

SILAKBO

n. Ang utos ng damdamin na nanghihingi ng pagkakataon. An outburst of emotion that demands to be felt

Let's fill this space with compassion

cathartic / contents

drowning in reverie



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* trigger warning: contains sensitive material.

you and your story
are stronger
than you think

Silakbo PH Zine Issue One

August 2017

 /silakbomentalhealth

 /silakboPH



fighting off her demons

Art can be one's way of purging negative emotions.

Kitkat Barreiro explores, expresses and copes with her own emotions through illustration.



Shame (left) ; Sometimes quiet is violent (right);
You Will Be Alone Always and Then You Will Die (bottom)



SOMETIMES QUIET IS VIOLENT



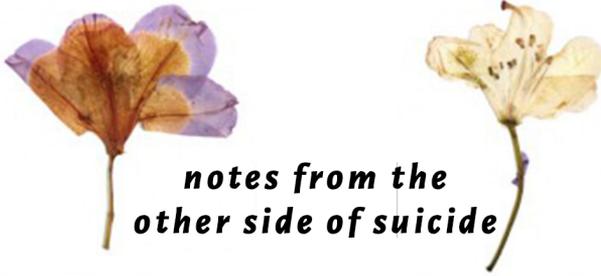
“My art is something that allows me to express myself fully without feeling guilty afterwards. In doing so, I am able to cope with strong emotions in a healthy and productive way.”



Monster in My Head (bottom right)
Many Eyed Monster (top right)
Cut Here (left)

“Art also allows for ample reflection afterwards, letting me ask myself questions like “what else can I do to feel better/to heal” and “how can I respond to the same situation if it happens again?.”





notes from the other side of suicide

BY REINA BAMBAO

THERE IS A CHANGED sort of wisdom you bring back with you, when you make it back from the darkness. Saving your own life is a powerful thing, and every night you go to sleep is another day you've saved yourself. But it's just as vital to recognize—part of the darkness makes it back with you.

Here's a truth: the world doesn't get better even if you do. There will be new failures, new bullies, new triggers. Deciding not to up and leave is something you will do again and again, because even after you've proven that it's not going to solve anything, it's still going to be the first place your mind will go. Today I'm 23, and the last time I seriously considered letting a bus run over me was when I was 14. I have a purpose, healthy coping mechanisms, a number of people in my life who would never let me feel like I didn't matter, and a conviction that I deserve to take up space and push back against anything that tells me otherwise. And yet, there's always that first moment during a crisis when I think, things would be so much easier if I were gone.

It's only for a second. Maybe less. Then everything I've fought to learn in the past ten years kicks in, and then it's forget the haters and shake it off and you are not the reflection of those who cannot love you, before I calmly sit down and figure out how to best get a grip on the situation.

But there's always that first moment. Harmful habits disguised as comfortable ones are the hardest to break, and suicide remains an item on the list for those of us whose rational minds were once convinced it was a solution. The key is to remember it's the wrong one, until that first moment gets shorter and shorter. Until the shit comes and you jump straight into the fray, and it's barely there at all. Until you look back and realize you've lived ten years and it's worth living ten, twenty, a hundred more. Because here's another truth: even when the world doesn't get better, you do. ☀

Emergency exit plan:
~~kill self~~ not today

- BURN BOOK -

A collection of anonymous notes, messages and screams into the void against the ever-present mental health stigma.

Sorry, ang bit ng font. Well, mula kaninang umaga, kanina ko iniisip kung tama lang ba na, eto. Sususulat ako sa inyo. Siguro nasawa na lang ako mag share sa mga nasa paligid ko kaya pati to pinapatulal ko. Pero kasi, eto na kasi yung safest para sa akin kasi siguro kung sa inyo/ sayo man ako mag open at magkwento, kung may rejection o kung ano mang masabi kayo is okay lang. Ilikekwento ko na, dami kong hanash e.

