Autoethnographic Poetry: â??The Wrong Kind of Theme Parkâ?•

Description

The AutoEthnographer

My ability to be creatively vulnerable with my mental illness as well as the experiences which contributed to it will serve as a method of self-healing.

Authorâ??s Memo

Autoethnography can offer multiple therapeutic benefits. Not only does it allow those with mental illnesses to express themselves, which contributes to a better understanding of self, but it offers a method of healing. Duchin and Wiseman state, â??Individualsâ?? ability to describe traumatic events in their lives is connected to the processing of trauma and healingâ?• (280). As these poems illustrate, my ability to be creatively vulnerable with my mental illness as well as the experiences which contributed to it will serve as a method of self-healing.

2020 was a trying year for a lot of people, and for me, in a multitude of *clusterfucks* kinda way. I lost a beloved pet, moved across the country, separated from my spouse of 11 years, started my graduate degree, had to make a difficult decision to re-home my other pets, and had a miscarriage. *Donâ??t forget the abusive relationshipsâ?*¦ Yeahâ??I wish I could. Sometimes in life, we do stupid shitâ??like that time I got out of one abusive relationship just to get into another. Although, to be fair, I didnâ??t even realize it was abuse because it resembled the environment where I was raised. Itâ??s funny how that worksâ??how you canâ??t see something for what it is until youâ??re away from it.

Iâ??ve written poems here and there before, but something about all of these events happening really drew me to put words to paper againâ??or in this case, text to phone screen. When I was writing, I went back from time to time and reviewed the previous poems, but it never occurred to me just how dysfunctional I was until I â??retiredâ?• them, completed some grueling therapy work, and later read them from start to finish. Being in an abusive situation is difficult, and although it was painful to endure and itâ??s still painful today, I am thankful I escaped. I still struggle some daysâ??but the struggle I

have independently is much preferred to being around someone who is purposely trying to destroy you.

We all have trauma and the only way we can stop projecting our trauma onto other people is to heal. We heal by sharing our storiesâ??vulnerability is powerful.

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Iâ??m at the top and itâ??s a long way down, but if I fall, I know the wind will carry me away

Like a dandelion

And Iâ??ll float and fly over the water until the earth pulls me back down

Then Iâ??ll flutter down and dig deep in the soil

Sprout my seed

Ground my roots

And even if they try to pull me from the dirt, they wonâ??t be able to

Because Iâ??ll be strong, steady, planted

Thought loops are like Froot Loops so let me take you on a colorful ride

Sometimes itâ??s a fucking mess inside

One minute I want to die and the next I want to live

But whatâ??s living?

I donâ??t want to meet over coffeeâ??that shitâ??s lame

I donâ??t do wine Wednesdays or get a thrill from playing chess

What I really need is a distractionâ??you know, stimulate my brain

Sometimes I eat the good candy just to turn the lights out

Why is it always night out when I feel most alive?

Chain smoking keeps me coasting through the minutes

hours

days

And I close my eyes and pray â??please take me awayâ?•

Because I want to go right in this moment while everythingâ??s okay

Iâ??ve been trying to think of what to do with you but I had too much candy and canâ??t think clearly

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I guess itâ??s the better alternative to an electric current running through my cerebrum

Fuck feelings

Maybe I should just be brain dead

This mind is a beautiful thing to waste but itâ??s always been treated like trash anyways

Youâ??re like the fish that I keep throwing back but my baitâ??s too good and I hook you again

And again. And again.

And each time, it gets a little harder to throw you back

And every time I cast my line again, you bite a little sooner

I guess this will be the little game we play until I break down and take you home with me

