

In A Nutshell

Winter 2003-04

Some Thoughts on God and Mental Health

by D. Paul Strashok

I remember visiting a Christian outreach center near the Coast Foundation Clubhouse, years ago, when I was a part of the Transitional Employment Program at Coast. I mentioned the term 'mental health' and one of the ministering ladies there immediately said "I don't believe in mental health." Okay, I, as a long time critic of the mental health system, knew where she was coming from, but inwardly my only thought was "So, what do you believe in – mental illness?" But this encounter just goes to show that there are many gray, unknown areas in the general public's mind concerning mental health, not to mention in the minds of those God-seeking souls who believe that Jesus heals everything.

As one who has had a long-standing diagnosis of schizophrenia, and who believed, for the longest time, that the answer to my problem was Divine Healing, I understand why someone would say, "I don't believe in mental health." What this lady was probably trying to say is "I don't believe in a systemized treatment for a mental disorder, but rather I am trusting God for my mental well-being" - which is probably her right and is even quite scripturally sound (2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.") Yet, through all the gray and muddy waters of the mental health system, some vital, life-changing lessons can be learned.

One of the most basic lessons I have learned and one, I believe, that most fundamentalist and/or orthodox believers in Christianity miss is the basic error of what I call the 'Christian Superman Syndrome', the belief that if one has faith in Christ, one should be this immaculate, powerful being with no flaw or shortcoming. Yet, even the Apostle Paul spoke of his 'thorn in the flesh' and he said it was given to him to keep him from becoming puffed up with pride.

Also he said that the Apostles were counted the "offscouring of all things" for the sake of the good news they were bringing. When Paul said "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," it was prefaced by the statement "I know both how to be abased and how to abound", and not, as many preachers use it, a blanket promise to push through anything and everything that stands in your way.

Let's face it, without adversity, probably none of us would grow spiritually, but it is false to assume that our suffering is so much greater than others who have suffered before us and suffer around us. It is the peculiar nature of the mental health system, however, that the 'cure' can be more devastating than the original disease, especially when one is prone to bouts of intense mania that resemble a drug-user's 'high'. Coming down from lofty heights of mania and intense spiritual/mental activity can sometimes feel like the crash-dive of a jet airplane.

It is also significant that the 'power', 'love' and 'sound mind' in the above scripture passage are

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Winter 2003-04

contrasted with a 'spirit of fear'. From my own experience, I have found there is nothing really 'insane' about being manic, but when mania spills over into a megalomaniac delusion, spurred on by irrational fear, then the inevitable conflict, misunderstanding, anger, and a host of other evils, come into play and the result is a hospitalization by force, something which I hope, by the grace of God, I will never have to go through again.

Dr. Peter S. Breggin in his book *Toxic Psychiatry* has termed schizophrenia "psycho-spiritual overwhelm". My own experience heartily concurs with this terminology for I found that it was through intense spiritual seeking and excessive spiritual practices that I became open to an alternate reality, a whole separate spiritual universe that most people do not encounter in their daily activities. It seemed very real at the time, but now, as I look back, I realize that I was living an untenable life and that, if I was not willing to take responsibility for my own physical and emotional well-being, then it would be given into the hands of others (whom I considered my persecutors) to do so. Since the

time of my hospitalizations, it seems the basic lesson that I have been learning is the authentic expression of spirituality that is not 'zany' or 'insane', but is a working cooperation with the Divine in a genuine humanity, conscious of spiritual truths while still 'keeping my feet on the ground'.

A mental health worker once told me, that as far as she was concerned, everything was 'Okay' up to the point at which people start losing their life-skills. Perhaps this is the real acid-test of true spirituality and God-consciousness – it is not 'flaky' and irresponsible, but rather it is a life that is supernatural within a natural and human context and vessel.

Finally, I would say to all God-seekers and God-believers within the mental health system, I agree with the viewpoint of making God the center and core of your life and experience. Now, however, let us find ways of expressing that faith and experience in a way that is an authentic expression to all we contact, both in the mental health system and in other parts of our daily walk and life. ■

Editorial Note

by Jim Gifford

As of the Autumn issue, we have deleted the photo on the cover and are using less expensive paper throughout, including a colour paper cover. This cost-saving is in response to cutbacks at the MPA.

One thing will not change: the thought-

provoking and informative articles and poetry and, thus, we hope and trust, you will continue to enjoy *In A Nutshell*.

Thank you for your ongoing readership and support. ■

The Editorial Board of *In A Nutshell* welcomes letters, articles, and poetry on mental health issues from you, our readers.

Warning! Do not abruptly stop psychiatric medications! Most psychiatric medications are powerful drugs and should be withdrawn from gradually under the care of a physician or other health practitioner.

In A Nutshell is a publication of the Mental Patients' Association, #202 -1675 W. 4th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V6J 1L8, ph. (604) 738-2811, fax (604) 738-4132. The MPA is a non-profit organization that offers a variety of programs in **ADVOCACY, HOUSING, RECREATIONAL, and SOCIAL ACTIVITIES** for former mental patients. For more information on any of the above programs or housing waiting lists, please phone the office at (604) 738-2811. Editorial Board: Jim Gifford, Ely Swann, Reinhart, Byron Fraser, D. Paul Strashok.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of the MPA. Donations toward the cost of *In A Nutshell* will be gratefully accepted by MPA.

To The Last Round-up: First Class, with Trimmings

by Sam Roddan

Today many people are pretty glum about the future. Some are even ready to throw in the chips. I was mulling over this sad state of affairs when I remembered my old friend Mr. Lilly, the undertaker.

Mr. Lilly was by far the most cheerful man I've ever known. He was what I like to call a "creative optimist." Nothing ever got him down. A man far ahead of his time who operated his business like a travel bureau that booked one-way passages to The Promised Land.

Every year Mr. Lilly brought out a new calendar. It featured heavenly creatures strolling leisurely through shady groves dotted with bowling greens and park benches. Here and there white swans glided over quiet ponds and still waters.

"Folks like to think of Heaven as a place where you take it easy and sit around in the sun," Mr. Lilly said. "A place like your home town when you were a boy with nothing much to do but go fishing or toss the old ball around a corner lot."

When I was a lad, Mr. Lilly was one of my best friends. It was Mr. Lilly who gave the Trail Rangers, a boy's club in our church, the rough wooden boxes the coffins came in. We sawed and hammered the pine boards into bird houses. And then we made spice racks and bird feeders and flower boxes. One year we made seven baby cribs that sold like hot cakes at the Christmas bazaar.

But many people were suspicious of Mr. Lilly. They said he didn't conform. Didn't dress in a black suit. Never looked on the dark side of things. Some folk thought he was a hypocrite, particularly when they saw him on the church steps shaking hands with the old-timers like Mr. Harper and Mrs. Kirby, or Mr. Green, who was pushing 89. The general feeling was that Mr. Lilly was too much of a go-getter. Always looking for leads.

