now wife!), asked if it is hard for me to write about this topic. The answer is no. It's not. It's not because this is me, not a separate part that I have to try to put together. I am a person with bipolar disorder, drug-induced psychosis, and a heart full of love. Probably in reverse order but hey, who's counting?

I know I was counting when I was in the hospital. Counting the patient rights that I so desperately wanted to understand but the legalese made it difficult even for the current me. I was in a psychiatric ward, with psychiatric problems, and they had me sign papers and left me to my own devices. Of course, there was group work and evals. But for the most, I wandered and wondered how to get home. Eventually, I grew comfortable, like I was at summer camp, but only before the incident. This is something that I have trouble writing about. So I will hold off.

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Before I ever went to the hospital, I talked to God. More like heard or listened to through another. I smoked a joint of BC bud and my mind was on. We were in a little grove with moss underneath as we sat cross-legged smoking our joints. After the session, I retired to my room where I put on some tunes, more specifically a duo called Black Star. Black Star is comprised of Mos Def and Talieb Kwali. The album was on shuffle and I heard them talk about God (not really) in the sequence the songs came. I couldn't tell you what I heard or what order the songs were in, but as I lay in that lofted dorm room bed, I heard God. I also talked to a tree... kinda.

I think I went outside after hearing God, and I came across this tree whose energy was calling to me. I stood in front of it for an unknown amount of time feeling what it had to say. I also came across a couple of raccoons. We had a moment, for about a minute, where we looked at one another. I felt, what if we could communicate past this eye contact we are making? What would we say? To be honest, I feel like crying now. The moments I'm describing although trivial felt biblical to me. Real, whole moments that wrapped around me like a warm blanket. The night wasn't cold. I was barefoot or had taken off my shoes. I made my way down to the beach by the moonlight on a back trail. UBC's campus is across the street from a well-known nude beach called Wreck Beach. I spent some time down there, only a handful of days if I remember correctly.

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On the beach, another day, there was a time where I smoked a joint with a group of people and talked about spirituality. As far as I know, I was talking to a Rasta about what he believed.

Joint passed.

He told me to look at the horizon, along the waterline, the sky, the sand, the waves. They were all one. And for me, they were visually one at that moment. Everything looked like a painting, two dimensional. It was simple to see the connection. We started to play music, I was in the djembe section, playing to my heart's content. When asked why I wasn't playing with everyone by the same man who showed me the singularity of life, I thought, I am.

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Bipolar Disorder is woven in a fine tapestry of other disorders, all interlaced, and affecting each other accumulating to the totality that is what we know of as mental health. That is a pretty way to say that we know a lot, but not a lot about the distinctions between diagnosis. I'm reading Bipolar Disorder for Dummies and it's telling me quite a bit. First off, there are two types. And in those two types are percentages. Percentages of people who have comorbidity. That is the presence of a couple of chronic diseases. Percentages of suicide rates. It gets heavy fast. One clear thing is that doctors are getting better at diagnosing, using family history, and more refined requirements as the pool grows larger, and time moves on.

One of my psychiatrists recommended that I write down a timeline of important events. This is that of sorts. I never did it. It's been many years and I never tried to set in stone the pivotal moments that led to me being me now. Taken seriously, this task is daunting. It's answering the question, who am I? I had to answer that question during my senior year of high school. I made an emotional fool of myself crying over god knows what in front of about thirty people. Now as I sit on this reclined workout bicycle, swipe typing away, I know that what I'm doing is fated. Shit, fated. Damn, autocorrect.

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Humor got me through a lot. My dad's laugh, booming, and all-encompassing. A laugh I would liken to, say, Thor. My mom and the gentleness about her. Her presence always bringing joy and her infectious laughter. My brother has perhaps the most genuine, endearing laughs. When I hear it, I feel love and understanding. I didn't make people laugh for some time after each episode. There is a proving period when you as the delusional must show that is no longer the case. Even if you feel better, the weight to perform as hoped is palpable. And it's no one's fault. Tiptoeing around me like I was a hurt animal of a special kind was my family and friends. The clinicians

gave a solid foundation to handle this, with their questions and general approach, which I will get into later.