A friend told me "iyang depression parang natural lang naman sa atin yan. Kahit naman sino, at some point our lives, nagkakaroon ng depression" sigie thanks very helpful, I just felt invalidated

Friday, Nov 28
I don't think I remember all the details for he _____ exercised what if I'm just being m depressed or anxious al don't trust myself. I mig myself or manipulating p I have never been to er and everyone else has reflecting on embarrass

I hate it when my so-called friends tell me "wag mo kasi isipin" like???? Hello???? If i could just not think about it I would have done so

It's not that I'm blaming getting it; rather, I'm such a cross to bear. case. I overheard the _____ asking for a s because "mabigat to dalhin. _____ burden, "Di pweden _____ thinking." "Stress yan nasestress. stresses."

Untitled - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
Wala pang ilang minuto mula nung umalis ako para pumasok, umuwi agad ako nang umiyak. Pumunta ako sa bahay ng lolo at lola ko kasi andun yung mga tito at tita ko. Ready na ako na sabihin sa kanila na may Major Depressive Disorder ako at nagpapalano na akong magpakamatay at na hirap na hirap na ako at na, well, gusto ko na talagang maglaho sa mundo. Ang bilin pa naman sakín ng nanay ko, wag ko daw sabihin sa mga kamaganak namin, kasi...yung iba naming kamaganak na may sakit isip eh tinawag at itinuring na baliw. Pero desperado ako na magkaron ng support group maliban sa mga tao sa internet. Kaya, ayun, medyo basa nang ulan at basa nang luha, sinabi ko sa kanila ang mga nararamdaman ko. Hindi ko mabanggit yung salitang "depresyon" kasi, takot din naman ako sa isipin nila. Stigma nga di ba? Yung kapatid ng lola ko na may Schizophrenia eh...baliw sa paningin ng karamihan. Pagkatapos kong ibuhos yung lahat ng nararamdaman ko, pagkatapos kong maglahad, pagkatapos kong umiyak sa harap nilang lahat...masakit kasi ang reaksiyon nila? "Kulang ka lang sa tulog!" "Kaka-komputer mo kasi." "Naku, nasa isip mo lang yan." "Tinatamad ka lang pumasok eh." "Wag kang maginarte. It's all in the mind!" "Broken hearted ka ano?" WOW LANG MGA TOL MGA PARE MGA MARE KO JUSKO I KNOW RIGHT???? Tapos nung sinabi ko sa tito ko na gusto ko nang mamatay at na ilang beses na akong magplanong magpakamatay....surprise! Ang sabi niya: "Aba, isipin mo ang kahihayan na ibigay mo sa pamilya natin." WOW UNCLE THAT WAS SO SUPPORTIVE TALAGA HAHA SHOOKT SI ACOE. So okay unahin natin yung kahihayan ng pamilya nating sobrang perfect sa mata nang komunidad natin. Kasi of course, wow naman, sobrang laking issue nun di ba? Na yung golden, poster girl ng pamilya natin at ng simbahan natin biglang nagpakamatay? Like, whooooaaaaa, ano ang rason, amaryt? HOT ISSUE! Mawawasak reputasyon ng epilepsydo natin! And to think may sakit siya sa isip! Everyone will be so SHOOOOOORRRRREEEDDDDDHHHH! Tapos sobrang sheltered at privileged ko pa, so sobrang invalid talaga na may problema ako, let alone sakit sa isip pa! Eh sakit lang yun nang mga traumatised eh. Tatay ko nga hindi matanggap. Since my diagnosis noong _____ hirap na hirap sya to make tanggap this thing. Sabi nga nya noon, itong issue ko na to is a sign of my resistance to his authority and headship. Like my brain chemicals care about his ability to father me. After all, sobrang pinagkagustaran nga nina naman ako since birth, so akong dahilan to be "sad". RIGHT. And don't let me get started with self harm! When my mom and aunt said that I have bruises, kinausap nila ako na it's a sign of rebellion. Well, okay. Sure. Pwede bang about me muna? Not about how I'm trying to take down the family hierarchy and authority? Lately, mas raging accepting na sila. Especially na sa simbahan namin, naging point of discussion ang mental illness. Si Elias, isang matapat na propeta, naging depressed! Si Jesus, sobrang anxious eh pinagpawisan na nang may dugot! Thank you na lang talaga, kasi at least sa loob nang community namin nagkaroon ng openness and acceptance. Naliwanagan! Salamat sa Diyos, super. Palagi kaming pinaaalalahanan na ang sakit sa isip ay sakit kagaya nang diabetes, ng sipon, ng cancer. Ang sakit ay sakit, no exceptions. Nagpapagaling parin ako sa mga sugat nung mga salita nila, pero, at least, nagta-try talaga sila ngayon. At handa akong i-guide sila at sumagot sa mga tanong nila para malwanagan sila ng husto. Yun