I saw Mr. Lilly gloomy only once. That was when the Baptists brought in a revivalist, Pastor Price. The theme for his preaching was "Millions Now Living Shall Never Die." The week before Mr. Lilly had just bought a brand new streamlined hearse.

One day when we were over at Mr. Lilly's place to get another rough box for the Trail Rangers he invited my friend Benny and me for a ride in the new hearse. We hopped in and drove slowly past the poolhall where a couple old-timers took off their hats and quietly stood at attention.

"Better keep your heads down and out of sight, boys, until we get out of town," Mr. Lilly said. "And then we'll step on the gas."

Later when we were coming up to Pleasant View, the cemetery, Mr. Lilly explained how his new hearse could be converted into an ambulance if worst came to worst.

"I made sure to get an end-loader," Mr. Lilly said.

"Instead of a coffin, I can push in a couple of stretchers. No trouble when the floor of the hearse is filled with ball-bearing rollers."

Near Red Currant River Mr. Lilly gave her the gas and soon had the hearse hitting sixty. Mr. Lilly told us we could now sit up and take in the scenery. Telephone poles whizzed by like lightning and before we knew it we had roared past Five Corners and were headed

straight for Cloverdust.

"She rides like a dream!" Benny shouted.

Back on the old King's Highway Mr. Lilly slowed down and we took it easy singing Home on the Range and his favorite When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder. Then Mr. Lilly told us to get our heads down again because we were coming to the city limits.

All that happened a long time ago and a lot of water has gone under the old Cambie Street Bridge. But to this day I still remember the rich smell of the soft leather seats, the smooth purring of the motor, and the gentle rocking of the hearse, like the way it is in one of those Old Country baby buggies with the big curving springs.

And I'll never forget Mr. Lilly smiling and chuckling and saying everything in this life depends on your point of view, that a spin in a good hearse isn't nearly as bad as it sounds, and a fellow heading for The Last Round-up deserves to go first class, with all the trimmings. ■

"...I still remember the rich smell of the soft leather seats..."

Satya's Soapbox: Symphony for Insomniacs

by Satya Devi

For a long time, I used to go to bed early and be asleep within the hour, usually. Falling asleep with all the Nocturnal Muses waiting to float me into that shadow world.

Over the last few months, I have been being investigated for, among other things, thyroid and pelvic concerns, anxiety, panic attacks and worse, insomnia. The mind seems to half-sleep but the eye and soul rise and look down on me. Knives are coming to get me. I don't hear a clock or tick in time. I want to move my bed out here to entangle with the fog, the ether and the vesper breath. This season is without colour except for the stains on the trinity of knives, in case I want to make incidental that I am unforgiven; me of all people. It is appropriate as I am the one always searching out the dark cloud under which to walk, who turned my love beds into coffins and hermetically sealed off both joy and pain, and lowered them down, covered them with dirt so as not to look at them and know none was worth it. As for the knives, they cut hard but only through the fog, and before I can write a sin out in full, they are enveloped back into the ether. Two knives will visit me this month to cut out the rot and cast it off into a Wandering Jew wind, never to return. But the third knife cut out long ago – I was the rot – cut out and outcast; mine is the DNA of the wind. I will erode the pyramids before I'm through, stopping only long enough to hang the albatross all through God's aspirate.

Winter is fast approaching and unless I get some sleep, I may have to hand-whittle the cold nights away. Thus the underworld of late night TV. I will watch anything but the news channels. If I am looking for a sign, it will not be the TV Preachers, and I continue to flip the channels in the darkened room. A flash dazzles my eyes, is this the sign I'm looking for? No, it's Tony Robbins's kundalini-lightening teeth. Bette Davis eyes, Michael Jackson's nose and Tony Robbins's teeth,

I am ready to try self-hypnosis. When McGarrett says: "Book 'em, Dano", I will fall into a deep slumber, before botox, before nip'n' tuck, there was girdles and McGarrett.

The night is getting late now, and I cannot bear another infomercial, so all that is left is to see what

CNN is flaunting and this time it's all about some ape that escaped from a hormone farm to become Governor of Sunny Cal, Ah-nold:

the only boy who could ever reach me
was the son of a Panzer man
the only boy who could ever teach me
was the son of a Panzer man

PIANO SOLO: "I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker." - T. S. Eliot

One day, it was announced to me that my dear old aunt would be paying for piano lessons for me, which I had never expressed any interest in and protests about same went unheard. When the provincial competition came up, it was agreed by all, but me, that I would be in the finals. The more demanding piece was called "Elphin Hill" followed by the more contemporary "Misty". I hated the constant practising over and over on an old upright piano, always out of tune, and after certain keys were played, one had to stop and pull the keys back up. I walked up to the piano at the Recital Hall and tried four times to start the piece but the keys were so tight and highly tuned, and I just couldn't play. I got up off the piano stool, and walked to the middle of the stage and sang:

"Look at me,
I'm as helpless as a kitten
up a tree."

— And then curtsied and walked off.

INTERMISSION

Mojo Radio: there is a new talk radio show for guys called Mojo. It's advertised on TV with a guy duct taping the seat up against a toilet tank – this is appropriate as their brains are in the toilet: it gets juicier as the night wears on and is a must for insomniacs. All the stuff to put you to sleep. There are contests for a free bungee jump, a lube job and tickets to The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Any females calling in are addressed, "yes, sweetie" and "sure, dear". The night goes on and the Camomile tea isn't quite enough, until

the next encounter, which was the tour de force of the toilet radio. This guy calls up and says he drove into Canadian Tire to get some work done on his truck's engine, and "a guy from the Middle East started lifting up the hood of my truck and so I wouldn't let one of them work on my truck because you don't know what they'll put under your hood. So the Arab guy yells at

me, I suppose he was accusing me of being a terrorist-basher."

And so, with an open 12 pack on the seat next to him, and a copy of Playboy on the dashboard, he rode off into the red (neck) sunset.

Au revoir Lynda

Quote from the Roundtable

by M.D. Arthurs

"Anything which strengthens or affirms
our faith, hope and love
can be called a miracle."

Valuable Advice

by Jim Gifford

Lately, to my elderly and blind mother, I have been reading aloud **The right words at the right time** by Marlo Thomas. Famous and well-known persons such as fighter Mohammed Ali, TV host Katie Couric, and writer Tom Wolfe, offer up stories. They tell of moments, for them, when something someone said motivated them to move ahead and achieve success.

As a mental health consumer, I too recall valuable advice, accepted from mentors, that helped me to cope with life. Four special comments played a vital role when direction was much needed. Coming at crucial points during my psychological growing pains, they gave pause for reflection. In turn, they enabled a greater degree of integrity and balance to take place.