I knew I was still me but I was so far in listening to my inner voice that was so soft that I could hardly hear myself, and it was near impossible to amplify. A story came through my dad's inbox. Somehow while I was in the hospital, one of the shorts I wrote made its way to his email perhaps a year after I sent it. Here is that story.

Humdiddillyhealthy.

Little Annabel was always so sickly sick, and her mother cried and cried for her. Yellow skin, black skin, green skin, it seemed as if something was always changing inside of her. One day, little Annabel's skin turned grey and her body went cold. And inside of her person, of her heart, Little Annabel did grab ahold. It was the only thing still warm, as far as she could tell. She was in there cozy and happy, while out there, her mommy was going through hell.

“Why!” Mommy cried to some fear deep inside.

“Why must my baby go cold and change colors, there isn't anything I haven't tried!”

Knots twisted and turned, churning Momma's very core. She cried and cried until everything she had was sore. But Little Annabel did not wake up she was deep within her mind; cozy and toasty, she thought everything to be fine.

Tra-la-lollygagging around, Little Annabel started to hum the softest of sounds. It felt so good and reverberated just so, that she started to hum louder and sway to and fro.

In the hospital, sitting beside the bed, Mommy laid on Little Annabel's heart, resting her head. And what she heard caused a feeling the opposite of dread. She had felt a sign of life, and that sign she read.

“My daughter will live! I know it to be true. I felt a vibration inside, to call it a humming would be crude. But it was! It was! She's inside there somewhere, probably humming and skipping, without care!”

So Mommy sat vigil, with the power of hope. And Little Annabel got better and Mommy was no longer a mope. So remember next time a loved one is sick, listen soft and hearty because the time, the moment of better health, is soon to tick.

I think this sums up how I felt at the time. I knew I was still me and felt safe, but I didn't know how I was affecting those around me.

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Drugs or recovery? Let's start with the former. I smoked salvia a few times. It was and probably still is a drug that you can get over the counter at a smoke shop, sold as incense. It's of the sage family and is used ritualistically by some cultures to, if I remember correctly, contact the spirits. I was not aiming to do that, I don't think. My dad told me I could do what was legal for me to do. I found this loophole. The second to last time I smoked it, a lot happened. I was with two friends at a music festival at the Gorge. It was my second time drinking, I think I was eighteen, and I had never smoked weed.

What I didn't know was that after a few brews, I had the intention to get high on salvia. There wasn't a good track record of having fun while high on salvia. It was the experience that was addicting. So onward through life, I chugged, about to get high for the whatever time, when I didn't realize that my friend had used weed as a filter. It was a weed pipe you see, with a weed pipe sized hole, a hole big enough for salvia to fall right through. So naturally, with no filters at hand, we used weed as one. But I didn't know.

That hit knocked me back into another world as real as this one, my friend. And when I say, as real as this one I mean pinch yourself, Dorothy, 'cause there's no going home any time soon. I remember it vividly.

I was standing there in my parents' front lawn, looking at myself also being a piece of siding on the house, body all stretched out. It was another day in the neighborhood, quite literally. After a while, something like thunderstruck and I looked up to see the sky breaking. I thought, did I do drugs? The question wasn't if I were high in reality, but rather was I high on my trip. That's when the trippy stuff started to happen.

I found myself with my head attached to a conveyor belt. I could only move my eyes. To the left and right of me were me's as far as I could see, but I was only conscious in one.

Tick, tick, tick. The line moved on. It wasn't long before it started on an upward angle so that my body was horizontal to the ground. Above me was the outline of my body, lying there on the tent floor, the place it was in reality. I saw it coming. Tick. Tick. Tick. I'm in! Holy shit! I exclaim! And back down I go.