I've been de _____ always use let go sa lahat ng bagay simula _____ so... gone well naman but sometimes im still feeling my

I'm not sure _____ remain on top of everything. _____? _____ to give. I have nothing to give. I have nothing to give. I have nothing to give.

1."Nakakahiya naman sa nanay mo dahil nahirapan syang isilang ka."
2."Yung iba nga pino-problema anung kakainin at saan matutulog!"

My own sister referred to me as "may tiling"

I was wondering if you have recommendations or a list of therapists.
Thank you for listening and I'm sorry to bother.

You may share your experiences, frustrations and rants over at silakbo.ph@gmail.com with the subject "Burn Book."



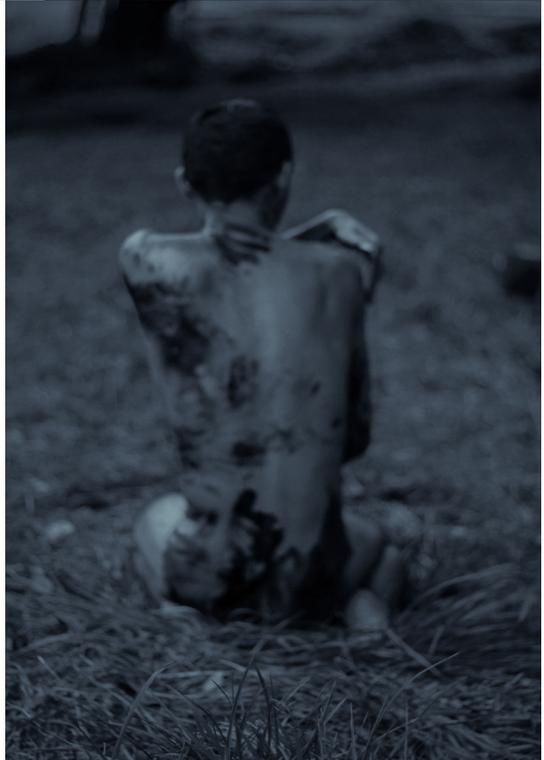
Under Wraps

BY PAOLO DURLAO AND
ERIC VINCENT DAVID

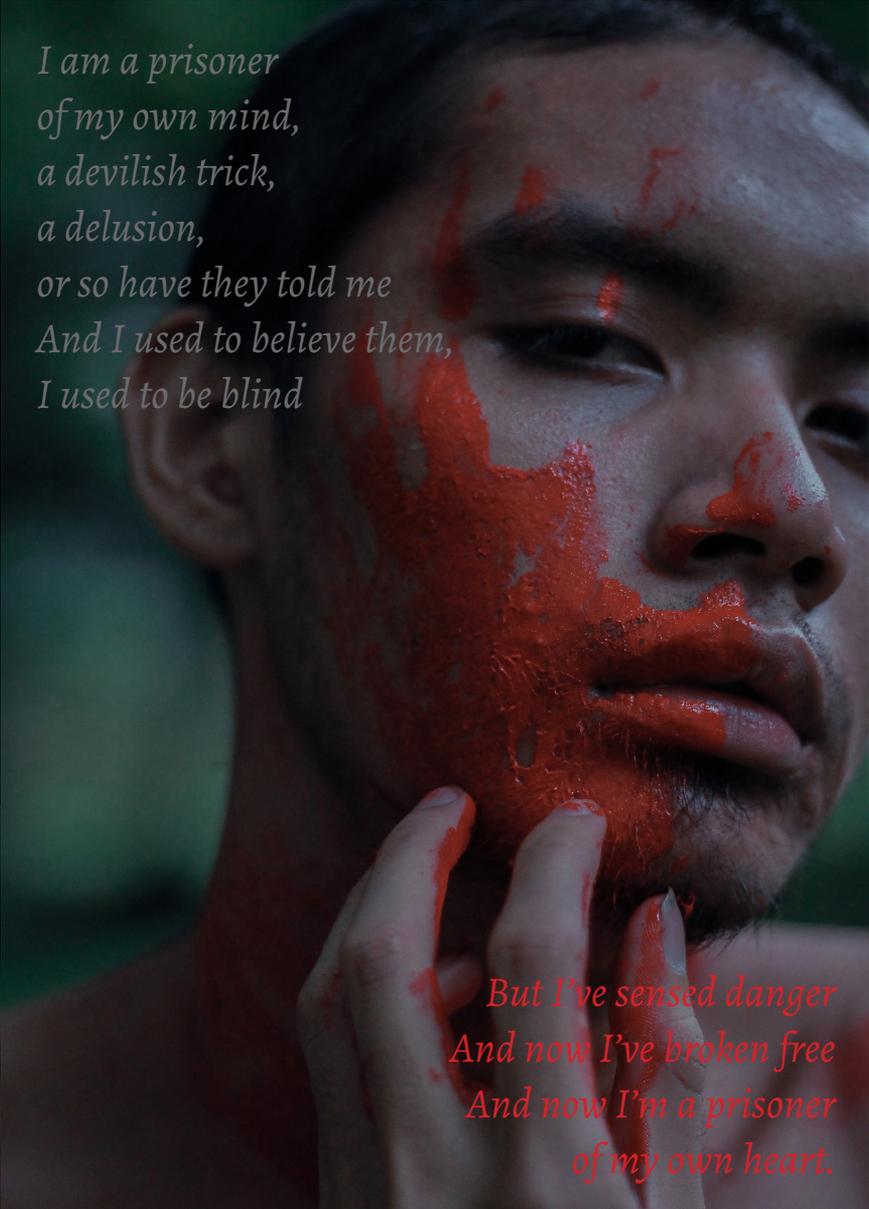
These striking images aim to raise awareness towards gaslighting and abuse, highlighting the internal delusion of a survivor of abuse and gaslighting. The wounds never heal overtime, and it's never easy to just get a grip an move forward.

Proceeds from this shoot go to fundraising for a little girl's chemotherapy. To help, visit :

<http://gogetfunding.com/princess-alexas-chemo-fund>.

