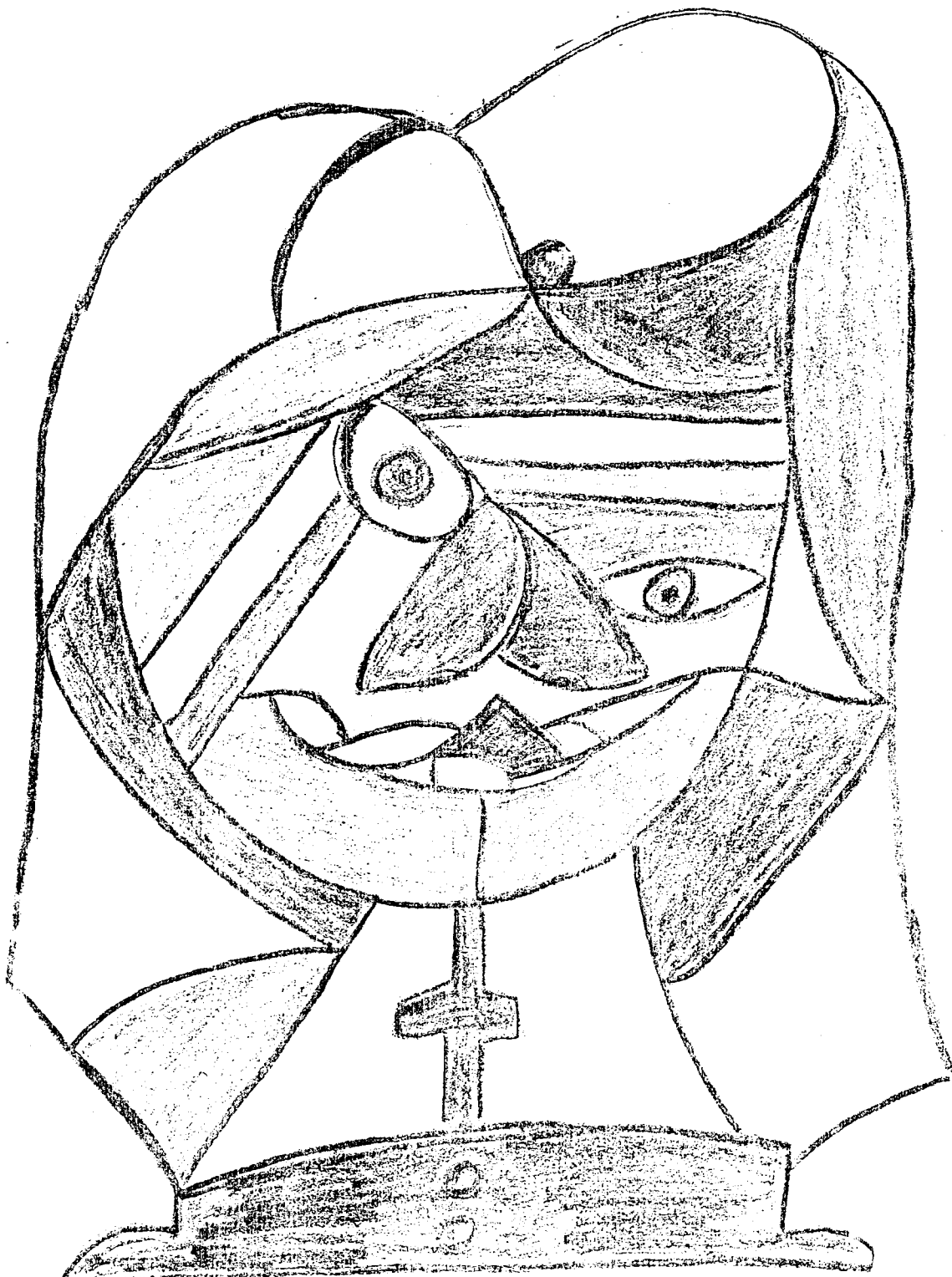


Spring - Summer 97

In A NutShell

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION



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How to Become A Schizophrenic: The Case Against Biological Psychiatry

by John Modrow
Reviewed by Byron Fraser

There have been quite a number of books published in recent years attacking biopsychiatry but virtually all have been written by professionals, experts in the field who have not personally experienced the so-called schizophrenic phenomena. Now we have a brilliant first-hand account by a "survivor", one who has really been there and gone through all of the typical symptomatic stages down to receiving his label and treatment, etc. What distinguishes John Modrow's book is his extensive autobiographical section showing unequivocally how it is clearly environmental causes that grow "schizophrenia" and his equally clear-headed and well-informed section analyzing psychiatry today in all its multifaceted manifestations. As well, as his notes and bibliography make plain, he has mastered an impressive amount of relevant source literature both pro and con. This is no amateur effort.