Stuck there on the conveyor, I began to wonder, what if the wrong me get stuck in me. A terrifying thought.

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Recovery is a lot harder than getting high on salvia. It takes a Christopher Robin approach. First, don't get high. That's an important step. Don't. Get. High. Remember that. At least that was the case for me. I decided to be sober some unknown years ago. The choice was easy and I made it many times. The last time I made it, it stuck. The problem that surfaced was this: my mental health vs. getting high/drunken. For some reason, that time it was obvious, and I've been sober ever since. I take my medication regularly, I go to therapy, I read, I work, I family, I friends... I am a functioning member of society! A society that is far different since the internet was created, again, another topic to unpack later.

But what was I saying? Oh yeah, Christopher Robin. The kid plays with his emotions in the form of animated stuffed animals. He touches each piece of himself through the different characters and remains lofted above. It's that perspective that we strive for and mindfulness is a huge contributor to getting there. Remember that quote from earlier, "Awareness is more like a vessel which can hold and contain our thinking, helping us to see and know our thoughts rather than getting caught up in them as reality." Winnie the Pooh is a story about a kid, Christopher Robin, who has developed a mechanism to train his self-awareness. I've got a couple of quotes to pull from The Tao of Pooh, but before that, I thought I'd mention the book I was listening to on the walk home from work. I get to walk through a community garden, in this sunny weather, a reprieve from office work, which in itself isn't bad.

I was listening to Recovery by Russell Brand, read by Russell Brand. Brilliant. The book is brilliant even if you are not an addict because you glean insight into what an addict's life and recovery path look like, and it ain't easy. Recovery can mean so many things and in this instance, it is a paradigm called The Twelve Steps. I don't know much about the individual steps but one thing I know is that you have to ask help from a higher power.

Now, I don't know if that means someone who has been there done that or an actual deity. I think both. The idea is your plan to quit whatever hasn't worked the last umpteenth time you've tried, so why not give it up to the highest to make a plan for you. Even if this is just psychological, and there is no God, I think this thought pattern is key. For you to have a realization, something needs to change. You can't go through churning away the same neurons if you want results. And neurons are what is in question in the case of mental health. By the way, dependence on alcohol or other drugs are mental health diseases.

So neurons. I like to sprinkle in scientific words so that I sound more photosynthesis (stolen internet joke.) But seriously, I don't understand neurons past the pathways we create when forming thoughts. I think neurons are the hubs with little tentacle-like connectors that form our brains. I saw it on TV. Probably wrong, but let's pretend. So neurons are thought patterns and thought patterns are what we need to change. I think of it like water running down a rock-face creating a groove. It would take an obstacle to be introduced for that pattern to change. In many people's cases, that obstacle is the Twelve Step Program. In mine, it was the realization that I wanted to live a healthy life. Take away the obstacle, and the groove that wasn't groovy is still there. That is why people who are on the program must stick to it like doctrine.

From the Tao of Pooh:

“If you face the fact that you have weak muscles, say, then you can do the right things and eventually become strong. But if you ignore What's There and try to lift someone's car out of a ditch, what sort of condition will you be in after a while? And even if you have more muscle than anyone alive, you still can't push over a freight train. The wise know their limitations; the foolish do not.”

We constantly face obstacles that are beyond our solving, but together we most likely can solve them. Building a skyscraper demands an army of workers, designers, testers, etc. One person could not build a skyscraper alone in one lifetime. My mental health is the skyscraper and I rely on the people around me to build it up. Of course, I claim the title of head architect, but I have many other architects, my friends, my family, my doctors, helping with the blueprints.

Countless numbers of people before me grappled with mental health have seen the dark side of things, as well as the light. Medications have improved, as well as the method of diagnosis, and overall stigma. I too stand on the backs of giants and shed tears for those lost to the tide of life. Here is a quote from that was quoted in The Tao of Pooh, “One disease, long life; no disease, short life.” Life is a constant reconstruction. Things break down: Tools, dust happens, mechanisms we use digitally, our bodies.

