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poems
by
doctors

Suicide Junkie

Jo McFarlane

The last overdose I took
was precipitated by the fear of abandonment.
I had misinterpreted my key worker's kindness
as a sign she was soon to be leaving,
I wasn't trying to make her stay;
I just couldn't imagine how I'd cope without her
so death seemed the only viable option.

When I was younger
I used to fantasise about being murdered.
It seemed the obvious solution
to my impossible predicament:
Life too unbearable to go on
but I wouldn't have to face the wrath of hell
because the fatal knife plunged into me
would be the doing of another's hand.

So I'd tank up on the cheapest and most potent booze
then stagger round the streets all night,
searching for a friendly psychopath
to put me out of my misery.
Some nights I slept on a dried patch of dog's piss,
soaking up the fumes with a vampire's
lust for the macabre.

There was the odd attempted hanging
where I proved myself a parody
of beefed-up incompetence.
I even tried to drown myself by swimming out to sea.
The life crew that picked me up
were unaware of the irony in my 'thanks'
When I jumped off Salisbury Crags
some unseen force intervened and I came off lightly
with a thousand bruises and a broken bone.
Staring from the Forth Road Bridge into the black abyss,
I should have known
the fence would prove too much for my dyspraxia.
Each botched attempt to silence the scream
another notch upon the damning pages of my notes.

Lurching from crisis to crisis
fed the adrenalin of being mad.
I wasn't doing it for attention
but release from the distress.
It's hard to explain if you've not known the pain
of desolation in the beauty of a sunset.
Being addicted to despair is a sickness of the soul.
The healing touch of heaven, I now see,
comes not from death
but the sunset quickening my senses,
making me feel whole.

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Selected by Femi Oyeboade. From *Stigma & Stones: Living with a Diagnosis of BPD*, poems by Sally Fox & Jo McFarlane. Through their collection *Stigma & Stones*, writers/performers/partners Sally Fox and Jo McFarlane seek to promote understanding, improve treatment and reduce the stigma of living with a diagnosis of BPD.

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