

Brenna Moore

Anxiety/Depression

No one realizes it isn't always
One or the other.
Sometimes,
Much of the time,
It's both.

What is it like,
Inside my head?
Do you really want to know?

It's Jaws pulling you to the bottom of the sea,
Burying you in the sand.
It's being buried alive,
Waking up in a coffin.
Suffocating.
No. Way. Out.

It's billions of voices inside your head,
Each one louder than the next,
And *twice* as mean as the last.
But it's also nothingness, blank.
Someone erased everything.
EVERYTHING.

But worst of all, it's being forced to stand still,
Blindfolded,
Being shot at with arrows,
Hoping they'll all miss...

But you don't really care.
You *hope* they'll hit you
And kill you quickly.
Because in the end,
You don't really matter, do you?

Brenna Moore
Introduction to Creative Writing

Artist's Statement for "Anxiety/Depression"

Poetry has never been my favorite genre, and I think that had to do with the kinds of poems I was assigned to read. Most of them rhymed, and many of them didn't really have the story I was craving. In writing this piece, I pulled from my own life and had to think about times where I've had an anxiety attack or a depressive episode in order to find the right details. Now, I find that I'm warming up to poetry, and I think that has to do with how many poems I had to write in the class. I decided to take out the second stanza because it felt like fluff to me. It felt inauthentic, and that was not the meaning I was going for. I wanted the reader to actually understand what having both mental illnesses at the same time feels like. I also added more to the end because I wanted to get in one last jab to the audience, and I think that was effective. The apathy of my attitude is caused by having to balance two extremes, sometimes at the same time.

This was actually my favorite poem to write, and it came from one of the prompts in the book *Poet's Companion*. The prompt was in the Metaphors and Similes chapter, and I had a good time coming up with the kinds of metaphors that were fantastical but also accurate. I wanted to use imagery that everyone would be able to recognize and possibly relate to, and I think I was able to accomplish that in the end. I wanted to show the quickness of the switch from anxiety to depression, because there are times where the two are hand in hand as far as symptoms.

Overall, I liked the poetry unit. I learned a lot about making creative imagery and avoiding clichés that I've seen in other people's work and in my own work for years. I wanted to come up with things that the reader hadn't really thought about before or connected with anxiety or depression.

All I can think is to...

Brenna Ellen

Run.

I feel them creeping up on me.
They're trying to grab me.
Their hands breeze past my back.

Breathe.

I run faster than I've ever run before.
I feel like I'm drowning.
My legs are on fire.

Stop.

I don't know where I am.
I don't know where I am.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM.

Breathe.

The trees are thick as fog.
I can't see the sky.

Again.

I have no flashlight.
I'm blind in the night.
I still hear them coming for me.
I run in any direction that might save me.
I smack my head.
It's not bark.
It's glass.
They found me.

Breathe.

Melanocetus Eustalus

Brenna Ellen

You know, the anglerfish
from *Finding Nemo*.

That's what you are.
All you do is hang your light,
Luring people into your space,
Until it's too late to notice the teeth.

Then you kill them,
You drain them of their life
And their freedom.

Like the deep sea,
You alienate people and
You pretend it's okay.

Your force people away from
Family and friends,
But it's okay,
Because it's all in the name
Of *your* survival.

What I Learned from Watching Blue's Clues at 22
Brenna Ellen

The other day, I was doing dishes,
And my head started bobbing
To an invisible beat.

I was humming this tune, drying a plate,
When I suddenly sang,
“Sit down in our Thinking Chair and
Think,
Think,
Thi-i-ink...”

I burst into laughter at my sudden
Explosion of nostalgia, remembering
Orange vhs tapes,
Blue paw prints,
The smell of plastic from the covers.
(that I chewed on because I was five)

I looked up what I remembered to be
My favorite episodes,
My favorite songs and games
Of Blue's Clues
And I realized something.

There was so much we learned from
A guy in a green striped polo
And a little blue felt dog.

I watched Blue skidoo into
So many pictures,
So many worlds opened up
From watching a show about
Putting together pawprints.

It was so much more than that, though.
I remember the Handy Dandy Notebook
That my brother had,
How we bonded as we watched and learned
How to come up with solutions
From clues like a blanket, a light, and a book.

So simple, but so smart.
I never felt dumb watching Steve and Blue.

I learned to read because of “Blue’s ABCs,”
All the words in the house labeled,
Not only the small ones,
But complicated ones like *notebook* and *Thinking Chair*
Cantaloupe and *Pineapple*.

I learned ASL signs that I remembered
Into college ASL classes.
I learned how to observe the world around me,
Looking for “clues” that could solve my problems.

I also learned that expressing emotion was okay,
Even while being called a crybaby at school.
I learned that when you’re frustrated,
You “stop, take a deep breath, and think.”