I won't recount here, but leave to the reader, the details of John Modrow's life which are spelled out at considerable length

in the first half of his book. Suffice it to say, his story, which some may find somewhat tedious reading in parts, is quite necessary for painting a total picture of how this thing called "schizophrenia" comes about. From his narrative, we see the step-by-step progression of environmental — largely family — influences leading up to a full-blown breakdown. What results is an intimate portrait of the inner life of a person with an abnormal psychological orientation and how they — quite logically and without any organic disease component — got that way. The implication is that the backgrounds of others labelled "schizophrenic" will reveal similar rich mines of data shedding light on their condition and that this is the direction in which psychiatry should be looking for efficacious insight and "cures".

The second half of this book, titled "The Medical Model Re-examined", is more analytical and extremely valuable. He covers much the same material as Peter Breggin's "Toxic Psychiatry" but in a shorter, more con-

cise form. He examines schizophrenia postulated as brain, biochemical, and genetic defects and finds all of the popular extant theories wanting. One faulty hypothesis after another is explicated and shot down in flames. And he adds a useful appendix on just how neuroleptic drugs work, what they do and do not do. His last chapter, "The Anatomy of a Dogma", is full of scintillating rhetorical gems from which we can all take heart during the present predicament. Here are just a few:

"Can we really expect psychiatrists to give up the social prestige, special privileges, and high pay associated with medicine merely because there exists strong evidence which indicate that schizophrenia and other functional mental disorders are not actual organic diseases?"

"...for once the protective ideological veil of the medical model is torn away, they will be revealed as total incompetents incapable of managing such mental disorders as schizophrenia in even a halfway enlightened or effective or humane way."

"It is wholly inappropriate for psychiatrist to take pride in their supposed 'medical expertise' when the problems they usually deal with are clearly not of a medical nature."

"Due to their ideologically induced blindness and lack of

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Remembering Douglas Dean

by D. Paul Strashok

Writing about the mental health scene is no easy matter, because it is writing about something that I am supposed to know something about and yet, the truth is that I know so very little.

What I do know are my own episodes and encounters with mental health professionals and the entire sub-culture of consumers. There are incidents, accidents and episodes that could tear me apart all over again, were I to dwell on them too long. Most of all the people I have met along the way. Some of their faces shine in my memory like beacons of truth and beauty in the darkness. Others are only hazy reflections lost in the muddy waters of the distant past.

One face I remember so well, probably because it was so closely united to the singularity of his name, was Douglas Dean.

The first time I met Douglas Dean, he was striding down the locked wards of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton, dressed immaculately in a sports coat, slacks and tie, chewing feverishly on several sticks of Trident gum. His face beamed with a heavenly light. He informed me that he had just returned from Bible College in Lincoln, Nebraska and that the reason he had to chew gum was because of the dry mouth he had as a side-effect of his medication. Immediately, he took me into the

common room to play and sing hymns with the aid of a handy guitar. He absolutely shone with the glory of God upon his face in that first encounter.

The next time I met him was in 9 building at Alberta Hospital. We were on a locked ward together and at that time I was under the impression that my name was Israel so like Jacob of old I began to wrestle with some very corporeal "angels" (white clad attendants on the ward whom I now prefer to call 'goon squads'). As they wrestled me to the floor to give me a shot of Thorazine, I heard a voice pipe up from the common room. It was Douglas Dean crying out "Hey, what are you doing to that guy?" and he strode up to the conflict to see if he could help me out. The next thing I knew, the attendants jumped on him and he was lying beside me on the floor. There, pasted along the hard linoleum-concrete floor our hands were almost touching as we simultaneously received injections for our lack of sheep-like submission. I'll never forget that moment when one of my own brothers stood up to help me and died with me in that place.

The next time I met Douglas Dean was on an open ward in 10 building, the hotel of the Alberta Hospital campus. He

would call me 'a man of the cloth' because I still expressed faith in Jesus and read my Bible quite continuously. He told me the reason that he was in this time was because he had leaped upon his own father one night in the middle of the night and tried to kill him. Like me he had returned to his own family in later years to try and solve the mental health dilemma. The shine had long since left his face.

The last time I saw Douglas Dean was on a bus on Whyte Avenue in the southside of Edmonton. As I looked at him I asked him if he still believed in Jesus. He replied -"You know what I believe in, I believe in Rock 'n Roll ". That's that last time I ever saw Douglas Dean. But one thing I did understand was that the transformation that the psychiatric system had worked on him was almost complete. Now, I have lost complete track of him. Perhaps he is still out there somewhere, attending dance halls, revering the "King" of Rock'n Roll.



Breakthrough Breakdown

by Jim Gifford

What is Reality if not in the mind of the beholder?

In the throes of shamanic rite de passage, the primitive undergoes an intense emotional, mental and physical crisis. Thrust into the wilderness, he/she becomes a wounded visionary of dead spirits and the supernatural animal, plant, and mineral kingdoms. He/she accesses the darkside of the psyche and, in manic-schizophrenic, psychotic state, is overwhelmed by terrifying demons, dynamic archetypes of humanity, intuitive magic haunting with its occult powers, even God Itself. Delusions, hearing voices and hallucinations are integral to this Vision Quest.

By expressing these potent images of Inner reality, the primitive comes to accept and be reconciled with these influences seeking to control, possess, and manipulate him/her. When this sojourn has run its course, the now fully-fledged wounded healer returns to communal life as a key figure.