My late father's wisdom fostered in my heart and soul the ability to carry on and endure my mood swings. Often, in the early years of my illness, he would join me in my basement suite in the family home. During those evenings, we'd listen to inspiring songs like "Pick Yourself Up", "High Hopes" and "The Impossible Dream". But one thing he said touched me deeply. Concerning my extreme highs and lows, he remarked "Nothing is ever as good as you hope or as bad as you fear."

Like dad, my brother is fiercely loyal and, in his busy schedule, has always found quality time to spend with me. One day over lunch, I shared my little pearl

that "there are no answers." He looked me in the eye and, smiling, said "Jim, there are no questions!" A light lit up in my head. It wasn't necessary to ask the 'who, what, why, where and when' of the mystery of life. Just live spontaneously in the moment and, as the Beatles sing, "Let It Be".

Dropping out of law school when I had my breakdown, my intellectual drive was channeled into serious works of philosophy and psychology. I became full of ideas and theories that had no relevance to my day-to-day functioning in the world.

One day I was expounding to my mother. She sat quietly and patiently, listening. When I came up for air, she poetically said "let the muddy waters settle." It dawned on me that I needed to stop reading so deeply and clear my mind, allowing the kernels to separate from the chaff.

The last insight I'd like to discuss came from the Merv Griffin show on television. One of the guests was an actress, then appearing on a popular sitcom. She preached that everyone in the world must meditate as the end was near. Merv asked his other guest, singer-songwriter Roger Miller, if he had anything to say. Roger simply said "I'm gonna plant in the spring."

Man Bites Black Dogs - News Briefs From All Over

Compiled by Scott Dixon

After a storm of controversy, the best-selling British tabloid newspaper *The Sun* has thrown its support behind a campaign to fight the stigma of mental illness. The decision came after the paper published a headline describing a mentally ill celebrity as 'bonkers'. The celeb was former boxing star Frank Bruno. The headline read "Bonkers Bruno Locked Up". (Bruno, suffering from major depression, was detained under the Mental Health Act.)

A survey of mental patients in England reported that 37% have faced discrimination while looking for work; 47% had faced discrimination at work; and 55% didn't dare tell colleagues about their experience of mental illness. A previous survey found that more than a third of respondents had lost jobs because of their psychiatric history; 38% had been harassed, intimidated or teased at work.

A new report by Human Rights Watch has found that American prisons and jails now contain three times more mentally ill people than do U.S. psychiatric hospitals. A *New York Times* editorial says the study confirmed what mental health and corrections experts have long known: incarceration has become America's default mental health treatment.

The Los Angeles County jail, with 3,400 mentally ill prisoners, functions as the largest psychiatric inpatient institution in the United States. New York's Rikers Island, with 3,000 mentally ill inmates, is second. According to the Justice Department, roughly 16 percent of American inmates have serious psychiatric illnesses like schizophrenia, manic-depressive illness and disabling depression.

Life on the inside is a special nightmare for these inmates, noted *The Times*. They are targets of cruel manipulation and of physical and sexual abuse. Bizarre behavior, like responding to imaginary voices or self-mutilation, can get them punished — and the usual penalty, solitary confinement, only worsens hallucinations and delusions.

Rock & Roll wild man Ted Nugent told a pro-hunting rally in Michigan people would have to be 'mentally ill' not to understand it's okay to shoot and eat the tiny birds known as mourning doves. (The state has banned the hunting of the birds for more than a century.) "Here's the facts: doves — they're food. And if they're too small, let's ban shrimp. I mean, you have to be mentally ill not to realize the facts," Nugent told a crowd of three hundred people. ■

Quote from the Roundtable

by M.D. Arthurs

"Miracles are supernatural
only insofar as we cannot, as yet,
scientifically account for their subsistence."

Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmár

As a parent, I often experienced my role as walking on a tightrope. There were two dangers to avoid moment by moment: falling off to the right meant unnecessary intrusiveness; falling off to the left meant unforgivable neglect. Avoiding both pitfalls, and keeping my balance, seemed almost impossible. Add to that the influence, bias of my own childhood experience and you might begin to discern the complexities of conscious and compassionate childrearing. My mother was intrusive, controlling, and I felt pressured by her preferences and desires. She thought and declared that I was *good* when I complied, when I was obedient, and she thought and declared that I was *bad* when I rebelled or ignored her. Under the constant pressure to become the *good boy* she had in mind, I didn't have time or space to become my authentic, autonomous self. Whether I complied or rebelled, I was still re-acting, not acting. One can only learn to act, respond from the heart, when there is no pressure, when one is allowed to be, let be, when one can be. I remember lying to her and feeling that I was a depraved little boy, yet not mending my ways. It was much later in my life, when I was in therapy that I realized: we lie because we don't think our own truth is good enough. I also realized that lying to a friend is stupid; but lying to an enemy is well-justifiable. How was my mother my enemy? Any information I revealed to her about myself she was likely to use to control me, not to figure out how to love me better. In order to protect my freedom, I reverted to lying. Shortly after my sixteenth birthday, after the defeat of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, I left my hometown, Budapest, on my own, and headed for the freedom represented by the vast, open spaces of Canada. Refugees from Hungary at that time were referred to as *freedom fighters*, and I counted myself among them: not because I had thrown Molotov cocktails at Russian tanks, but because I had successfully resisted my mother's attempts to domesticate me.

I don't blame my mother; she came to be who she was by having to survive in dire circumstances. But to be able to relax into who I really am, I must see what I was up against in my formative years. She needed to be needed so much so that she was terrified to acknowledge my separate existence. She demanded that I be fused with her: she wanted the two of us to be one, and that one, had to be her. She was the dog,

and I was to be her tail. My need, as I was growing older, was not to need her. Any attempt on my part to live a separate life was met by rage, emotional blackmail, and attributions of selfishness.

Dr. Haim G. Ginott wrote two very helpful books in the 1960s for parents: **Between Parent and Child** and **Between Parent and Teenager**. I still recommend them for their common sense approach. He noted, "To let go when we want to hold on, requires utmost generosity and love." Heidegger wrote, "To embrace a 'thing' or a 'person' in its essence means to love it, to favor it. Thought in a more originary way, such favoring means to bestow essence as a gift. Such favoring is the proper essence of enabling, which not only can achieve this or that but also can let something essentially unfold in its provenance, that is, let it be. It is on the 'strength' of such enabling by favoring that something is properly able to be." Love is letting the other be, with some care and concern. Love is taking delight in the other as the other is, in his or her *is-ness*. Coercion, control, criticism are not loving.