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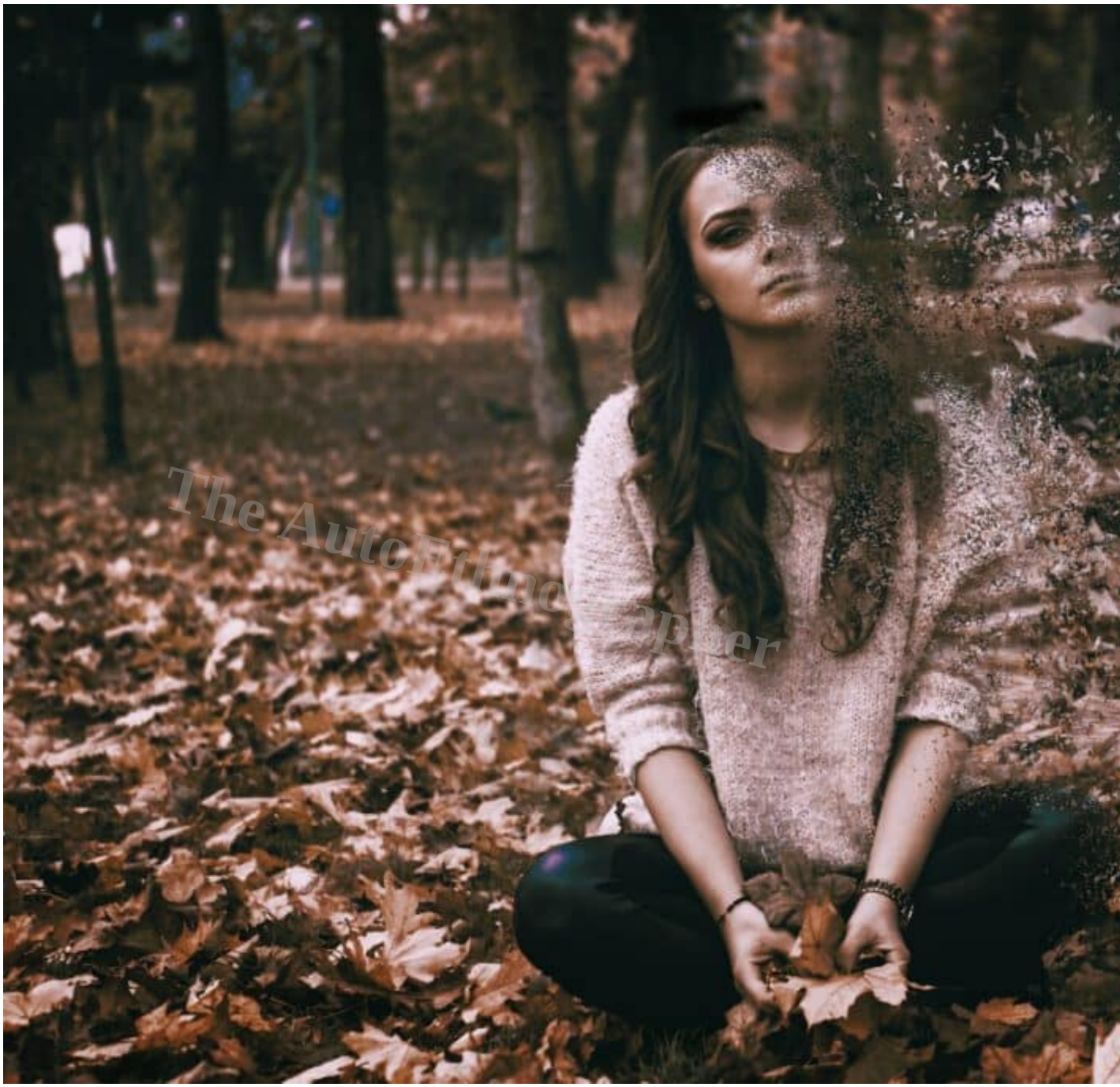