Everything breaks down, that is the nature of life. The quote is a “..saying from the area of Chinese medicine...” and it directs us to that very point. If we are to maintain something, we must know what ails it. Bipolar Disorder has a list of criteria that one must mirror to be diagnosed. Then, for treatment, there is a list of possibilities that have worked for people in the past with the same diagnosis. For me, not everything we tried worked. I took some medications that had seemingly adverse effects on my health to the point where I thought, no thanks! Some of the therapy sessions felt like, say, useless. Balancing everything didn't work out for me always, and still doesn't always.

Hindsight is twenty-twenty, especially when looking over medical documents. I was given a slew of papers when in the hospital that all told me about my situation. I got good, well actually above average reading scores in elementary school, but those didn't translate in these situations. “Welcome” in nice curvy letters calling me in like a siren to the rocky shores of sanity. “To 5 West Hospital B.” Very inviting. The fuck am I supposed to do with these papers? The answer is to stash them away like the squirrel I am so that I could read them later.

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Let's talk about fish bowls. I wonder sometimes if the language we are given can fit in a fishbowl. We can draw words from this fishbowl, make new meaning by connecting the words, and ultimately add new words to the bowl itself. But did everyone start with the same fishbowl of words? If so, how many words were there? Did some elemental set of words guide the experience of discovering meaning?

Well, here's the thing. God told me there is already a fishbowl, nay a universe of words out there that all perfectly explain things with accuracy. Things... not a very accurate term to nail down this wiggly concept. By things, I mean what we experience and how we communicate that experience in real-time.

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I like to read over what I wrote fairly repetitively but as a piece of work gets longer, that task becomes more tedious. It's kinda like life. The older we get, the more we have to remember. If you get it, then you remember the things that enrich your lives. That does not mean remembering only the good things you have done. It's more of a balance than that. For example, I have said some mean things. I keep those things in mind so that I do not repeat those words. But at the same time, I have made people smile. I remember those smiles.

What makes me feel the most hopeless is how we, as a thing, miscommunicate. I did not want to say we as a people because the scope is broader than that. I think communication is much more elemental, more spiritual than we give it credit for. For example, we communicate with trees. Trees and we give each other life. That's pretty cool. Thoughts are things too. They happen, then chemicals are spread, and hormones and stuff. Those thought-things also eventually move your mouth and flap your vocal cords.

What I am going to do is going to take a lifetime. I plan on cleaning this dirty fishbowl that we are all swimming, eating, and pooping in. I want us as a people to understand that words are heavy. Words have meaning. Words are spirit encapsulated. When wielding the spirits, one should exercise constraint and focus. Words should not just be thrown around all willy nilly. Doodle di dado. See. That was nonsense.

I am going to show people that their fish bowls are dirty. Heck, I am going to help show that they are swimming in a dammed fishbowl in the first place. It's going to be great. They are going to be like, whoa, I can breathe underwater!

God showed me a perfect language but I was too high to remember it. I wish I was kidding. I smoked the ganj and I heard, better felt, this perfect language. It was one that if spoken everything was communicated with precision down to the quarks of the matter. It was a language where things could not be misunderstood, and there was no reason to disagree because everything fit. I do not speak that language. But I heard it. It is real. And I am crazy to think that one day I might contribute to the disease like spreading of goodness with the help of this language.

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I cried today, July 29th, 2019. I incriminate myself as a crier because it felt good. I cried because of the state of the world and the cycle it goes through. Mainly doctrine turned into religion turned into fervor turned into war. I believe that these bigger warring groups of people are all pulling words from their fishbowls, are saying the same thing as each other, and arguing who is saying it right. And they know no better because their fish bowls are so inherently different and possibly dirty. I cried. It felt good. Do not know what it did other than that.