Different children wake up to their own separate, solitary selves at different times. In our culture, the life of a child who has woken up early to his or her separate existence is very difficult. Adults tend to control and dominate children, taking it for granted that they know better what's good for a child than the child can possibly know for him-, or herself. This is not done out of malice, but out of a mistaken view of maturational processes. Adults tend to have little or no faith in the natural, deep desire of children to grow into creative, aware, openhearted adults. Out of possibly deep concern for the welfare of their children, adults wish to do everything in their power to prevent harm coming to their charges. This comes across to the child as restriction, constriction, coercion, control, yet any protest is squelched with the slogan, "This is for your own good!"

"It's time for you to go to sleep, otherwise you'll be tired tomorrow!" – doesn't wash. The child hates this benevolent yet dictatorial approach. Rebellion or compliance results, and the child will have to postpone discovering her own autorhythmia later in life, if ever.

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Scenes From A Breakdown

by Scott Dixon

"I feel like jumping off a bridge," I told a social worker in a tearful telephone conversation. She'd been working with me for several months, following my latest suicide-by-overdose attempt.

"Where are you now," she asked.

"At work." It was the truth. "I have to go. I'll see you next week." I hung up, wanting to cry. But the tears didn't come.

Unfortunately, the police did, a few minutes later.

The two cops were nice, but in the futility and hopelessness of a major depressive episode, I was – as usual – my own worst enemy. The officers - one a fresh-faced recruit, and the other an old-timer who took no guff - asked me to telephone either my social worker or psychiatrist. When I refused, they escorted me out of the office. I say 'escorted' because it has a nicer tone than 'arrested'.

My co-workers watched in disbelieving silence, as if a slow-moving train wreck was happening before their eyes. It wasn't embarrassing exactly. By this time, after several years of lurching from crisis to crisis, I was way beyond simple embarrassment.

When we got to the street, an ambulance was waiting. The police car was flashing its lights. A small crowd gathered. "What have they got you for man?" asked a street person who was thoroughly enjoying this bit of unexpected free theater.

"Impersonating a human," I replied. The man stepped back.

A few weeks later, I passed a fortune-teller on Robson Street. She had a sign that read, "Don't worry – I won't tell you that you are going to die."

"Then you're not telling the truth," I yelled. How dare this woman claim to look into the future, while not revealing the Ultimate Truth. "You're a phony!"

"What? What are you talking about?" The woman looked scared.

"You're telling lies," I screamed.

"You a crazy man," she said. "I call police."

Been there. Done that.

I hopped on a bus and went home to be alone with my fevered, dark thoughts.

But I wasn't alone. A new Neighbour From Hell had moved in down the hall. The guy always wore a cowboy hat, and apparently had never before lived in a

high-rise apartment building. "Cowboy" had a nasty habit of leaving the door to his suite wide-open, with the sound of his stereo or TV (and sometimes both) blaring into the hallway. He was oblivious to my complaints. "This is my home too you know," he said dismissively.

The neighbours must have thought they were living next to a hibernating, but easily aroused, cave-dwelling troll. I sometimes heard the sound of talking right outside my door. I'd fling the door open, scream, "Shut Up!"... and find myself facing an empty hallway.

"What's going on in here?" the building manager demanded. I had spent hours smashing every dish, glass, cup and bowl in my apartment. Someone complained about the sound. Probably Cowboy, I thought. It would be just like the bastard... to bitch about someone else's noise.

Standing ankle-deep in a mess of broken glass and dishes, I was at least wise enough to be wearing sensible shoes.

"Gotta get everything new and boil it everyday," I said while showing the manager garbage bags full of pillows, sheets, towels and cutlery. Everything had to go. Although I had no idea why.

"Stop the noise, and clean this place up," the manager said. "It's disgusting." Old newspapers and magazines were stacked up everywhere, along with half-empty pizza containers, used milk cartons, old cans of pop and general junk.

Instead of cleaning up, I called some movers a few weeks later. But I didn't have the energy to pack before their arrival, and they vanished after a quick look around the disaster area I called home. Days later - maybe weeks, it's all a blur - I stuffed everything into boxes and moved in with a friend.

When we're ill for a long time, friends tend to drift away after awhile, but this guy was the real thing.

Three weeks later, after getting kicked off a psychiatric ward for refusing ECT, I waited for the end. (ECT was the last-stop on the Therapy Train, and I was just too frightened to hop aboard. That's the worst thing

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Shrink (compassion)

by Oliver Cross

A "footprint" gets smaller
as one's balance improves.

The Art of Breath: Dark Ages

by Oliver Cross

Nothing lasts forever
except a psychiatric diagnosis
in this time in history.

Paranoia

by Oliver Cross

It's only music, and like any piece of music it will end.

In Concert: Flexible Ego, Beforehand (Self-conscious)

If I make a mistake,
they'll just have to forgive me
[the audience].

Afterwards

It's not between you and them
it's between us and God.

When the World Did Least Expect It

by reinhart

When the world did least expect it,
A star came from the east
And rested over Bethlehem,
Where it was expected least.

No room was found to bear the babe
In the town or on the way;
The holy child was gently laid
In a manger made of hay.

The beasts of Paradise stood by
To welcome the newborn;
Through the long cold night their body heat
Helped to keep the infant warm.

The donkey, camel, steer and lamb
Recognized their Lord,
While the world of mortals slept in peace
And nary heard a word.

The Son of G-d, the Prince of Peace,
Forsook all vanity;
Instead of royal crown and robe,
He chose humility.

Three wise men came to praise His birth
With frankincense, myrrh and gold;
Rejoicing to find the Light of the World,
Whom the ancients had foretold.

The Righteous Judge, the Lord of Lords,
Who came to set man free,
Whom even angels praise as king,
Rather clothed Himself in humanity.

And the singing of the heavenly choir
Only poor lowly shepherds heard;
Rejoicing at the angel song
Of the good news just occurred.

The Faithful Servant who'd pay the price,
Who'd bear the sins of man;
Who would completely empty Himself,
According to G-d's plan.

Son of Man, Son of G-d,
Fully human and divine;
The servant's role He'd dignify
Was humble by design.

The Best Time of the Year

by reinhart

Oh, the children they all know the truth;
to them it's altogether clear;
that Christmas Time is beyond all proof
the best time of the year.

Oh, the winter snow's so pretty;
a wedding dress of white,
that descends on street and city,
like some winged angelic delight.

Oh, the Christmas Lights shine friendly;
the people of good cheer;
they greet one another gently,
and they hold each other dear.

Oh, friends and family gather
in a spirit of love and joy and good will,
and there's not a single one who'd rather
be alone and miss the thrill.

Oh, we celebrate and feast and give thanks;
and we wish each other peace;
and every last one joins the ranks,
so that the blessings never cease.

Oh, the grown-ups they do rediscover
that giving is a joy;
the little one learns to become a lover
through the thrill of some small toy.

Oh, and all of us learn the golden rule;
and that it's better to give than receive.
and we might find a further jewel;
that it's best to give but also to receive.

Oh, but it's the little children,
whose love lights up the home and hearth,
whose love is to readily given,
whose love is the hope of this earth.