Like the shamanic trial, manic-psychosis among the so-called mentally ill is a time of aberrant behaviour characterized by extreme emotional excitability, impetuosity, frenzy of ideas, rambling speech, prophetic visions, and delusions of grandeur.

The ultimate delusions of grandeur are the archetypal 'I am

God' and 'I am Christ.' To view this as a heirarchal revelation creates in him/her a feeling of authority and omnipotence. Or one may see the world with a pantheistic eye, all nature equally embued with the Essence of the Universal Dance, the Spirit of Being.

During the phase of struggling to balance the fires of psychic energy, the sensitivity to the waves of the life-force (external/internal) is so overwhelming a cyclical vibrational swing as to appear to mindsets as disoriented and crippling. There is an intense burst and overcapacity of peripheral experience. Unlike 'normal' people who discriminate and select image patterns according to survival and interest moulds, the manic-psychotic has the mammoth task of making sense and meaning from sensory and information input flooding the mind like a tidal wave. Symbols are used as a unifying tool: telephone poles are crosses, stars are neurons of God's Mind, birds are angels.

Such metaphors, that allow this mind swamping to settle into a form of clarity, are the result of falling and imploding into the Abyss, frequently without guides or maps. He/she penetrates the Sources of Being that have been coated over in mankind's

evolutionary history with layer on layer of the civilizing syndrome. Perceived madness is the acting out, in relationship to daily surroundings, of these newly discovered beings of the awakened psychological depths. Often creatively gifted as artists, poets, musicians, these individuals' eccentric perceptions and perspectives reveal the thin line between genius and insanity.

In the western world, such souls may find themselves imprisoned in mental asylums, subjected to pills, therapy and shock treatment, for having expressed metaphorical language that is misunderstood by linear thinking persons in whom latent subconscious qualities only surface during sleep. Unfortunately, in our material-oriented culture potential shamans, driven to the upheaval of dis-ease that leads to a psychic death and an awakening are cast aside, fringe members of society who are unheard, ignored and ridiculed. At odds with and totally unacceptable to the safety and survival of the status quo, psychiatry intervenes, stigmatically labelling a profound period of transformation with terms like mania, psychosis, and schizophrenia.

Let us hope someday these persons are allowed and encouraged as unique members of the human family to ascend the spiral of change and grow into the

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Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmar

Most of the time I live inside the cave of my consulting room, practising a discipline of attentiveness. It's a monastic life and very eggy. Eggy, because I wait receptively like an egg in a fallopian tube, and people find their way to me. For balance, once or twice a year I arrange some traveling to satisfy my spermy side. Right now, I am about to take off for Budapest, London, Big Sur in California, and Toronto. I will give talks, lead workshops and participate in discussions and consultations. Mostly people will want to know what I have learned from practicing psychotherapy for 28 years. What is psychotherapy? In what follows, I am trying to gather my thoughts, trying to prepare some cogent replies.

Most therapists who learned their trade within one school or another, are interested in treatment aimed to cure a pathology. I cannot be subsumed into a system and no methodology can reach me. So why would I approach the Other with pre-conceptions, violently reducing

his infinite otherness, inconceivable, unrepresentable otherness of the Other into the Same, into some version of myself, fitting him into what I already know? John Heaton, a long-time associate of R.D. Laing, puts it this way: "The Other is radical only if the desire for it is not the possibility of anticipating it as the desirable or of thinking it out beforehand but if it comes aimlessly as an absolute alterity, like death". The Other, for me, is always a revelation that goes beyond language, whom it is impossible to understand, explain or interpret. I meet people face to face. And when our eyes meet, I wonder, "Who, or what, needs to be healed, of what, by whom, how?" Anyone answering the above with certainty would be rash and arrogant. Christa Wolf, in one of her novels, writes, "A word came up, as if newly invented: truth. We kept repeating it, truth, truth, and believed the word was more closely than ever our concern, truth, as if it were some animal with small eyes which lives in the dark and is timid but which one can surprise

and catch, to possess it for all time. Just as we'd possessed our earlier truths. Then we checked ourselves. Nothing is so difficult as turning one's attention to things as they really are, to events as they really occur, after one has spent a long time not doing so and has mistaken their reflection in wishes, beliefs and judgments for the things and events themselves.

We need to understand on the basis of phenomena, not through hypothetical constructs out of principles. "Phenomenon is what we see, what is present in our experience, 'what presents itself', within the limits of the way it presents itself", writes Jan Patočka, a Czech philosopher who died in 1977 at the hands of the police who held him imprisoned and tortured him because he spoke out for freedom. "Freedom, which is always a freedom to let what is be what and how it is, but ever anew and to greatest depth, is a seeing freedom, not merely sensing and most of all not believing, proclaiming and insisting". Compare this with what R.D. Laing wrote on love: "To love the Other, is to see the other as s/he is, whether or not this is as s/he needs to be seen, or as we feel the need to see him, her, them. Similarly, to love ourselves is to love oneself as one is, not as we feel we



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UnderDog by Jim Gifford



One Friday morning, heading off for my monthly respite in Vancouver, I stopped for coffee with the gang at Jade's Blue Cafe. Mentioning I had to catch a bus in a few minutes, I got up to leave. At the next table Mike McIntosh quipped 'they say anyone over thirty who takes the bus is a failure.'

