



## Imbroglia: Poetry on Depression, Anxiety, and Bulimia Nervosa

### Description

## Imbroglia: Poetry on Depression, Anxiety, and Bulimia Nervosa

In my work , the issues of depression, anxiety, and bulimia nervosa are discussed heavily. M work is autoethnographic as it uses my lived experience with mental issues to address the institutions that grate on our mental health and their consequences. Using my lived experiences, and the experiences of those I've witnessed around me in recovery, my poetry focuses on allegories to the epidemic of mental illness – especially for younger people.





## On Purging

Dim the lights  
So that they radiate static orange  
Where green is blue and blue is red  
And I can't see my face in the water

She is staring through the keyhole  
Where white light leaks like a puddle on the floor  
Framing the abnormality of an ant mound silhouette  
Tunneling straight through itself

She is listening to silenced retching  
And the quiet splash of thick honey  
And trickle of vinegar  
Into water

She didn't hear enough  
My breath that fills the air like dust  
With the scent of sugar and acid  
That burns like ants crawling deep up my nose

Leaving the room raw and red  
Like an infected wound  
She knocks on the door  
And dims the lights further

So that I don't have a body  
She tells me wishes come true with the right price  
And that the flip of the switch  
Will hide the smell

## Foil

I'm like foil  
Dented and bending at the faintest touch or force

I have no solid form, but remember every touch  
Why so sensitive?  
To the tiniest pressure

Put your pressure on me  
And grind me to bits  
Like clay into dusted chalk  
Let me be as insignificant that dust  
I want to fall into every crease  
To run between the lines of your hands  
And flow as someone else  
Can I be you?

We all turn to clay one day  
Will I?  
Wouldn't that be best  
No fluidity, such solidity  
Aren't we best in certainty?  
A sea of sculptures  
Lines of tombstones  
Isn't that beauty?  
Captured in a moment  
Caught in our life's culmination  
No question, no change  
Set in stone

Like the clay figures that molded us  
That made us take our hands  
And babies' hands  
To mold  
And call that stuck stiff figure  
Life

We all turn to clay one day  
From clay we are ground to dust  
Weren't we all dust?  
Molded to be bounded by bodies  
Bred and bled to break  
By babies' hands

I wish I was a ghost  
Lifeless, pressureless  
I want food to fall through me;  
I want my skin not to hold me  
Let gazes pass through me.  
It's too much pressure;  
you see?

I want no body  
Nobody to know me  
Nothing to dent or mold or destroy  
Like dust, or scattered ashes  
Wouldn't it all be better without me?

## Tunnel Vision

I don't control the scrolling of my thumb  
It moves along with my heart  
And the chewing of my mouth

I've forgotten how to blink my eyes  
But it still feels like I can't see through them  
Like how I can't hear her when she says  
"Stop. You're wasting your youth."

And I can't see through my eyes  
It feels like they are always twitching  
Or blurred in a migraine

I can't see the food clearly  
Nor my body in the mirror  
I can't feel much either

As if I just turned off  
When she asks over the phone  
"Why so drained?"

## Buffet

It starts with water  
Glugs of water  
Until you feel like you'll explode

Into a splash of freezing water  
Lock the door in the bathroom  
Tiled floors stare in off white  
With black mold growing in the cracks  
It's cold to the knees  
Stick a hand down the throat  
I think of my mother's face  
When she was my age

It starts with water  
Pouring itself back into the bowl  
And then the main course  
Reveals itself  
A monster scratching it's way up  
Noodles dyed pink  
A chunk of chocolate  
Grains of rice  
Some blood  
Chunky like school oatmeal  
A fresh goulash  
Terraforming the bowl

Soon it's just water again  
Spit and dribble  
Mint and water  
To keep your teeth and eyes white as porcelain  
Open a window to remove the smell  
And flush the toilet  
Stare in the mirror  
Realize it wasn't enough  
All you've done  
Was sweeten the pot  
You'll still be back  
You can't just give up

## Maria

Maria was obsessed with a particle of sand  
A pebble amongst a sea of pebbles

A particle that didn't matter

But Maria could see it's flaws

It was bloated and jagged, not round  
It's color was off and it was too large

Half of the speck was droopy  
As if it was melting

It was hideous, to Maria  
Yet no one else could see the problems

This grain of sand was hideous  
Compared to all the other pebbles

Maria couldn't look at it  
And she'd spend hours picking and tearing at it

It was the worst piece of sand in the world  
Amongst all the infinite multitude of other particles

Maria would do them and the world a favor  
Because she couldn't perfect the sand

She threw it far into the sea  
So it'd never be seen again

The AutoEthnographer

## Half Empty

Sometimes I wonder  
If everything in my head turned to water  
How much space would I take up?