Oh, and Jesus taught us to lay down our guns,
and He offered us genuine freedom;
but He said we must become like these little ones,
if we wish to enter the Kingdom.

Oh, but it seems like Christmas Time
is the only lonely season,
when by and large things are truly fine
and our love is unconditionally given.

Oh, the Christmas Tree perennial;
the lights shine bright both night and day –
Oh, our world might become more livable,
if every day was Christmas Day.
Oh, our world might become more livable,
if every day was Christmas Day.

Air

by Maureen Glaser

The darkness steals the colors of the day and turns them into night

Chunks of air move around the particles of light and sound
waiting for the still moment to arrive
And signal their departure

The dawn is breaking, and the spaces begin to fill with the light of colors and chunks of air
Raindrops are separated by the spaces of time
Within the elastic river.

You

by Maureen Glaser

I can see the end of nothing
As your shadow slowly falls into the abyss of time and becomes invisible to me.
Glistening drops of meshlike particles fall until the parameters of invisible threads slowly disintegrate and
fall into the light where you once stood.
Jello like cubes
Their indentations hardly moving collapse slowly into the liquid fire of the river and you disappear.

The Night

by Maureen Glaser

The greenness of the trees mask the ocean of darkness of the still night

Silence descends into the quiet of the morning
And the clear light becomes bright
Until the evening shadow returns its blanket of darkness to cover the earth.

Bookworm

Potentialities: Collected

Essays in Philosophy

By Giorgio Agamben

Stanford University Press, 1999

Reviewed by Andrew Feldmár

Robin Blaser is perhaps Vancouver's most widely appreciated poet of international fame. In his recently published little book, entitled *The Irreparable* (Nomados, 2003), Blaser is inspired by the Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben. Both Blaser and Agamben are awestruck by the miracle of language. "The unprecedented violence of human power has its deepest roots in the structure of language," writes Agamben, and Blaser comments, "Language is not our own – no more than our life or death is in our ownership – historically or now. We have only to honour them." Blaser's engagement with Agamben's work is restricted to three of his earlier books: *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, and *The Coming Community*. The book under review here also addresses the *aporia* and *euporia* of language (*aporia*, literally means 'lack of way', a problem without a solution; *euporia*, is 'a felicitous way').

In the Platonic dialogues Socrates "presents the hatred of language as the worst of evils and the disappearance of language as the loss of philosophy itself." Blaser brings this worry into the post-September-11, war-on-terrorism here-and-now: "we run into manipulation of language that is meant to shape a herd, an amalgamated voice, answered from the other side by a violent refusal to be subordinated. Whiffs of god on both sides of this 'manifest destiny' to found the good. The shepherds are many in this intermeddling tradition – Hebrew, Christian, Muslim – a clangour of splendours. The herds are obedient, especially since the media have been instructed not to show the mutual brutality and barbarism."

The *aporia* of language, Agamben expresses in terms of revelation: "The meaning of revelation is that humans can reveal beings through language but cannot reveal language itself. In other words: humans see the world through language but do not see language. This invisibility of the revealer in what is revealed is the word of God; it is revelation." Then, he goes on, "For the first time, what preceding generations called God,

Being, spirit, unconscious appear to us as what they are: names for language."

I am tempted to quote so much of the exact words of both Blaser, and Agamben because they are poets. The conceptual aspects of language dominate in prose, the mimetic in verse. Verse is expressive gesture that cannot be paraphrased. Agamben writes, "gesture is always the gesture of being at a loss in language; it is always a 'gag' in the literal sense of the word, which indicates first of all something put in someone's mouth to keep him from speaking and, then, the actor's improvisation to make up for an impossibility of speaking." He, in turn, quotes Kommerell, "The disjunction between appearance and essence lies at the basis of both the sublime and the comical; the small sign of the corporeal points to the indescribable."

There is nothing simple, nothing resolved, nothing smoothed away in Agamben's thought. *Aporias* abound. Note the tension, the accuracy, and the impossibility in talking about the creation and enjoyment of art, which "require the fusion of two psychic attitudes that exclude each other ('a passionate surrender of the self leading to a complete identification with the present – and a cool and detached serenity which belongs to the categorizing contemplation of things')."

Paradox abounds: Shabbatai Zevi stated that the "violation of the Torah is its fulfillment". A commandment is fulfilled by being transgressed — how is this so? What comes to my mind is the revolutionary dictum of Paracelsus: "Speech is not of the tongue but of the heart. The tongue is merely the instrument with which one speaks. He who is dumb is dumb in his heart, not in his tongue. Therefore the words of the tongue should come from the heart, for it is the heart that holds truth, loyalty, and love. He who speaks should draw them thence, and speak from the

(Continued on next page)

heart, then his yes will be a yes, and his no a no. If you say yes, abide by it, even if it is evil; and if you say no, abide by it, even if it is evil. For what is in our heart is thereby revealed, and thereby you may be known. As you speak, so is your heart.”

“At the limit,” Agamben quotes Foucault, “life... is what is capable of error... With man, life reaches a living being who is never altogether in his place, a living being who is fated ‘to err’ and ‘to be mistaken’.” So much for being proud of what we know and being ashamed of what we don’t! Shortly after September 11, 2001, Agamben wrote an article, *On Security and Terror*. He warns, that “The thought of security bears within it an essential risk. A state, which has security as its sole task and source of legitimacy, is a fragile organism; it can always be provoked by terrorism to become itself terroristic... In the end security and terrorism may form a single deadly system, in which they justify and legitimate each other’s actions... The risk is not merely the development of a clandestine complicity of opponents, but that the search for security leads to a world civil war which makes all civil coexistence impossible. In the new situation created by the end of the classical form of war between sovereign states it becomes clear that security finds its end in globalization: it implies the idea of a new planetary order which is in truth the worst of all disorders. But there is another danger. Because they

require constant reference to a state of exception, measures of security work towards a growing depoliticization of society. In the long run they are irreconcilable with democracy... It is not that democracies should cease to defend themselves: but maybe the time has come to work towards the prevention of disorder and catastrophe, not merely towards their control. On the contrary, we can say that politics secretly works towards the production of emergencies. It is the task of democratic politics to prevent the development of conditions that lead to hatred, terror, and destruction and not to limit itself to attempts to control them once they have already occurred.”

R. D. Laing used to point out that *maximum security* is a prison. “Life is extremely dangerous, death is perfectly safe,” he used to quip. All attempts at control for the sake of safety and security reduce aliveness, and make one wonder if survival, without the opportunity of freely living, is worth surviving for.

Agamben is a teacher of philosophy at the University of Verona, who sheds light on difficult and confusing topics. His reflections are dense, acute, and rapid. Well worth immersing oneself in his text, surrender and then treasure what one can catch. ■

Compassion By Law Enforcers More Common Than May Be Expected

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

Although it’s true that police, and the justice system as a whole, are known to criminalize rather than treat persons with mental illness who are suspected of having committed a crime, there are noteworthy cases of compassion by police toward persons with mental illness, even though those ill persons have indeed committed a crime.