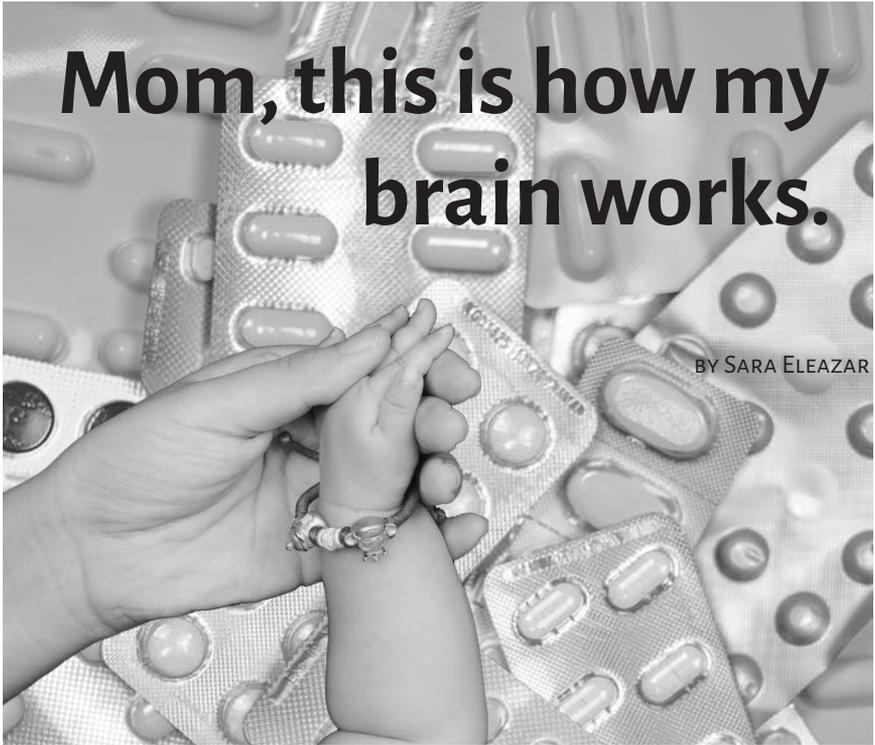






*I am a prisoner
of my own mind,
a devilish trick,
a delusion,
or so have they told me
And I used to believe them,
I used to be blind*

*But I've sensed danger
And now I've broken free
And now I'm a prisoner
of my own heart.*



Mom, this is how my brain works.

BY SARA ELEAZAR

WHEN I COME HOME from school every weekend, worn out like an old sweater, your hugs stitch me back together, one seam at a time. I hope you know how much I love every instance we sit by the balcony and talk. You know, those Friday nights, thick with humid air and your cigarette smoke and my endless chatter; those Friday nights when I can shake the exhaustion of school from my bones while you ask me about the latest medical phenomenon I learned in class. “How does the heart pump blood,” you would ask one week. “How do our eyes actually see,” you would ask during another. You tell me you enjoy watching me explain as animatedly as I can, and I love that you listen, that you understand. You see, these concepts are relatively simple to explain because they are concrete things, objective things, things you can read on a textbook and observe in another human being. I'm sorry my mental illnesses aren't quite as easy to observe and comprehend.

Well, they are, in a way. I witness you and dad and my siblings and friends caught up in the path of a typhoon and that typhoon is me. I am a hurricane of anxious thoughts and and half-meant suicidal jokes told wryly with a joyless



grin. I am the calm before the storm, pleasant and cheerful, then suddenly I am the storm, winds roaring a hundred kilometers an hour as I jump from idea to plan to plan to idea. And then the blustering winds die down until I am nothing more than a weak breeze blowing on a sunny day – except I don't feel the warmth of the sun because here I am stuck in bed, and I don't want to get up and I don't want to feel anything and I don't want to exist for now (or forever). But please don't be alarmed, because I promise I'll try my best to explain what it's like up here behind my face.

To be honest, I still don't know why I am the way I am and maybe I never will. A couple of times, during one of our more vitriolic disagreements, you asked me if this was your fault, if you had fucked me up enough. But I know – and please believe me – that this is my mind's fault and no one else's. Does it matter what caused my anxiety and bipolar though? I just want you to know that I try and fight and claw my way out of this godforsaken chasm I find myself in every day. Three years ago, I sought out a psychiatrist behind your back and dad's because I was terrified of what you would think of me. Would you still believe that I was your firstbaby, the child you bore and raised two decades ago? Or would you see me like how I see myself – a shadow of your daughter, a parasite thriving in the dark, afraid to live?

You see, mom, this is what depression and anxiety love to tell me every chance they get. I am useless, I am worthless, I do not deserve value and love and care. I've grown used to this internal monologue, this tug-o-war of self-hate and self-pity. Depression and anxiety are frenemies that love to one-up each other in my head, keeping my mind trapped in a never-ending battle with itself. I imagine every outcome I could come up with, rationality be damned. I agree and disagree; I catastrophize and the anxiety grows louder. My thoughts screech like bullets ricocheting into a deafening roar and I am held captive. What were once whispers are now screams, ordering me to bottle up these feelings, to stay silent and unaffected, to don a mask with a grin so wide, no one will believe that I was unhappy. (But I was. I am. Enough to wish I dropped dead so I could finally get the peace and quiet I longed for.)