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The language. I hope it is with me now. I told it that I was going to go dark for a while, and I promised to tell everything that happened when I got back. I hope that I can remember

everything important. Because I believe it is important to paint an accurate picture of where you have been and where you want to go.

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The incident. They held me down and injected something in my booty cheek. What had happened was she told me I needed to take a new medicine the first day I arrived at the involuntary stay at the hospital. I replied, um no. Not until I talk to my psychiatrist. So the med time came, and I didn't take it. And then... when I was in bed reading, they came in about six men and held my face down so they could give me the medicine... in my booty cheek.

I screamed, I cried, I made empty threats. But I let them do it because I knew that if I didn't, my time there might be longer than anticipated. Not that I anticipated being there. Come to think of it, how did I get there? Blah. Enough for tonight.

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Hello again. I just finished writing a song and boredom set in. My wife is away, I already ate, I created, blah blah blah. How is it that there are so many problems in the world? How is it that we have all this free time yet there is no project manager designating tasks to those who are free? Why do these flipping questions come to my mind? I think I mentioned I cried the other day. I've cried like this twice.

I am stable mentally, and these tears, nay sobs, flood my psyche and my body has no choice. I think I am supposed to do something about the big picture problem of existence. I know how to focus on details, but I feel like a presence god-like thing showed me something that not everyone sees... or feels.

~

I talked to a man today who was a soldier, and he explained life in a perspective that few in my circle have. I want to share my view of life with others as he shared with me. But what in the world does that mean? For me, I want my life to be a multimedia presentation where people can tune in and out as they please. I want books, music, pictures, movies, holograms, sensorgrams, augmented reality experiences for what I have to offer. Why the heck though, do I value my experience so much? I don't know the answer. It is more of a feeling.

I do feel less bored when I write. I hope that reading this makes you feel less bored. I don't want my distracting thoughts to overwhelm or bore. I hope it lands in the middle. Like I am, with Bipolar Disorder! What a segway!

I am medicated and to be honest, I don't know exactly what each medication is supposed to do, but I know that my mix works for me. Even if it is a peace of mind thing. I don't think it is, cause I believe in pharmaceuticals when prescribed appropriately. I am no doctor, but I have seen first hand my life turn around for the better. I don't give drugs all the credit. There is also the fact that I go to therapy, and that I have a loving circle of family and friends that support me. That is key, and that is why I cry. I think about that often, what if I didn't have that circle. I am reminded as I walk the streets in Seattle, and I want to help. I am starting with this memoire because I hope that it gives some insight into what a mind over the edge looks like. That way, empathy can weigh in and we can see our family that is lost wandering the street, for whatever reason, as people who need love.

I think I should research more here, that way all this jibber-jabber will be qualified. Hold on a second... "In the Seattle King County area, about 12,500 homeless people are living on the streets or in shelters." That's a lot of people. Sometimes it seems biblical to me, the number of people that are underneath so to speak. But what are they under? What burdens do they carry that are unique to them? I don't know, but I do know a subset of them are dealing with drugs and psychosis.

~

A thought.

We will expand the network to cover those who are in dire need and cannot afford the current model.

~

Dear diary,

I am spending some time reading outdated books on mental health, an exercise that I think will prove worth my time. I am also apparently sleepwalking, which concerns me. I fear what could happen. So far it's been fine but I don't know.

Work is kinda stressful but not so much so. I think the added responsibility of being a husband, a dog dad, and a provider is stress enough. I wonder how people have done it for so long. It's okay though. It will all be fine.

Adam

~

I'm gonna grab my narcotics anonymous book that I got from the thrift store. I have been able to take multiple things from it and relate them to my disorder. On that note, disorder that is, isn't it funny how things get out of order... like this book? If you are this far, well then you've almost done a thing! Read through the ramblings of a sane man with a brain plan to tame the lands and get fame and dam the mental hole letting thoughts out of control flow out till nobody knows what in the world is going on. Psychosis. A detachment from reality. Anxiety. Fear of possible futures. Depression. Being tired of being you. Mania. The impossible is possible which is a great feeling until it catches up with you.