For example, there’s “Dan”:

When Dan was roaming the urban streets of Burnaby after developing a serious case of schizophrenia, he behaved strangely and, being broke, often resorted to helping himself to food without paying, mostly at the local large grocery stores (e.g., eating grapes in the produce section).

Now it should be known that Dan is normally not in the least a thief — he’s the type who would rather give away \$100 that belonged to him than take \$50 that was not his. Indeed, Dan was so ill at the time that he left his vehicle in some deserted Burnaby back alley, where it was completely stripped down for parts by thieves. Dan was so ill, he could not recall where he’d left his own vehicle, even after his illness was successfully treated.

Having said that, when he finally got stopped after doing an “eat & run” at a restaurant, the police were called. However, rather than charge him with theft, the police, seeing that Dan was mentally ill and untreated for that illness, instead took him to the local

hospital's psychiatric ward. The psychiatric ward having rejected him, he was then taken to a homeless shelter, the latter which admittedly was not a pleasant experience for him.

(Dan also notes how he now is surprised that not even a large grocery store's manager phoned police when his employees finally stopped Dan for eating produce without paying. The store did, however, take his photograph so they'd have a record of him.)

Also, police are known to assist persons with mental illness even when a crime definitely has not been committed: When Dan was spotted by police sleeping on the urban sidewalk, the police assisted him in finally phoning home to his mother, who was worried sick about him.

Often it only takes recognition by police that an accused is mentally ill, and especially if family has reported him as missing, Dan now says, for the police to compassionately behave towards and assist those who are mentally ill.

On January 23, 2003, a news story reported that Canadian police are more understanding and benevolent toward people with mental illness than the general public, according to a new study by a Queen's University professor.

"There is a pervasive societal assumption that the police have a hard time with the mentally ill, they are afraid of them and see them as more dangerous," said psychologist Dorothy Cotton. "That perception is very wrong, and there is no evidence to support that [assumption]."

About 150 officers from Kingston, Ontario, and Port Moody, B.C., and OPP detachments in eastern Ontario completed a questionnaire designed to measure attitudes. The questions were constructed to show whether the police officer could be categorized as authoritarian, socially benevolent, socially restrictive or oriented towards community integration. Officers were also asked about the role of police in working with people who are mentally ill. Cotton found that 80 percent of the officers she surveyed feel

the mentally ill are "far less dangerous than most people suppose" and 94 percent believe society should adopt a more tolerant attitude towards people with mental illness.

The data collected was compared to findings from a survey of the general public conducted in 1981. Citizens were asked the same questions as those posed in Cotton's survey. She said it's difficult to measure society's attitudes, but she believes that they haven't changed much since 1981: "Society at large is extremely uncomfortable with mental illness," Cotton said. "We still won't talk about [having] them. The good news [however] is that the police are not the problem, and that's exciting and heartening to see." The study also found that 93 percent of officers surveyed believe the mentally ill should not be denied their individual rights. Cotton said police are more protective of people with mental illness than the average person. She was somewhat surprised by this finding, considering that officers receive little training on mental-health issues. But as she conducted her research, she learned that it takes a special kind of person for policing.

"The type of people who become cops in the first place are people who are generally concerned with the welfare of society and keeping people safe," Cotton said. "Before, I had much of the attitude that I think most people do, that the police are bullies. Now that I've done a lot of work with them, I would never say that."

I, like Dan, experienced police compassion as a young man barely out of my teens. I had committed a fairly-serious, though non-violent/non-destructive, crime, but was shown compassion by my arresting officer, especially when he learned of my mental illness. Having compensated my victim, I did not even have to face an intimidating criminal court judge — I was spared, mostly thanks to that police officer, excruciating judicial anxiety. ■

Quote from the Roundtable

by M.D. Arthurs

"It is only when we are filled with love
that we can even begin to discern
between what is right and what is wrong."

Minute Particulars

(Continued from p. 7)

When I had enough of my children at night, I used to say, "All right, kids, I want some time for myself, go to your rooms! From now on, I don't want to know you exist. You can do whatever you wish, just don't call for my attention!" This is easily acceptable, and taken as reasonable. It also allows the child to learn from his or her own experience.

As my children grew older, I had to reframe my task as a parent. It used to be protection, guidance and care. By the time they became teens, it had to evolve into encouragement, support and providing a safety net. A child who is prevented from making many mistakes, or one who is shamed and made to feel guilty for making mistakes will be too afraid to learn with gusto. We cannot learn without making mistakes. My job is to console and nurse back to health the kid who goes out on a limb and gets hurt, not burden him with my worry, scare her with my insecurities.

What helped me most as a developing individual were elders who had faith in me, who respected me,

who took me seriously, who were prepared to learn from me, who took chances with me, who encouraged me, who treated me as if I were a little *more* developed than I actually was, not, as it happens normally, a lot *less* developed than I actually was.

When I was a teen, I was growing into a world my parents couldn't possibly fathom, for it was going to be so very different from the one their generation had adapted to. When my children were teens, I had to realize that they had to be far more aware and connected to their future, than I could possibly be.

Parents have no right to desire anything from their children. The archetype of parent is there to love, not desire. All desire from parent to child is incestuous. Children on the other hand are not to be shamed for unleashing ruthless desire on their parents. They may have to learn to accept the limits of their parents' generosity or ability to provide, but parents are the soil, children the sapling trees, not the other way around. ■

Mad Woman Monocle: the inner dialogue prompt to release the "crazy bitch" rant

by Marie Annehart Baker

How are we to dialogue about women and madness? Does it downsize into monologue mode when we share experiences with each other? Remember the book called *The Vagina Monologues*? Seemed a good idea at the time to substitute "monocle" for monologue. Picture it, eh? If and when it were asked "Just who is listening?", we might need to assume an objective stance by donning the monocle to examine ourselves from a myriad of perspectives. All argumentation must rest on the authority of the personal narrative? Before we may begin to converse, we have to counter the awkward obstacles to our own stories.

The gender angle dangles before us much like the phallogocentric pendulum of knowledge or philosophic bent of the European male. So when we peer through the "madness" monocle, we must surely spout the usual avoidance of clandestine commentary with exclama-

tions such as "Oh Dear" or even the shock response of "Poor Dear" as we arch our back to feign the formal distance in a polite discussion. Time out for a spot of tea, dearie? The right/rite of prompting our inner dialogue is to carry on the endless depictions of abuse - misdiagnoses that surround the "mad woman", "crazy bitch" or "sicko cunt". Maybe time to take off the glam tiara and replace the eye/spy glass with more mumbles. Slide off and throw down the over-elbow gloves! Rip off the gown! Beat the non-hairy chest! Time to vent volatile! Quite a maddening venture to take on!

