

2015

Survive and Thrive Writing Workshop Poems

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1. Title: Anxiety

Abstract: My body during an anxiety attack.

They crawl around just beneath the skin, let's call them the Children of Anxiety. They like to play mischievous tricks; tapping my bones to make them jump under the duvet, poking fingers into my brain to make me stay awake. They don't want to be bored, they want me to come out and play.

During the day while I teach, work, and work some more, they lay quietly playing with the moonbeams hiding in the corners. It's their quiet time. Time to rest beneath my skin, letting me breathe for awhile.

Naptime is over when the world outside quiets. Shadows lengthen, and the moon takes it's place while fingers creep around the crook of my elbow, sticky with the day's sweat. Knees press down on my heart. A soft trampoline for untied laces.

They love to play Olly Olly Oxen Free inside my stomach, trampling around, hollering for me to give in. When I remain hidden, they play Lava with my lungs. Jumping from one to the other. Grasping the soft tissue and squeezing. My eyes are where they love to finger paint; throwing splotches of black and white against the blue-green canvas. Trodding and trampling until I give in and curl into the shape of a bent blade of grass.

Mischief is their game. My body their home.

2. Title: Regret

Abstract: When my grandpa passed away suddenly a few years ago, I sat and thought about all our unspoken words, memories, and experiences. Death is a tricky aftermath for the living; complicated, messy, and hauntingly beautiful in relation to our concept of time. I tried to capture that in this poem.

The day I died
the world inhaled softly
and blew my soul out
in a hushed whisper.
I always thought
I would land
amongst the stars.
Coloring the sky
by setting it on fire
with my fingertips
before dipping it
in a cool pool
of velvet purple.

I would dangle from
the belt of Orion
before swinging over
to loop around
the Big Dipper.
Settling in the crook
of its arm
and watching life
unfold beneath me
like a soft blanket
shaken out
for the season's
first picnic.
I thought
I would be able
to reach down
and leave a few
specks of paint
on the people
I had loved most.
A streak of green
on my mother's cheek.
A brush of blue
on my father's whiskers.
Or perhaps
a smudge
of red
on my sister's collarbone.
I thought
I would grow wings
To cover
The earth
In a silver spoon
And place it
Beneath
My tongue.
A small marble
Worn smooth.

Instead
The world
Blinked
And carried
Me away
In a hurried breath.
A dandelion wisp

In a field
Of snow.

3. Title: Being

Abstract: Far too often we are wrapped in our own little worlds; forgetting that there is a great space before us. A simple moment or gesture is lost in the hurry of life. Being is about taking a moment to reach out and grasp those little moments that remind us that we are still beautifully human.

Legs bent
beneath the sunshine,
a lazy afternoon
curls around
the pages
of Augusten Burroughs.
a slight breeze
ruffles the hair
of his mother
poet.
time slips
easily
between the
woven fabric
of the hammock
as Augusten's
life greedily
spills into an
open lap
unaware
of the small
feathered body
perched above
the nesting head.
a flit catches
the corner of
zipline eyes
and they raise
to peer above
cherry red
spectacles.
watching as the
tiny head of the
feathered being
bobs and twists
before hopping down
to perch below

a crinkled forehead.
the bent body
too surprised
to move
so it sits still
and watches as
tiny bird feet
grip
the red frames.
a breath
is held
as the tiny
bird feet
hop
right to left
and
left to right
before a
feathered tail
flicks up
to brush
soft blonde
eyebrows.
a short burst
of Chickadeedeedees
warble out
of the small
feathered body
before the sunshine
inhales and
swallows
the tiny bird feet
in the blink
of a slow
afternoon

4. Title: Diabetes

Abstract: I've had diabetes since I was 2 (24 years) and this is a scene that has played out numerous times over the years. It has been a struggle to find a doctor that remembers that I am more than just skin and bones. That I am more than just a disease.

Diabetes they told me. I was two so I just nodded and ate my cookie. It's just a shot they told me while pinning me down, lungs raw and eyes red from screaming. Twenty-four years have gone by. It's just diabetes they say. Three shots a day to start with. That was before the medicine changed. Then one shot a day and one every time I ate. Now I use an insulin pump. One small prick every three days (to change the infusion set).

Diabetes they say is a simple disease. Watch your blood sugars. Exercise. Take your insulin. Simple they say. But for me it wasn't so simple. See what they didn't realize was is that every body is different. Some burn insulin faster and some burn it slower. Some burn slower or faster during different times of the day.

Sugars at 400?! Exercise they say. Still at 400?! Take more insulin they say. More than what your body can handle. Convulsions. Shaking. Seizure. Frantic 911 call. Flashing lights. Ambulance. Bright and dark. Alive? Maybe. Dead? Possibly.

Who am I? I can't remember my name. I know the faces around me, but do not recall their names. What did I do yesterday? Where do I live? Hypoglycemia they say. Not enough sugar. Too much insulin.

Diabetes is simple they say.