Once in my past, a friend's dad took us to Fry's electronic store. I bought a shitty Pitbull remix CD. Anyways, he had a beater car and would leave his windows down with the keys in the front seat. "Who's gonna steal this?" He'd say. So I did that. I was at the mall, the Target parking lot, and left the windows down in my 2011 Subaru Impreza WRX, with the keys on the front seat. Target was years after Fry's, but for some reason in my manic state that action penetrated my thoughts and I did it. I walked away from my car and next, I remember I was sitting on an empty skate park pondering some things. The spot was reminiscent of my childhood stomping grounds, but everything was grey like in a desolate scene in a movie. I thought, what happened to this place? I don't know how long I sat there and ruminated.

I saw the light. It was green, and on someone's front porch, beckoning me towards it. After living in a town called Bellingham, I was under the impression that a green light meant a safe space. Thank god I was right.

By the way, that light was still glowing green as my wife and I drove out of the Target parking last Friday night, August 2019. I don't remember the year I went into the light, but I do remember what happened. A man answered my knock, in his fifties. We talked, he invited me in, we sat. The T.V. was on the news. There were floods in Las Vegas or Nevada or something. I remember thinking it was a sign. The only thing I remember him saying, although we talked for some time, is something like, "Alright, I better be getting on with my day." And I left. Not in any great fashion, but just as I came through the door, I left. I hope that this man reads this and remembers me.

I went into the mall. Two things happened. Magic in Radio Shack, and the Ice Age. The Magic in Radio Shack happened before I was paranoid. I was still on top of the world, as they say. I met someone who reminded me of my uncle. They were working at Radio Shack. I wanted a BlueTooth receiver and a car mount for my phone. I wanted to listen to music cordless, what else can a man ask for? But I didn't know what I was doing. I asked for these things with these criteria and voila! The person provided. I then asked for a discount because that is a part of a normal transaction in the US. Low and behold, I got a discount! I figured out later that the thing I got a discount on didn't work well, but hey! I got one anyhow.

Mania is no joke. It is amazing though. To me, it felt like I was the king, super suave, a mighty man! No kidding, it was like I was the protagonist in a movie, something like the feeling of having no limits. I could run a marathon with no training. I could be the MMA champ of the world. I could write a book with no premise...

After I bought my discounted loot, I went about my wandering business. Now, remember, my car was in the parking lot with windows down and keys perched in the driver's seat, taunting the world. And seriously I had no goal. I don't even remember why I went there. I think I was supposed to be at work. If my memory serves me, I wanted to find a new way to work and ended up about twenty minutes north of where I was supposed to be.

At the mall, I walked around not looking for anything but being driven by some divine force. That's when I saw a scene that I construed accidentally. There was a person with special needs walking by the same time a group of young men, not unlike myself, joked amongst themselves. Their laughter, to me, was directed to the person with needs, and that made me furious. I had a cup of ice in my hand and made the impulsive decision to jettison the ice out of the cup and toward the group. Thankfully the ice narrowly missed. "It's the ice age," one of the men said, as we all walked forward through the moment. Now I wonder, what happened to that ice? Did it sit there and melt, causing a puddle? Or did someone sweep it up before it became a hazard? I don't know, because I bolted in a walking-like fashion.

I think back and am so grateful that my aim was poor, and the men were jovial. It could have turned out way worse... but it thankfully didn't. After that, my high went away and paranoia set in. I B-lined it for the outside world as I was being followed by some unseen person or people. I made it outside safe but didn't feel safe. Oh, look, a bus stop. That's a good idea, get on one. So I did, no bus pass, no cash, I just got on the first one I saw. Magically that bus was headed in the right direction, and I ended up in the right place. But before that, there was an interaction worth noting. It was between the bus driver and me. She wanted me to pay, but funnily enough, they didn't take credit. I told her to, "just drive." And she did. Good god Adam.