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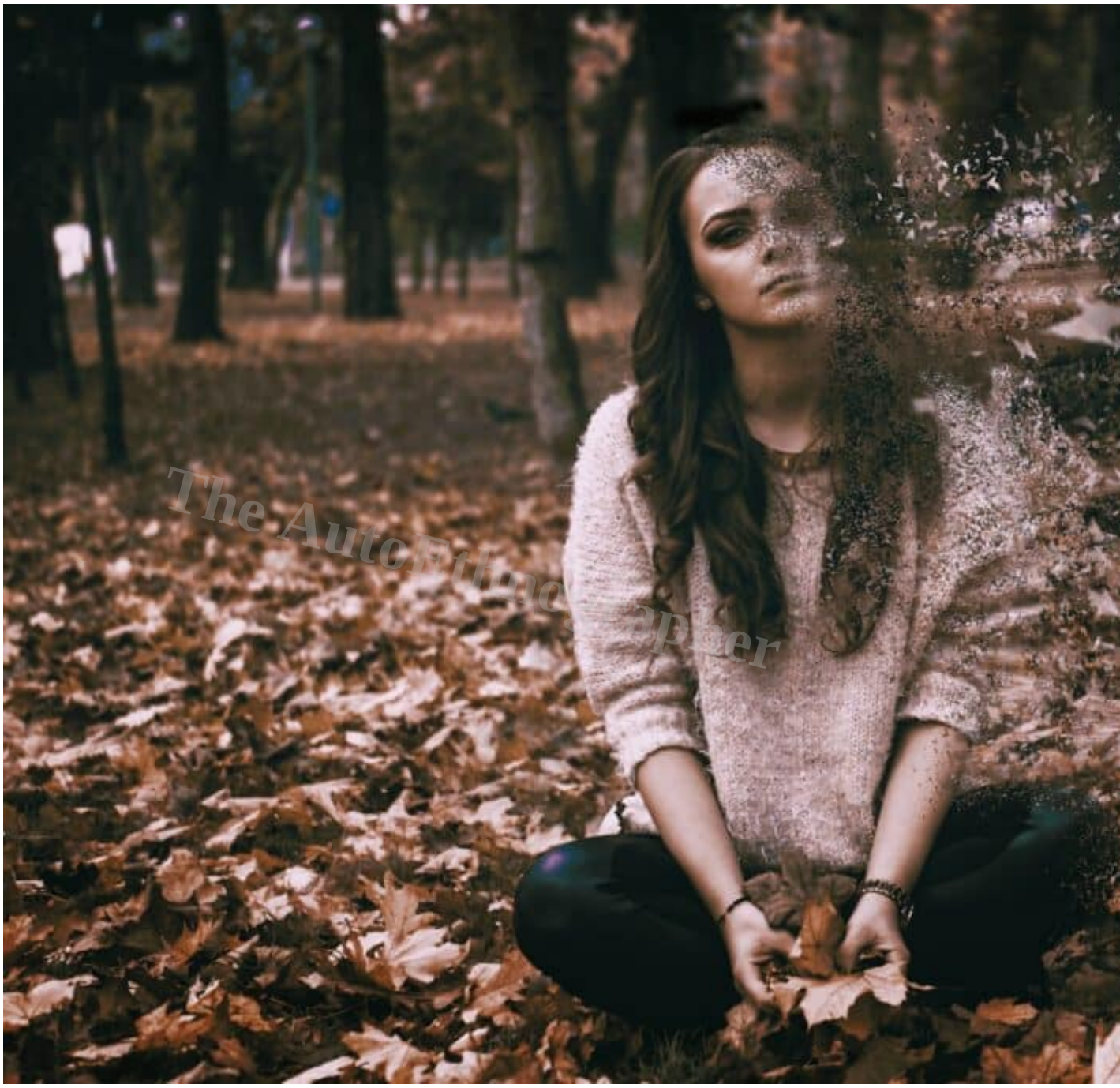