When my diagnosis of depression was changed to bipolar 2 disorder just a couple of months ago, everything clicked in my head. Something in my mind,



always so foggy and noisy, gleamed like the full moon on a cloudy evening; it was enlightenment. Now I understood the highs and the lows, the excessive energy then the sluggish apathy. I welcomed hypomania to the party in my head like an old, familiar friend.

Mom, you tell me you enjoy watching me explain things, and I love that you listen. So I hope now you understand, maybe just a little bit.

This is how bipolar works – well, for me anyway. I'm on a rollercoaster and you know I hate rollercoasters, but god, do I love that exhilaration as I speed upwards, higher and higher. Soaring over everything and everyone, I swear I can taste the clouds from up here. I like to think of hypomania as mania's functional cousin, because these are the times when you see me at my best, sort of. I'm up and about, restless and hankering for something, anything to do. I spew out words a mile a minute because I can barely keep up with all these new and shiny ideas in my head. I am productive. I am outgoing. I am confident. And maybe I am a little too much of those, but I don't give a shit because these are the times when I can tell my anxiety to go suck it. I am a unicorn, bathing in rainbows and sparkles, and the euphoria is addictive. Each high has its come-down and when hypomania leaves me like a harried sailor abandoning ship, I crash and I crash hard. And you know what this looks like a little too well.

Once upon a time, you told me to put all the thoughts burrowing like worms in my brains into a box. You told me to put that box away. Compartmentalize. Done. I can't help but feel weak because I am incapable of doing that as effortlessly as you can. My brain simply doesn't work like that. I may not be as tough as you now, with all your decades of heartaches and happiness – but I'd like to believe I'm strong enough in my own way. Battling with one's mind every single day is no easy feat. And maybe I can even be strong enough to make you proud.

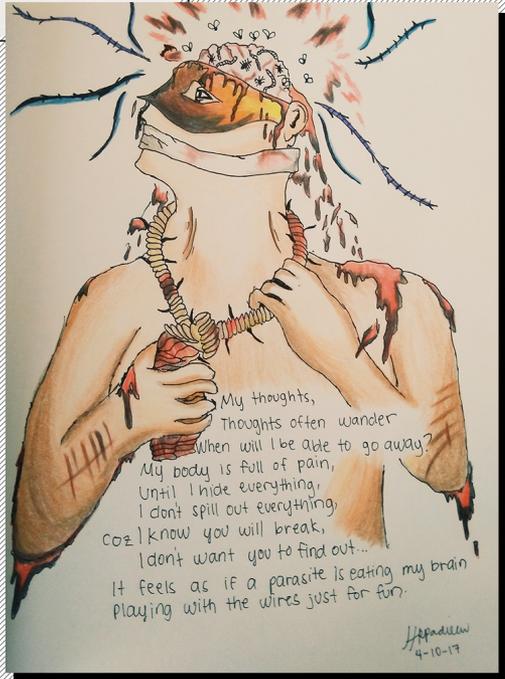
I don't blame you. I don't resent you. And I definitely don't hate you. Mom, you tell me you enjoy watching me explain things, and I love that you listen. So I hope now you understand, maybe just a little bit. Maybe we won't completely see eye to eye on this and that's okay. All I really want are your empathy and your patience and your acceptance. Because this is me, this is my life, and this is how my brain works. ☀



“When depression hits or relapse happens, I feel as though something is playing with the wires of my brain, eating up my tissues, making me feel like the living dead.”

when darkness comes for a visit

“This is what I feel almost everyday, as though a mask and cloth wrapped around my mouth can hide it all.”



My thoughts,
Thoughts often wander
When will I be able to go away?
My body is full of pain,
Until I hide everything,
I dont spill out everything,
coz I know you will break,
I dont want you to find out...
It feels as if a parasite is eating my brain
Playing with the wires just for fun.