Amid the chuckles, I made a reply about smallies. Over coffee a few days earlier at Whitby's in White Rock, a pal and I were witticizing about our status in life. We remarked on the various acronyms that have held sway during recent times: yuppies (young urban professionals); yippies (youth international party); dinks (double income no kids). In a moment of jest we labelled ourselves smallies (sensitive middle-aged losers).

We laughed that there are no BMW's in our foreseeable fu-

ture, my pal's car having seen better days when he had a career. Today he could be described as a dharma bum like a Jack Kerouac character in "On The Road".

I, too, have found such a lifestyle appealing. There is a serene detachment from the competitive games of our society. Once an ambitious Law School student and later driven to reach the top as a famous writer, I have since learned the wisdom of being low man on the totem pole. Now small things enhance my everyday life.

My pal and I allow for the time and space to converse without running around with our heads chopped off. As psychiatrist Carl Jung wrote 'hurry is not of the devil; it is the devil itself.'

For me a 'breakthrough breakdown' was the turning point; for my pal it was a broken marriage and job stress that threatened to kill him.

Like Rudyard Kipling's poem 'IF', we now see success and failure as impostors to be regarded with detachment. We have moved beyond the dual labels of win and lose and appreciate Bob Dylan's lyrics:

There's no success like failure

And failure's no success

at all

We take each day as it comes, as sensitive middle-aged losers who know 'small is beautiful' - and wear the acronym 'smallies' with dignity and not a little humour.



Education

I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.

Groucho Marx

The Dark Haunts of Memory by Sam Roddan

Years ago, Thomas Wolfe wrote "you can't go home again". But I firmly disagree...As I slowly grew up "in wisdom and stature" I discovered that many good poets spend a great deal of time wading through the archives of their own childhood searching for palpable moments of clarity unmarked by the betrayals of time or age.

Now well into my 80's, (and second childhood), I find myself puttering around with ease and considerable delight through the dust and detritus of my own "dear dead days".

Today, I still catch my breath at the pungent odour of burning leaves, or the perfume of lilacs in the gardens of my youth. Or it could be the aroma of plasticine and Dust Bane in classrooms of Laura Secord. Or the whiff of wet towels, water wings, bathing suits and jock straps in the bowels of the shower room in the ramshackle Y.M.C.A. at Cambie and Dunsmuir.

But I also pause, in moody reflection, at the acrid odour of sour beer, canned heat smells, stale garbage filth that evoke the dark lanes behind a mission church on Gore avenue. Or it might be the deep stink of running shoes that triggers memo-

ries of the Reading Room, packed with homeless men, in the Carnegie Library at Main and Hastings.

In these times, my heart murmurs with painful recognition when I enter a church, hear the words of a childhood hymn, whiff the glue perfumes from the spines of old Bibles.

It is then that memory takes me back to the Book of Psalms and the still waters of Lost Lagoon, the green pastures of Stanley Park, the corner stores and places of refreshment along Pender and Gore. And when I was weary in those days I knew enough to lift up mine eyes past the flashing light on Woodward's

Store at Abbot and Hastings to the hills and mountains which were Grouse and Seymour and the mighty Lions.

Today I do not recall the pep talks and the sermons of my youth, but the mellifluous words of Holy Scriptures still toll like bells in the dark haunts of memory.

Truth is always stranger than fiction, which is just a way of saying that at long last I am now back in the pew of the church of my boyhood at Gore and Hastings.

And it is here in this sanctuary, I try silent prayer, count my scars, add up many blessings. But such are the ways of a half-crazed world, cries from the street nigh drown out the Good News from "the meadows of heaven".



Laughs with Lewry

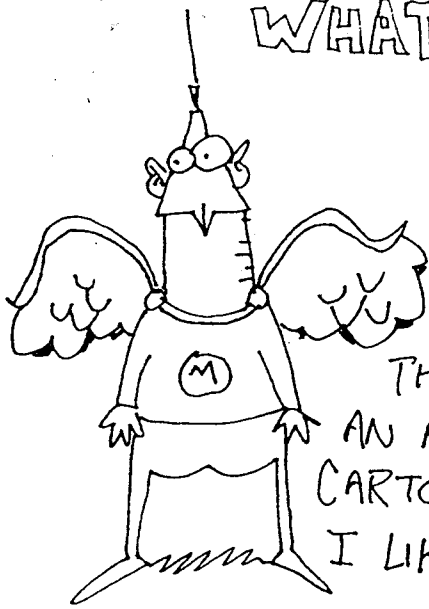
The psychiatrist said to the patient, "You must give up smoking. You must give up smoking. I insist. No more smoking!"

The patient said, "Is it that bad for me?"

"No, but you're burning holes in my couch!"



WHAT IS MEDICATION MAN?