Downtown now, I end up at a fancy bar that is to remain unnamed cause I don't know why. I was in the back and a big booth, drinking beers, and enjoying the goods that I plundered. It was about noon.

Oh hey, Russell is calling. I pick up. Some interaction happens, he ends up at the bar. Russell is my best bud. He shows up for me like he did that day. He convinced me to go home, about a ten-minute walk away. I guess I had either been ignoring my family's phone calls or just missing them. Either way, Russell got through.

On a side note, reliving this is harder than it seems. Not so much emotionally, but remembering the facts. It seems like I kind of blanked out some of the bits from my memory. Just now, though, I remember standing on the bus, coming down I-5 South toward Seattle, watching the city grow nearer. I wonder how the bus driver felt with this strange man standing right at the line the whole time when there were plenty of seats to take.

Let's transport back to my parent's condo where I met my cousin and soon after, my brother. We were in there. I had a glass of water in hand. One of them must have gotten it for me. Who asked me if I was okay, I don't remember. But that triggered it. I realized I wasn't okay but not in a reasonable way.

I threw the water out of my glass onto the ceiling, jumped on the couch, and yelled about this and that being wrong. "This is Mary's Place!" I screamed at Elliot Bay. There was an evil presence coming, and I was warning it to stay away. How did my mind get here? I don't know. But it did!

I walked by Mary's Place, but never really knew what it was until after this incident. It is a shelter for families without homes. I still have that grandiosity about me. I still think that we can change the status quo of the standard of being alive.

After this tantrum, I hurt my testicle somehow, but just one. So I pulled the one testie out and laid on the ground completely pooped. I remember the paramedics looking at me from up high, but I don't remember being carried out. I remember waking up in the ambulance on the way to the mental hospital, and there was a kind parametric. I felt safe on the way to my involuntary stay at a sleepover, get-better-camp. I fell back asleep.

~

“Although we are not responsible for our disease, we are responsible for our recovery.” - Narcotics Anonymous. I particularly like this quote because it reminds me of the nature of an illness. An illness it is, and recovery is the only thing we have control over. And to me, recovery is a lifelong maintenance program.

“The impact of bipolar disorder on the brain is thought to include abnormal structures, abnormal levels of neurotransmitters (the chemical messengers of the brain), abnormal cellular function, and abnormal metabolic function.” - Childhood Bipolar Disorder AnswerBook. This quote reminds me that the illness is real. And so are the effects. But reading things about the disorder after living it is helpful to no end. It’s unfortunate that the understanding of the disorder, while it is being diagnosed, is near impossible for the person affected. But once clarity is achieved, I think it is important to research and learn about what you went through. This can be helpful for anybody going through anything.

Remember when I told you about my salvia experience? I told my new psychiatrist about it too. I told him that I did it more than five times. He asked why, because of his understanding it was not a pleasant trip. I replied that I was addicted to the experience.

I think I was forced to become more articulate because of my recovery. I am in a constant proving period as a person on a maintenance program. It’s kind of like the inevitable weed that comes to strangle the plants in your garden. If you don’t weed regularly, those weeds will take over. My psyche is similar, and the weeds are the effects of bipolar. It’s tiring but worth it.

I am sober of weed, alcohol, and other drugs. I still drink caffeine but that is about as hardcore as I get. This sobriety has been a thing for a few years. I don’t know, it might be worth mentioning twice or thrice, because maybe the first time you read it, it didn’t hit home. I am sober of weed, alcohol, and other drugs. It’s not easy, but it is at the same time. I like the taste of beer, wine, weed. But they increase the risk of symptoms. Those things are like reverse Round-Up for my mind weeds. Being mindful of this is what I practice.