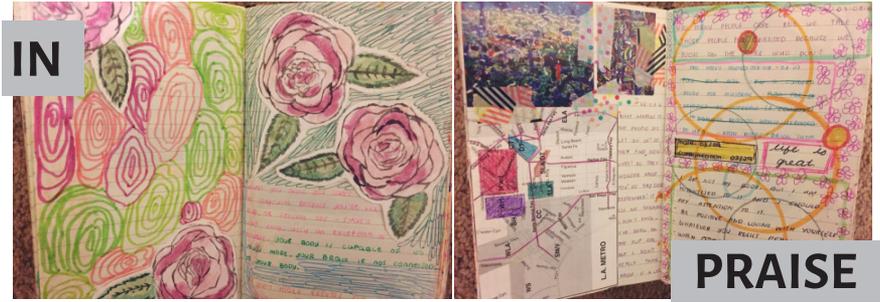
illustration by Jeanedelle Sinco

EMBERS

THERE ARE PEOPLE who are suffering silently with the pain of loss, grief and despair. People say they should move on and 'get over it'... Some people never acknowledge [mental illness]: it's just 'overreacting' or it's 'all in your head'. This piece was done when people wanted too many things from

me. People told me to be happy, but I couldn't. People told me that it doesn't matter, but it did. People told me it's all in your head, but that's the problem. Embers were once burning with glorious flames that could light up any darkness. What if those flames die? What if they're all used up? Don't they

turn into embers? Are we not embers when all the love we've had has been spent, and all the love had been given? We cannot give what we don't have. We cannot provide them out of our nothingness. We can't be 'okay' when we know we aren't, and we can't be forced to burn so bright for the satisfaction of others. ☀



If there's anything that I have been wrong about, it would be thinking that journaling isn't important, and I'll tell you why, but before I get to that I'll give you a timeline:

August 2014: *I went to my first therapist session because I was lost, she told me I have depression and anxiety (I just did therapy for 8 sessions, no meds yet)*

July 2015: *I went to a psychiatrist in the Philippines, she said I have the same thing (She prescribed me with Lexapro)*

January 2016: *I went to a psychiatrist who told me I have Bipolar Disorder (I continued Lexapro and then changed it to Celexa because I didn't feel any changes) (I stopped doing therapy and taking my antidepressants and I had a mental breakdown on July 31)*

August 2016: *I ended up in a psych hospital and I was told I have Borderline Personality Disorder (I started taking Welbutrin and that's been working for me).*

I started journaling earlier because I started taking Ambien, and it was making me have blackouts and forget everything that happened the day before. It was like how Lucy from 50 First Dates would forget, except I didn't forget people, I just forgot what happened. What started as a way for me to remember things later on became a habit, though I did stop for a couple of months because I started being detached. I picked back up on journaling when I was in the hospital because I wanted to do some self-reflection. Now, journaling has become a way for me to hone in my thoughts and keep myself sane. One ultimate way it's helped me is how it helped me recognize things that I can improve on and the things that I do wrong; talking to yourself doesn't mean you're crazy, it's a really good way to know who you are and feel at peace within yourself. Mental health is such an underrated topic, but it shouldn't be that way.

I want to touch base with being in a psych hospital, seeing therapists, and going a psychiatrist – because those are often seen with a stigma. Being told I was going to a psych hospital scared me, I started sobbing in the hospital and messaging everyone close to me. On the way there, I was shaking, then when I got there I stayed in my room for the first couple of hours. Psych hospitals aren't what the media paints them to be,



ART AND WORDS BY LEI ANCHETA

there were different areas ranging from highly functional to schizophrenic. It was a way for me to meet people who went through the same things (I was in the highly functional group, all of us in there were people who attempted suicide), it was also a way for me to find resources.

Seeing therapists doesn't necessarily mean sitting on a couch and talking about your problems, it's more of talking about your problems and then finding coping skills to help you manage things. Y'know how it's easier to open up to a stranger because there's no personal connection and it'll be between the two of you? That's how it is for me. At time it can get tedious, though it does help. And there are a lot of therapies out there, so there's one that's bound to fit any need.