IS HE A DRUG? POSSIBLY
A PLACEBO? A SYMBOLIC
GESTURE OF HOPE FOR A
SMALL PERCENT OF
THE POPULATION PERHAPS.

AN ALTER EGO FOR THE RESPECTIVE
CARTOONIST COULD BE APPLIED,
I LIKE BUTTOCKS, BIG BUTTOCKS,



MEDIUM BUTTOCKS, SMALL BUTTOCKS,
WIDE BUTTOCKS. PRETTY WELL EVERYONE HAS
THEM (AS FAR AS I KNOW). TWO FLESHY SLABS
OF MAXIMUS GLUTUMOUS PUT TOGETHER
TO BE TOGETHER. GREAT ARTISTS WOULD
SCULPT, PAINT AND DRAW THEM TO CAPTURE
ITS BEAUTY, ITS ESSENCE. SOME WOBBLE
AND BOUNCE SIDE TO SIDE, OTHERS ARE TIGHT
AND HARD AS GRANITE. YOU CAN GLENCH
THEM SITON THEM AND MAKE RUDE
NOISES BECAUSE OF THEM. I GUESS

BY NOW YOU MAY REALIZE I'M
A BUTTOCKS MAN. SO IN CLOSING

WHAT IS MEDICATION MAN? I DON'T

KNOW I'LL LET
YOU DECIDE...



Entry Into Mania by Karen Horn

Round and round I twirl-
My eyes like jewels
My head like champagne.

There is no stopping me-
I can go on forever
I am wound up like a spring
A bomb ready to explode.

I can outdo anyone
I can outrun anyone
My feet carry wings
My arms can soar
Up into the sky.

Oh, God, let me slow down
The pace is too much
Let me be at peace
Not this wild
Beating in my breast.

Walking the Tightrope by Karen Horn

This roller-coaster
illness of mine
is like walking
on a tightrope.

It is a balancing act
The juggler plays with feelings
in the circus of my soul.
Up and down my feelings wander
First to soar Heavenwards,
then to plummet down
into the greyness of depression.

Oh, God, let me be at peace
Not this wild
beating in my breast.

On Being Psychotic No.1 by Al Todd

When you were directing traffic
did you
 stand on your head,
 swirl a baton,
 command sphere of light to descend?
Or were you merely enjoying yourself,
secure in the feeling that insanity.
all insanities
are real?

Interview with a Psychiatrist No.2 by Al Todd

Angles of light
break against my skin;
I am caught in a web of lies.
Standing on my head
in the psychiatrist's office
I see, under pelting rain,
a silo and a ploughed field.

"Do you have a girlfriend?
-I see."

I wave my arms
as though
standing on my head
is not enough.

Water begins to drip
from the ceiling -
I am waiting for it to reach my neck.

Branches Over the Wall: To Remember or To Forget? by D. Paul Strashok

It is a hard decision. Whether to remember or forget—forget all the names, the faces, the places, the injustices, the siderooms, the sensory deprivation. Forget, like a cigarette still dangling from my lips until the last puff of smoke is gone.

Someone I trusted once said to me, “forget the past and go on”. I like the sound of that go on - to be headed somewhere, somewhere special, somewhere bright, somewhere beautiful. In the early days it was so easy to hope for that and to believe that all this suffering had meaning, but as the process goes on without release, it is no longer so easy to believe that I am “laying up treasures in heaven”. But is that not the testing of my faith?

How can we forgive these injustices that have been perpetrated in the name of a ‘just society’, a society supposedly under the rule of God and law (truly mostly just law and that, arbitrary law)? When I think back to days so dark, the horror of it appalls me, yet the impetus of those remembrances drives me on to a brighter day and happier times.

In a way, it is true that I have never really accepted my

diagnosis, although I have accepted the fact that I must stay on medication. I was preaching a strong, 2000 year old message in the midst of a modern and complicated society. “Religious conversion hysteria” I guess they called it. But in my seeking of God it seems that there was no extreme that I would not go to. Now of course, 25 years later, I am much more mellow and reserved, but occasionally a glimmer of the former brightness shines through and I know that Jesus is alive.

Perhaps my greatest error was in not understanding that “mercy rejoices against judgement” for I was so prone to enter into judgement in my former years. I would preach uncompromisingly

against the things that I believed were “sin” and the result was that the measure I judged with was meted back to me.

Hopefully we learn things through our trials and tribulations. And yes, there is still a bright and shining hope for those who embrace the truths of Christ and learn how to apply His truths in a modern industrialized, informationalized world.

At one place in the gospels Jesus said “put new wine in new wineskins”. He spoke this in reference to the new age of the Spirit and the Church which he began. Now, 2000 years later, more than ever it is important that we understand the “new wineskin” of this present generation and learn how to dispense the Spirit of Christ into those who are open to receive it.

Perhaps my own personal folly when I ran up against the mental health system was in being a “generational throwback”,

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Another Link in the Chain

by Marjorie Vroone

"She won't leave her mother's side and she cries if her Mom leaves her. Also, she doesn't sleep through the night yet, she wakes up every couple of hours and has problems getting to sleep at a reasonable hour. Most nights she just cries herself to sleep. She's already three. You were just like that you know."