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Itâ??s complicated, right? I am complicated. You are complicated. This, we, us, themâ??is complicated. There are some complications. I hope if I say it enough, it all becomes meaningless.

Your heart is a muscleâ??it keeps you alive, but as it beats, youâ??re dying. Thatâ??s what itâ??s like. Like having your heart in a glass box where no one can touch it. But I feel it beat in meâ?¦

Itâ??s a sweet misery. It kills me a little bit more every day, but it keeps me wanting to wake up the next. Iâ??ll dream of all the things that could be, only to open my eyes to the empty space in my bed. But, somehow, youâ??re still here with meâ?¦

How do you wait when you donâ??t even know what youâ??re waiting forâ??or if it will ever come? But I know I canâ??t walk away, because I want to hear you call my name. Please, will you please just call my name?

Iâ??ve always wanted ECT because it helps with forgetting, but your brain can actually work in this wayâ??on its own. Einstein said time is relative and now it all makes sense; my brain took out the garbage, so what was many calendar years is now just a small sliver in my mind.

How do you stay when it kills you? Because you donâ??t want to lose it. How can you leave it behind? You canâ??t. And all the frustrated crying in the world canâ??t change a damn thing, but you let it out anyway.

So Iâ??ll live each day in a dichotomy; I guess sometimes thereâ??s pain in pleasure. And Iâ??ll keep dreaming of scenarios in my head that may never happen, but Iâ??m hopeful. Or am I just stupid? I guess being in love is like thatâ?¦

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Feels like being ripped apart from the inside

Right in the solar plexus

Who do you talk to when the person you would normally talk to doesnâ??t want to talk?

You talk to yourself

And what do you say?

You try to make sense of it even when nothing makes sense

You could lose your shit but what does that do?

It canâ??t change anything. It certainly wonâ??t make it better

So you just keep holding on

What do you hold onto?

Yourself. Donâ??t lose yourself

This phlegm in my throat chokes me up and I canâ??t speak for days

Truth is thereâ??s so much I want to say but youâ??re not always there like I need you to be

I try to think of all the good times but the bad is bad bad

Like I want to run and never look back bad

But you keep holding on

And so do I

Why do we both keep holding on?

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You said you were happy it happenedâ??how could you say that?

Extasy

Iâ??m pretty sure thatâ??s when I obtained

One nightâ??two hoursâ??ecstasy

And we didnâ??t even know until it was too late

You were an assholeâ??first rate

Stressed me out and made me feel like I wasnâ??t perfectâ??even though you told me before that I am

And then there was the drinking

And the smoking

Was it your fault or mine?

You said you were happy it happenedâ??how could you say that?

It was like being stabbed in my pelvis with a skewer

For a weekâ??every day

I thought I just wasnâ??t drinking enough water

Until I saw the fragments floating in the water of the porcelain bowl

Blood clotâ??a little heart

Gray tissueâ??a little face

White tissueâ??tiny limbs

You said you were happy it happenedâ??how could you say that?

And when the passing was finally over

I was so relieved until I had to scrub the blood stains from my underwear

And I was reminded all over again that all the love and support I needed were flushed just like the life that once lived inside me

That was our baby. My baby. Your baby.

Your child.

You said you were happy it happenedâ??how could you say that?

Beautiful disaster

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Thereâ??s a version of you that I love and adore

And another one that I hate

I donâ??t think itâ??s your fault

But you have to be ready to let yourself be free

I know you said you like that feeling but do you know what being free really feels like?

Because I donâ??t think youâ??ve ever healed from all of your pain

And you can take as many trips as you like, but theyâ??re not going to get you any closer to your destination

The experts say narcissists and empaths are actually the perfect pair

But I think that only applies if both are up to the challenges theyâ??re going to face

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And theyâ??re both ready

It always drove me a little crazy that you knew me so well, so I can understand why it drives you crazy that I can see right through you, too

Itâ??s terrifying to be so transparent, isnâ??t it?

Most people I know canâ??t understand my feelings towards you

And I think thatâ??s only because Iâ??ve seen your soul where others are stuck on your exterior

You were right when you said weâ??re all alone in this world

But Iâ??m starting to see that everyone is at least a little damaged

And itâ??s still possible for two lonely, damaged people to come together and get things right where everything else was always wrong

Iâ??m being a little hypocritical right now because while thatâ??s my hope, Iâ??ve also lost hope

Iâ??ll be alright, though, because Iâ??ve been fulfilling my own dreams for a long time

I am a fortress now

Like the cement marker at Clinton Lakeâ??right now Iâ??m watching the waves crashing against it and yet itâ??s unmoving

I so badly want to go out and stand on it so I can be one with my metaphor

I donâ??t know who they are, but they say two people who are meant to be together will always find their way back to each other

I always wondered how thatâ??s possible because the world is so big

But itâ??s really not that difficult to find who youâ??re looking for if youâ??re determined

You can find anything on the internetâ??especially once you know someoneâ??s real name

Yes, I know everything, and yes, Iâ??m still here

I donâ??t hate you

I just hate what youâ??ve let other people make you

Youâ??re better than that but it doesnâ??t matter how many times I say it, you have to believe it

But, for good measure, youâ??re so much fucking better than that

Donâ??t be lost. Donâ??t be gone. Youâ??ve been foundâ??now find yourself

Catch a wave and ride it into the sunset, and if you ever get yourself together, you can come find me

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