Would I be a great flood  
A spilled glass?  
An overflowed sink?

How would they clean up my mess  
With napkins or mops?  
Or buckets upon buckets without a dent



How much is everything  
All my emotions, memories, thoughts, and fatigue  
Sometimes it feels like too much

Like a constant dripping  
Building up to overflow  
Due to explode

It feels so huge  
That if I just burst  
All the oceans would rise up the shore

And it feels so small  
That they'd just disappear  
Into something much larger

Does anything I feel matter?  
Would it even make a dent?

Or am I just a spilled glass  
Easily dried into air  
Easily refilled

The AutoEthnographer

## Shoes

There was a baby born with shoes on his feet  
From the moment he left the womb  
And the boy grew up  
Comfortable in his own shoes

And when the boy fell  
And twisted an arm  
The shoes would remember  
And an agelet would dent

The boy grew up  
And his shoes grew style  
And wore his achievements  
Polished and settled

But as the man grew older

He didn't stop  
Nor did his shoes  
They'd grown fragile

And when the man fell  
The fabric waned  
And when he broke his hip  
The laces went  
And when he got his surgeries  
The stuffing burst  
And when he finally keeled over  
The shoes soles broke

And that's what we have left  
A dead man  
And empty holes

Fill them both with bodies  
And call them "gifts"

The AutoEthnographer

## All He Nose

There's a man in a room, who's crooked and bent.  
With a pencil in hand.  
He draws.  
Twisted over, in a fetal hunch.  
With his pencil worked to the tip.  
He lays on a paper of noses.  
Nose after nose after nose after nose.  
He rots in a dim lit room  
Where the fading light cannot touch the corners.  
He works.  
With an ageless face that's covered with sores and scratches.  
His left eye is red and bulging out of his skull  
and his sleep deprived pupils eat the surrounding iris  
until his eyes are all but black and red.  
His lips are chapped, scabbed across his mouth.  
And on his forehead sores fester.  
And flies swirl in and out his open wounds.  
But his nose is pristine.  
The skin is moist and smooth, almost glowing in the dark.

The bridge is perfectly smooth and the tip appears sculpted.  
The nose is perfect.  
Completely symmetrical.  
Entirely divine.  
Yet around his nose, there's blood leaking  
from scratches so deep and skin so tattered.  
But He doesn't flinch when the maggots crawl in.  
He just draws noses and noses.  
And noses upon noses upon noses upon noses upon noses.  
But it's not right to say "noses,"  
for he's only drawing one nose.  
In his orderly fashion,  
with a ruler counting the spaces and the sizes.  
Each nose is drawn.  
And each nose disappoints.  
And each nose is flawed.  
And each nose isn't straight.  
And each nose is his.  
And with every bent line  
He scratches.  
And with every failed bridge  
He scratches.  
And every uneven nostril  
He scratches.  
With each impurity  
He tears out a piece of himself.  
Ripping himself to bits,  
Until He creates perfection.  
But it will never come.  
Until He himself is erased.

## Credits

Featured image By [Alex ?vashenko](#) for [Unsplash](#)

Image by [Christopher Campbell](#) for [Unsplash](#)

## Learn More

New to autoethnography? Visit [What Is Autoethnography? How Can I Learn More?](#) to learn about autoethnographic writing and expressive arts. Interested in contributing? Then, view our editorial board's [What Do Editors Look for When Reviewing Evocative Autoethnographic Work?](#). Accordingly, check out our [Submissions](#) page. View [Our Team](#) in order to learn about our editorial board. Please see our [Work with Us](#) page to learn about volunteering at *The AutoEthnographer*. Visit [Scholarships](#) to learn about our annual student scholarship competition

## Category

1. All Content
2. Autoethnographic Poetry
3. Volume 4, Issue 3 (2024)

## Author

hannah-englander

The AutoEthnographer