Yes, I know and I shuddered as my mother told me about my cousin's daughter. The thought that another child must grow up in the same emotional hell I did, is almost devastating to me.

You see, I suffer from Dysthymia, superimposed with chronic clinical depression. That is, I have a long term (more than 2 years) low grade depression. A chemical imbalance in the brain. Since I don't ever remember a time that I wasn't sad or low, I was most likely born with it. To top things off, I have severe clinical depression that never seems to lift.

Now, I'm hearing that this horrible disorder has surfaced again, in what is, at the very least, the third generation of my family.

My father was not diagnosed until late in his life, but the chances are high that he had been a depressive most, if not all, his life. My father was an alcoholic.

Self-medication in it's simplest, if not most accepted, form. As a matter of fact, my father's whole family are, or were, alcohol abusers.

I have 3 siblings, 2 of which are, or have been, treated for depression and/or other mood disorders. My brother is fine now. His depression came on in his mid-20's and he only needed medication for a short period of time. My youngest sister is manic-depressive with extreme mood swings. She also tends to get suicidal thoughts. Her illness came on when she was in her early teens. Medication has helped her, but she doesn't keep it up. I recently had to take her to the hospital and insist that they admit her. My other sister appears to be the only emotionally healthy one of the four of us.

I know absolutely nothing about the mental conditions of my cousins and I have many cousins. On my father's side of the family I am the oldest of 16. We are, what I'll refer to as the "second generation". As a rule, no one in our family talks about his devastating condition. I am trying to change that.

Out of the "third generation" all of my sibling's children seem to be fine. Of my children, which I have 2, my eldest has unfortunately inherited the disorder.

Onset in him came when he was quite young. He, like my youngest sister, has been helped with medication, but he doesn't keep it up. My youngest doesn't seem to have inherited it so far, thank goodness.

My goal at the moment is to try and educate, specifically my family, but everyone in general, about this genetic disability. I talk to just about anyone who will listen, about my condition, my hospitalizations and my treatments. Depression is not a weakness or a human fault. It is a physiological disorder. I don't want anyone to be afraid of it. I want people to understand and accept it. Someone who suffers from a depressive disorder has no more control over it than an epileptic or a diabetic has over their illness.

There is no cure. Medication is only a stabilizer at this time and in some cases, the medications that are available don't help. This, in fact, is my situation. I've tried almost every drug that is available to treat depression, some work better for me than others, but none help very much. There are a few drugs out there that are apparently having great results, but unfortunately, I am unable to try them because of their most common side effects. Most specifically, drowsiness. I take an antidepressant that causes

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BookWorm
Proofs and Theories:
Essays on Poetry
by Louise Glück
The Ecco Press, 1994
Reviewed by Andrew Feldmar

John Heaton, who worked with R.D. Laing for some 20 years, defines a skeptic as "an enquirer or seeker of truth who becomes disturbed by the contradictions and discrepancies he meets in the world". Skeptics oppose all dogma, and their favorite question is, "Are you sure?". Certainty seems to pave the way to violence and insanity, whereas doubt and inquiry leads to gentle moderation. Laing wrote in Sonnets, "It has been said: He who doubts his love, loves best".

Imagine my surprise when I found that one of America's

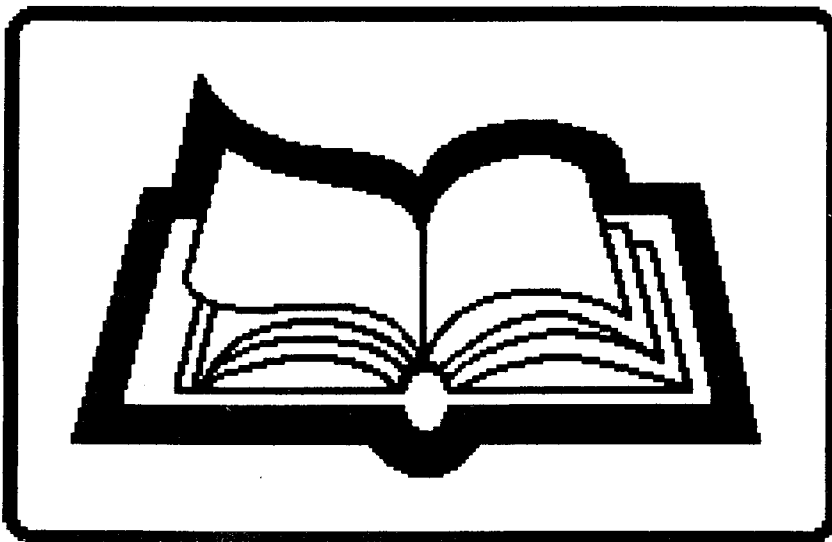
most original and important poets. Louise Glück, was a kindred spirit, a skeptic with a passion and wit that clears the mind and warms the heart. She wrote seven volumes of poetry and Proofs and Theories is her first gathering of prose. She is candid and generous: "for many years every from of social interaction seemed impossible, so acute was my shame". Writing, according to Glück, protects her from truly risking shame, for the reader's response to the author's revelations occur at a distance. "For poets, speech and fluency seem less an act of courage

than a state of grace. The intervals of silence, however, require a stoicism very like courage; of these, no reader is aware".