Going to a psychiatrist is basically like going to any doctor, the fear is there, yet when you're sitting there talking about your situation that fear goes away. I can't really elaborate on this, however, I want to say that openness with the psychiatrist will help you the most, because the doctor will only base things from what he or she knows. My aim in sharing all of this is to open up a conversation and suggest a thing that has helped me in hopes that it would help others too. Journaling has been the biggest help for me because talking to myself was a way for me to know that I am my own best friend and I am strong enough to have control over my life, the other resources were just ways to support the work that I have started within. Above all else though and if those things I have shared isn't your cup of tea, I'd say open up to the people around you, because there's a high chance that you feel alone and misunderstood, but they're there for you and people are willing to do whatever they can to help, they just don't know what you're going through. This is probably such an overused phrase and even Michael Jackson sang about it (Ay, ang corny ng joke ko, sorry, haha), "You are not alone" holds so much truth, remember that. Being on your own doesn't necessarily mean loneliness, because when you start knowing yourself more, your company will be more than enough. ☀

Have a Look Inside

DARLENE TURLA talks about her gripping photographs that depict a tumultuous inner world.

Onion Skin (above, left):

Anxiety has the power to turn you into a very scared and vulnerable creature. Under its claws, your wings are clipped; you walk away on tip-toes fearing your demons. You're aware of this, but the claws are too sharp and you grow more and more frustrated with yourself -- because who wants to be onion-skinned?



Down to My Last Piece:

"It doesn't interest me what you do for a living... I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away."

—The Invitation, Oriah Mountain Dreamer

I created this image in honor of that crucial point in our life battles—including those against ourselves—in which we hold on to that last piece of strength inside us after all else have been expended.



Hiding Place: People who suffer from depression and anxiety often cope through avoidance. Some succumb to depressive hibernation, but some find sanctuary in solitude and art. Depression in its severe state, however, is crippling and paralyzing. So that before one reaches this state, it is crucial that the sufferer finds a safe place to hide, be it a support system or a temporary hiatus from the demands of daily existence.

Ang Zahyi Tee

By its darkness I am swallowed,
pale and frozen.
Somebody please liberate me
from Anxiety.





The Power of Perspective: Sometimes, we deem the world dirty—Only to realize, in our moments of lucidity that we just forgot to clean our lenses. May we live for those moments..



Today I Just Want to Be Struck by Lightning (below): Today my mind is numb, my body in severe ennui. Today I just want to be struck by lightning.

Crisis Hotlines

Natasha Goulbourn Foundation

(02) 804 HOPE (4673)
0917 558 HOPE (4673)
or 2919 (toll-free for GLOBE and TM subscribers).

Manila Lifeline Centre

(02) 896 9191 or 0917 854 9191.

In Touch Community Services

Relationship problems, addiction, abuse, other emotional problems
(02) 893 7603, 0917 800 1123 (Globe),
0922 893 8944 (Sun), or email at
crisisline@i-manila.com.ph

Living Free Foundation

Addiction, individual and marital counseling
0917 322 7087
livingfreefoundation@gmail.com

National Center for Mental Health Helpline

Mental health concerns and services
0949 143 6425; 0915 792 6889;
0922 241 3855; (02) 531 9001 loc. 283

You or a loved one may benefit from keeping this list close by, in case of emergency.

Mood Harmony

Makati Medical Center's mood disorder support group
(02) 844-2941

Dial-a-Friend

(02) 5251743 or (02) 5251881

UGAT Foundation

Psychospiritual counseling
(02) 426 5992; (02) 426 6001 loc. 4872-73; ugat@admu.edu.ph

700 Club Asia

Prayer and counseling services via chat and Skype
(02) 737 0700
1 800 1 888 8700 (toll-free)
0949 888 8001
0925 300 3000
0917 406 5001
<http://cbnasia.org/mediacenter/prayer-requests>; Skype:the700clubasia

You may find a more comprehensive list of mental healthcare and counseling service providers at silakbo.ph/mh-resources.

Sources: Philippine Psychiatric Association page (<https://www.facebook.com/Philippine-Psychiatric-Association-Inc-PPA-18936637110309>), Mental Health PH (https://twitter.com/mentalhealth_ph/status/871269814144188419)





mini art by
anna cunanan,
stephanie rue,
andrew elgo
and tired-onigiri