“To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of the arts.” - Thoreau. That is my goal. To wake up happy. To use my mania and inject it in doses throughout my day to remain positive. To use my depression and inject it throughout the week to remain grounded and connected to the world at large. Because the world at large is not okay. The standard of living is lower than I’d hope for. That included the mental well being of the masses.

~

Dear Diary,

We are in Oregon, in a little studio rental, on a beach called Rockaway. I am through my last holistic treatment and taking a break before I start up work again. Tabi, Koa, and I are on vacation! And I am relaxed. Learned to self soothe, some mindfulness words, and techniques to brighten any day. The people who were studying at the same facility as I were vital to my learning of a good way of life. I hope that I will be able to continue turning the mind and choosing reality day in and day out.

~

Math. The present moment is like a limit. As  $x$  approaches  $C$ , we can almost touch that moment. But if it ever hits  $C$ , well, that would be confusing. Moments entrenched in time lost to the mind. Effervescent like those coke commercials at the beginning of a feature film. The film is thin, veiling within.

~

From the bottom up. I was confused, but now I decided to get into a program at my place of work that will teach me web development. Determined, I have studied every day for the past week. Something cool I learned was a concept called abstraction.

The example they give is a gas pedal making a car go faster. You don't need to understand the inner workings of the engine. You don't need to understand the math behind the laws of motion. You don't need to understand the theoretical physics that back all of that up. And alas! There is a limit to human knowledge, and you need not ponder that. Just put the pedal to the metal and go! Kinda metaphorical, but still someone needs to sit on the edge of certainty with a fishing pole, waiting for something to bite.

Amazingly, we can even recognize our lack of knowledge. Our limits. We are a being of great power in that sense. When we know at what intersection lies the confusion, we can ponder what to do next using deduction and the scientific method.

I don't want to sell you anything. That is why the digital copy of this story is free. The idea I want to share is simple. When a loved one is hurt, we help. How we help may be different, but we help until we cannot help anymore.

~

Depression is a fuck. Fuck depression. Fuck suicidal ideation.

I was only depressed for three months, but it felt like forever. I wrote a list of people who I needed to write before I killed myself. I was at work when I did this. No amount of cheering up could bring me out of my self-loathing and feeling of defeat. I was ready to end it. To be done.

Thank god for my youngest cousin. I thought about her. I thought twice about my plan. I shared my plan with my family. They got me help.

~

I'm an outlier. One of the people who would not be allowed to immigrate into this country. With my troubled mind, I am deemed unfit for normal citizenship. Citizenship is a weird concept. Bound to an organized governing body that provides services that were paid for by your labor. Labor is time. Time is aging. And the water is mixed with chemicals. Chemical we synthesized.

When I feel myself going red, angry, about situations that I have conceptualized in my head, I start to feel a pressure on one side of my face. I want to cuss and swear and dramatically swing my arms about the abuse in the world. Then I remember I have a family, and that brings me joy. The stuff that causes me pain is not worth my time and energy. The best way to combat it anyway is to be kind and build great things. My wife keeps me grounded. When I have grandiose ideas, she lets me know with grace and humor. But I know, even with my feet on the ground, that we can achieve great things.

~

I think I distilled the experience with the language I was a part of into one sentence.

The universe was responding to my thoughts in an intelligible way.

It communicated through people, colors, electricity, through the past, present, future. Through everything. Intelligible. I was able to understand and make sense of the communication. It was telling me there is a God. That there is a language that God speaks, and some people already speak it. I was being inducted, maybe. It was a perfect language. No communication went misheard. It was accurate. One detail of knowing the language was that it was to remain secret. I

thought to myself, no way! This language is perfect. More should know! Well, seriously, that is around the time it left me.

~

I asked tarot cards on how to learn the language again. It told me some stuff. The last card was the magician. I took that as a good sign.