Glück wrestles for/with the truth: "The secrets we choose to betray lose power over us" and artists suffer, in part, because "the love of truth is felt as chronic aspiration and chronic unease". She talks about the self as a lightning rod... it attracts experience. She is clear when she warns that authenticity in writing is not produced by sincerity. "The truth, on the page, need not have been lived. It is, instead, all that can be envisioned". This reminds me of the countless virtual encounters people have these days on the Net: symbolic, imaginary, but none of it lived.

One chapter, The Forbidden, speaks of the often unspeakable, i.e. trauma, abuse and what follows: anguish, isolation, and shame. "The child who involuntarily inhabits a taboo is marked by that fact", she writes, then cuts to the heart of the matter: "It is the silence that is collusive, that becomes for the victim the emblem of his or her deepest relation, since only with the one who damaged him are there no secrets". Her artistic advice is also therapeutic: "the problem for artists dealing with this material is to write not from pity for the child one was but to devise a language

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How to Become A Schizophrenic: The Case Against Biological Psychiatry

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skill, most psychiatrist are so monumentally inept that they appear to be doing everything they possibly can to drive their patients crazy and keep them that way."

"A psychiatrist will tell such a person that an intrinsic part of his personality, as manifested in his beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, is nothing more than a symptom of a disease — in short, that he has a **sick mind**. That psychiatrist is in effect telling this person: "**You are a disease.**"

"Aside from their authority to prescribe drugs, the only skill most psychiatrist possess is

their ability to put dehumanizing labels on their patients."

"For decades they have been spewing forth a steady stream of pseudo-scientific poison of disinformation."

"It is very easy to understand why most psychiatrists are so infatuated with the medical model. It simplifies everything. It makes their job so much easier."

Well, that gives you a taste of what is in store for you in this wonderful read. It is especially inspiring to all of us certified lunatics looking for some real help and constructive alternative

modes of understanding to think that "one of our own" could have produced such an impressive work. It helps all of us to regain and assert our sometimes fragile self-esteem. I urge you all to buy the book and thoroughly imbibe it's import. We have yet another chink in biopsychiatry's armour.

(To order by Visa/Mastercard call toll free 1-800-345-0096 or order through your local bookstore from Apollon Press, Everett, Washington).



Breakthrough Breakdown

(Continued from page 3)

sacredness that is their birthright. These wounded healers, with special insights, can show others through the mind-maze and reveal to humanity its holistic nature. As Carl Jung remarked, 'the deeper the crisis; the rarer the spirit.'

I am reminded of the saying, 'a mind is a terrible thing to waste.' It is time to reveal our compassion by salvaging and re-

deeming, from the psychiatric black hole, our fellow man.

Perhaps one day, such breakthrough breakdowns will be seen in a shamanic light as voyages of discovery to be revered and reflected upon by a sick civilization also in need of healing through the power of rebirth.



Life

The secret of life is knowing when to stop.

Alan Watts

Another Link in the Chain

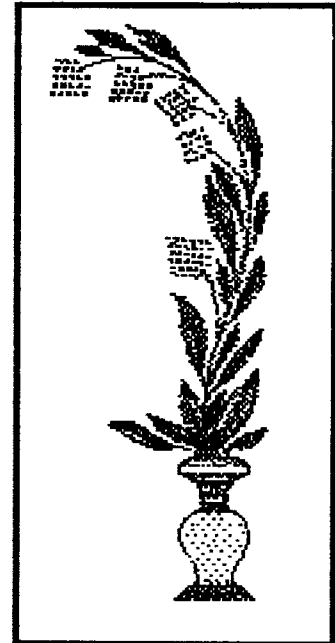
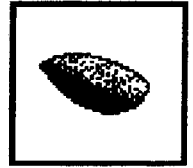
(Continued from page 11)

stimulation and still I need to take an amphetamine everyday to keep me from wanting to sleep all the time. With all this, I still feel exhausted most of the time. A sedating medication is just not an option in a case like mine. My everyday life feels like hell and there seems to be no hope on the horizon. A new drug. A new surgical procedure. A new therapy. What it looks like I need, what it looks like a lot of us need, is **A MIRACLE**. Unfortunately, it looks like that is what it's going to take. Maybe if my father was

still alive they could study the three of us (my father, myself and my son) to see if they can isolate the common genetic factor involved in our depression. The results of this type of study could possibly lead to a new treatment, or even a cure.

So, while I wait for this miracle, I live my life one issue at a time, one day at a time (or one hour or one minute at a time if that's all I can manage) I read, I inform and I hope and pray that soon they will be able to break the chain of this genetically linked

disorder. No one, especially not a child, should have to live the cruelty of this never-ending nightmare of darkness and depression.