To proceed forward, let's mumbo jumbo the jargon. In any appreciation of who is a mad woman and why, how, what did she do this time, the person who cares must confront the many locks or dreads on the Medusa

(Continued on p. 18)

Scenes From A Breakdown

(Continued from p. 8)

about psychotic episodes: the pulsating fear underlying everything. I couldn't leave my hospital bed because of a dread that something horrible was about to happen. So I was asked to leave.)

It was a blistering hot July day. After wandering the streets for a couple of hours, I took a room in a cheap hotel. "They're painting my apartment," I told the desk clerk. "Can't stand the fumes." The reason we tell most lies is to avoid the judgment of others. I'm sure the desk clerk couldn't have cared less why I was there, but I lied anyway. Maybe it was just a habit.

But that night, it was time - finally - to tell the truth. At least to myself. One question kept roaring through whatever tiny part of my mind was still functioning:

How?

How had this happened? In the preceding five years, I had lost everything - home, family, friends, career. The whole middle-class illusion was now truly an illusion, gone like a non-existent voice in a hallway.

My meds were all lined up in a row. This time, I had to do it right.

Screw it.

I closed my eyes and just did it, blindly and quickly, not pausing for even a second until the job was done.

I could see the different pills forming a rainbow of colors. The bright red Nardil, the white Ativan, the lime-green Lithium, plus the Restoril and Rivotril - whatever colors they were, plus a couple of drugs I've forgotten the names of; all turned into a chemical collage, a psychotropic smorgasbord.

Then - at the last second, I had doubts. Would I be able to do this? Or would I fail again, and flip out?

Screw it.

I was already flipped out. How bad could it be?

The toilet in that crappy little hotel room needed three flushes before the last of the pills dissolved and disappeared. The baby alligators in the sewers must have been high that night.

I will never, ever quit medications cold-turkey again. The next two weeks were a nightmare of do-it-yourself shock therapy. My entire body screamed in protest about suddenly being deprived of the drugs that had been such a part of its daily diet for so long. Every nerve-ending felt as if it was exposed and being touched - randomly - with live wires. There were short circuits everywhere. Muscles I didn't even know existed ached, screamed, for relief.

In the end, going off the drugs at least brought some clarity of thought. The word "responsibility" came back into my lexicon for the first time in years. I made amends where I could to people I had harmed, and accepted the rejection of others as a (regrettable) reality. The depression, which has been a life-long battle, returned full-blown. But the psychosis didn't... which was a huge blessing. A year later I was prescribed Prozac, and it changed my life.

Today, no matter how bad things get, I simply have to remind myself of the days of Cowboy, fortune tellers, over-doses, feverish thoughts and endless nights. And then I know that - like Gloria Gaynor - I will survive.

As W.H. Auden wrote, "Stagger onward, rejoicing."

Scott Dixon is a Vancouver writer.

Quote from the Roundtable

by M.D. Arthurs

"It is only when we have felt forgiven
that we are able to forgive
ourselves and others."

Mad Woman Monocle

(Continued from p. 16)

head of modern mental health practices. Oops, excuse the inept designation of "modern" because what is out there is a tad pre-medieval. Not aged like a fine wine or cheese even! More cheesy whine? Perhaps. Now get the visual picture of a line up at the church police station where witches need to be branded with labels such as Depressed, Bi-Polar, Borderline and Etc. A good guess is that this ahistoric moment is happening in the present. Feminist writers have examined the various and particular women's "ailments" in the early 1900s such as neurasthenia, hysteria and anorexia nervosa. They have boldly asserted that madness was a way out of oppression for women. Gender-assigned roles in the family remained constant and restrictive in spite of the mass demographic changes in that time, i.e. urbanization and industrialization. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's looney bin or prison environment was a woman's own room where she becomes disturbed by the décor. In "The Yellow Wallpaper", the unnamed heroine suffers from a malady called "melancholia". She fights the terror of social conformity as she witnesses a woman trapped behind the wallpaper. While Freud is credited with the onset of the "talking cure", his legacy of ordering disorders also cemented the concept that "hysteria" was exclusive to the female population.

As, Dr. Phyllis Chesler's book **Women and Madness** documents the disparity of the treatment of women versus men in the mental health field, she does confront the dogma. Her work as a feminist psychologist has helped many women understand the social construction of madness in which women who do not conform to societal standards of sanity are targeted. So the 21C begins with a solid link of women and madness defined by the practice of misogyny. The plethora of mental disabilities and medications today still spins on the same nervous and hysterical axis projected upon women. Poor women and even uppity rich women might share a somewhat similar fate of misdiagnosis and mistreatment but slight similarities do not forge sisterhood of sanity/insanity.

Having met Phyllis Chesler at a conference on mental health and women in Toronto in the early 80's, I was impressed with how accessible she was as an authority on women and madness. She invited me to join her for

dinner and we began to chat about mutual interests. She was writing about the loss of parental rights for women and I shared my experience as an advocate in the child welfare sixties scoop scandals that affected First Nations women in Canada (still happens). To find such an ally does prompt an inner dialogue because I had always wondered what happened to my own mother who was hospitalized and given shock treatment in the mid-forties. I had not considered that my mother might have been abused by the mental health system, as all I knew was that "it ran in the family". I knew that sexism and racism resulted in stereotypes which limited self-potential actualizing in the women's liberation trend. I was a student of medical anthropology but still was not able to see how my vulnerability was affected by not making a connection that my own mother had been victimized by the lack of services for First Nations women.

In 2002, the book **Women and Madness** had been in the bookstores for thirty years. In an interview upon that occasion, she quipped "men were still driving women crazy". That accusatory finger did switch directions as it had mostly pointed that mothers were the source of all social evils and illnesses. Those were confusing times and recently the book has been called a "pseudo-medical exploration" because it is limited by a lack of deep historical research and a failure to take actual mental illness into account. I had been reluctant to accept the feminist analysis because of the lack of cross-cultural research. Bea Medicine, Lakota cultural anthropologist, however, has written about how First Nations women have suffered from the misunderstanding about how addictions play out in various urban and rez communities. Her work does bridge the gap between the universal of "all women in the world" to "indigenous women" in particular. I do find the obsession with goddesses to be a peculiar slant in the reconstruction of the history of women. The Medusa head image of writhing snakes does make me pale at the prospect of inquiry into quagmire of guesses about women and madness.

End of Part One ■

Bulletin Board

The Self-Help Resource Association of B.C. (SHRA) conducts regular Facilitator Training Workshops for Self-Help and Mutual Aid Support Groups. They also publish a quarterly newsletter and the Directory of Self-Help/Support Groups in Greater Vancouver with approximately 600 listings, many of them dealing with mental health. The latest edition (2003-2004) of the Directory is now available for \$12.00 or \$10.00 at the office if you drop by and pick it up. SHRA is located at Suite 306 – 1212 West Broadway, Van. B.C. V6H 3V1. Tel: 604-733-6186. Fax: 604-730-1015. www.vcn.bc.ca/shra

The Alternative & Integrative Medical Society (AIMS) at UBC publishes the free AIMS Wellness Directory: Lower Mainland Guide to Complementary Health. It contains approximately 250 paid and many unpaid listings dealing with a broad spectrum of mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of healing. For a Directory and/or more info. about the Society, phone 604-822-7604. Fax: 604-822-2495. E-mail info@aims.ubc.ca. Web: www.aims.ubc.ca. AIMS, University of British Columbia, Box 81 – 6138 SUB Boulevard, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z1. Office: B80A Woodward Building, UBC.

Vancouver Women's Health Collective has peer counselling and makes referrals to support services, groups, and does advocacy work in health care reform. Their address is #1 - 175 E. 15th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V5T 2P6. Info. by phoning 604-732-5262.

Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network sponsors many self-help groups including a Women's Circle. Their address is #109 - 96 E. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5T 4N9 and the Co-ordinator of the Network may be reached at 604-733-5570.

Named after Vincent van Gough's homeopathic doctor, Paul Gachet, **Gallery Gachet** works to provide a safe, borderless place of artistic expression. It strives to be a place of healing and a center of artistic excellence. Founded in 1994 we provide opportunities to exhibit, perform, publish and sell work and to offer a place for support and community. We aim to use the canvas of the outside world to educate and demystify the public on issues related to mental health and abuse.

Call for Volunteers! Please call the Gallery for more information. Tel: 604-687-2468

Or visit our website www.gachet.org

GALLERY GACHET, 88 East Cordova St. , Vancouver BC, V6A 1K2

Public Resource Centre in the Areas of Mental Health, Wellness and Mental Illness. Books, videos, journals on loan for 2 weeks. Working and reading space, and internet access computers available.

Open: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Location: CMHA (Vancouver-Burnaby), 175 West Broadway Phone: 604-872-4902, Ext. 236 (Alan)

* Our newsletter 'All About Us' is created by Resource Centre volunteers and staff.

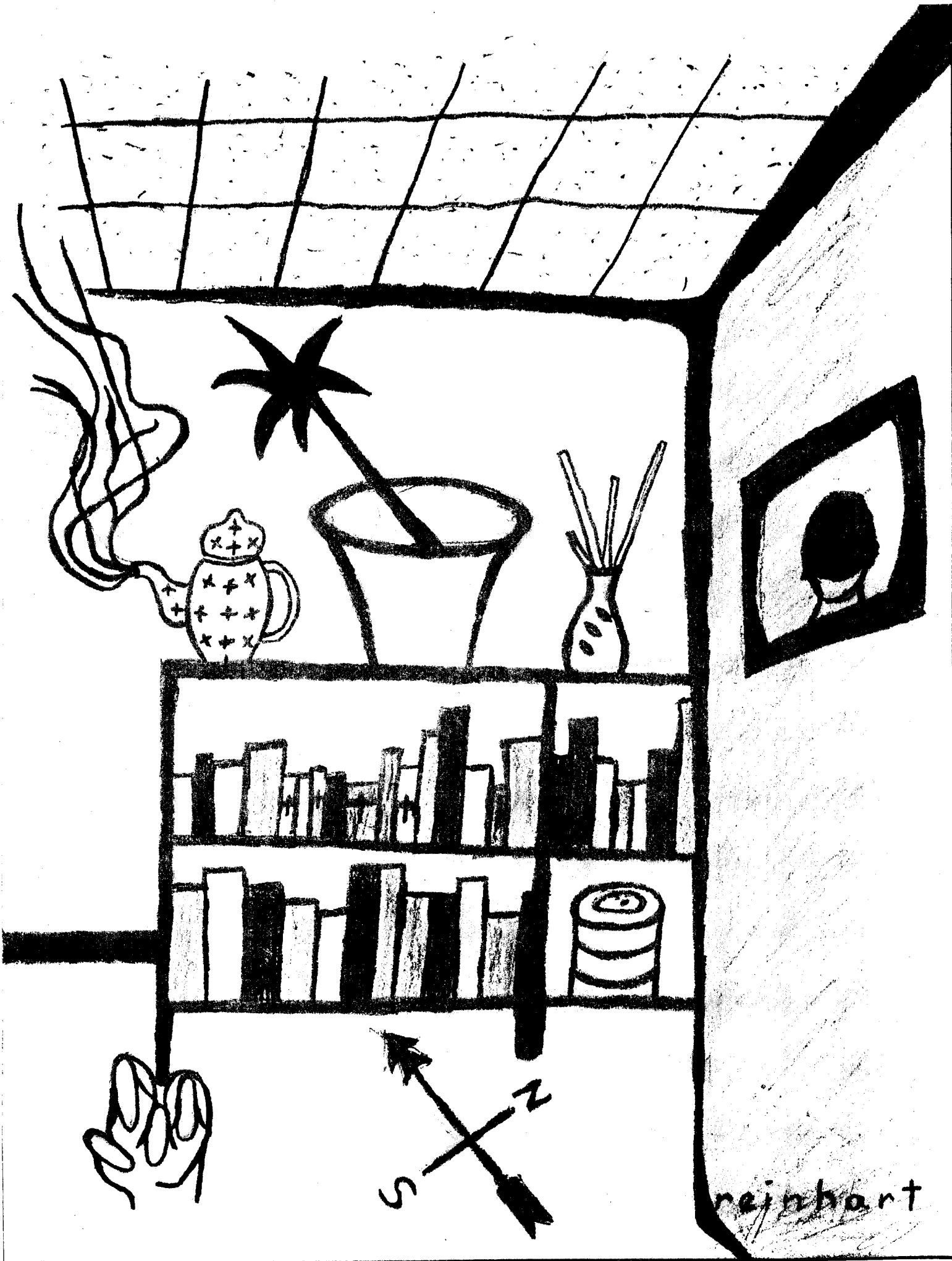
The University of Ottawa in cooperation with **Our Voice** present Alternatives Site

<http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~nstaman/alternatives/>

***Our Voice** is a publication containing viewpoints of the psychiatrized since 1987.

The CIF sponsored **Tardive Dyskinesia Group** meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 2:00 pm at the Self-Help Resource Association, #306 - 1212 W. Broadway. Call 604-733-6186 for more information.

THEO BC provides education and employment services to people within the mental health community. Drop - in orientation sessions are held at our Vancouver location every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month starting at 9:30 a.m. We are located at #100 – 112 E. 3rd. Ave (one block west of Main.). For more information contact us at 604-872-0770 or check us out at www.theobc.org.



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