Minute Particulars

(Continued from page 4)

feel we need to be in order to be loved in return. You don't have to like him, her, them yourself to love him, her them, yourself. All alteration of self or other, making self or other, other than we are is deception, not true love."

Johannes R. Becher is quoted by Christa Wolf, "This coming-to-oneself — what is it?" I trust the question, I doubt all the answers. The inquiry, heading for

the greatest depth, the joint inquiry of patient and therapist, this wrestling, this is psychotherapy. It requires faith, not in the existence of god, but in the value of struggling to be free and to love without the assurance of success or reward. The essence of health is not adaptation or conformity. It has something to do with overcoming the fear of living in an upheaval caused by the constant

shaking of immediate certainties and meaning. At best, therapist and patient can form a solidarity of the shaken. It is possible to move from "mere life" barren and chained by fear, to "life at the peak", life lived in the passionate moment, accepting that it will soon be over.



Branches Over the Wall

(Continued from page 10)

one who could believe for miracles in a world and in a system which believes that it is the only possible source of healing for the sick. Many times I was brought "before the bar" of psychiatry and asked whether I still believed that Jesus could heal me, as if that was the only sign of my illness. I must, they insisted, be forced to face the fact that I had a lifelong mental ill-

ness, thereby assuring their continuing authority over me. What a Catch-22! If I believe in supernatural healing, I am sick, but if I believe in the doctors healing I am well and am allowed to stay sick for the rest of my life.

Yet the faces of the people I met during those hospitalizations still remain and I wonder how many ever were able to find

peace outside of the system and escape the "ultimate cure", the diagnosis of a lifelong disease.



Bookworm

(Continued from page 12)

or point of view that reinhabits anguish."

Glück has a strong and haunting presence. Her prose is so dense and memorable that it could pass for poetry. The ethical stance that allows love to come into being, she expresses thus: "the exhausting obligation to recognize the other as other, as not part of the self". Without individuality no love can exist, "love connects one irreplaceable being to another: the payment is terror of death, since if each person is unique, each death is singular, an eternal isolation". Another ethical comment: "I think the word free has no meaning if it does not suggest freedom from greed". In

a similar spirit, she makes you ponder "obsession is not courage" or "impoverishment is also a teacher" or "oblivion is an alternative to self".

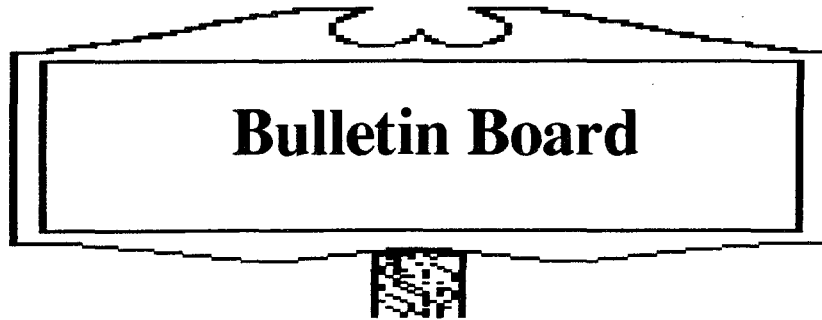
She has a "distaste for blather" and cultivates clarity. She loves and comments on many poets, among them Emily Dickenson, Blake, Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Rilke, Whitman, Keats, Frost, Plath, Milosz and a dozen more. For her art is not a service, it is a passionate preoccupation with truth. "It is less a mirror than microscope: it refocuses an existing image of the world — Where the flat white page was, a field of energy emerges".

I suppose what endears



her to me is her passion to learn from experience. Only writing and psychoanalysis affirmed for her that "whatever the truth is, to speak it is a great adventure".





The Primal Performance Workshop Series

Provides support for the development and encouragement of the performing arts.

The Primal Mental Health Productions Association will be meeting at a new place come mid-February. Their new address is 1595 East 13th St. at the back basement entrance. The schedule of activities in the Performance Workshop Series will include:

July 5, 12, 19, 26 Saturdays 1-3 P.M. Songwriting with Thomas McCay

* Enhance your ability to get your message across in this stimulating workshop series. Held in the Primal space.

August 2, 9, 16, 23 Saturdays 1-3P.M. Fine Arts with Nellie McClung

* Learn, laugh and exercise your creativity. Held in the Primal space

The Primal Coffeehouse will be held as usual every second Sunday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Drive.

See the Primal website for more information at <http://www.turnercom.com/primal>

“Moments”

“Moments”, is a collection of stories by consumers in B.C. about special experiences in their life journey while working towards mental health. It is available through the Canadian Mental Health Association, B.C. Division, 405-611 Alexander St. Vancouver B.C., V6A 1E1, Ph. (604)254-3211

Mental Health Information Line

For free, 24-hour, confidential information on mental illnesses contact the Mental Health Information Line at 1-800-661-2121. In the Lower Mainland, dial 669-7600.

Freebies:

For those in need: Free clothing; Dishes

Choose from a variety of donations

At Community Resource Centre, 1731 W. 4th Ave., Monday to Friday,
9 am to 9 pm on request.