I’m 22 and these lessons
Still stay with me.
I still get those feelings
Of tightness in my chest,
Clenched fists, grinding teeth,
And I remember to breathe because of Blue.

So, thank you, Steve and Blue,
For teaching me how
To read and draw,
Giving me an interest in science and art,
Music and performance.
Thank you for also teaching me
How to be a good friend,
To express myself
In the healthiest way possible.

And most of all, thank you for telling me every day,
“You can do anything that you wanna do.”

To My Grandma Ellen, 10 Years After Her Death
Brenna Ellen

I see you looking back at me,
Your face like old, stressed leather,
The cracks showing the light that was once there.

The times when we sat in the kitchen,
 Laughing and cooking, the smells of
 Fresh bread and seasoned beef,
 Gravy made with love and lard.

We smiled back then, before everything went to shit.

Before the ragged breathing
 And the hospital bed.

You shake your crooked finger at me.
 You tell me there's no reason to cry,
 But I can't help it.

You've been gone so long I don't know if you recognize just how much I've grown.

You've missed so much,
Middle school and high school graduations.
My license. College. The divorce. My first apartment.

I look away from the mirror,
 Tears burning my eyes,
 Remembering the picture
 I keep with me.

You're reading a birthday card to me.
I must be about five or so,
And your voice is slow and crackled.

At that time, you looked at me
Like I could snap in two.
What you don't know is that
Your resistance
Made me unbreakable.

***One-Star Reviews of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,
A found poem***
Brenna Ellen

Taking arms against Harry Potter,
At this moment, is to emulate
Hamlet taking arms against a sea of troubles.
By opposing the sea, you won't end it.
The Harry Potter epiphenomenon
Will go on, doubtless for some time, as
J. R. R. Tolkien did, and then waned.

Pathetic. Really pathetic.
Harry Potter is more of a
Mary-Sue than Eragon.
More than Nancy Drew.
More than the worst of fanfiction I've seen.

It is a bewildered girl who writes this.
*After all, her mind reasons, isn't this THE children's series?
The best thing to have hit the bookstores since Narnia?
There must be something tragically wrong with me.
Surely my mind has twisted this into something
other than what's really there. Right?*

Harry Potter is a Mary Sue,
Gary Stu, Marty Stu, whatever you want to call him.
Let me say it again.

HARRY POTTER IS A SUE.

I wouldn't be surprised if J.K. Rowling
Publicly announced her conversion to Satanism-
Honestly, it's no secret that she is one, or at least
Conforms to the beliefs.
Only one who follows the Devil would EVER write about
FLYING broomsticks and motorcycles, unicorns, and magical toads.
Toads are NOT magical; they are mere beasts
Created by our Lord to serve us.

These books terrify me.

Left in the Dark
Brenna Moore

Yellow and white, water-stained pages,
torn cover, caked with dried mud,
gluing you shut.

Who lost you? Who left you?
Was it an accident—a fall out of a bag?
Or a slip
 out
 of
 a pile?

Were you not important enough to come back for?

Or was it frustration, maybe
 boredom, that brought you here?

You're beyond full repair, but I'll take you home.
I'll scrape off the mud,
tearing a few pages,

but you'll remain intact.

I'll carefully set you
 on a shelf with the others.

I hope you will be happier
there, among friends.

Dr. Smile

Brenna Ellen

“Take the pill,” they all said. “It’s good for you.”

“Why?” I ask. “I don’t know what it’ll do.”

“Just do it because you have nothing to lose.”

“How do you know that? And what if I refuse?”

“You won’t. We are certain of that.” A smile.

One that spreads and spreads all the way down the aisle.

A timid return. I must decide quick.

Too late. My mouth is open. I feel sick.

I’m much happier now, my doctors say.

I can’t recall why I said no that day.

You look sad. Do you need medicine too?

The doctors are great. They’ll know what to do.

I’ll take you inside. Just please don’t resist.

Dr. Smile is here to give you an assist.

Endangered Meme (Or, Ode to Mr. Blobby)
Brenna Ellen

Consider the Blobfish,
Psychrolutes microporosus,
And how his legacy
Has been turned into
Entertainment.

Poor Mr. Blobby,
Who rests on a shelf in
The archives of the Australian Museum,
Thought to be endangered,
His living brothers and sisters
Are apparently thriving.

He no longer looks like his photo,
His pink skin now a dull grey,
His eye sunken into the caverns of his face.
He won't even pose for another photo.
I guess the love for his original is
What he wants to be remembered for,
With memes and stuffed toys carrying on
His message for generations to come:



“Go home, evolution. You’re drunk.”

My First Trip to the Aquarium

Brenna Ellen

The blues and greens are vivid in my mind,
Walking through the tunnel,
Seeing all the different colors, sizes,
And even textures.

I see the seahorses in their small tank,
Almost too little to see properly,
Inspiring me, as a small child,
To beg my parents for seahorse socks.

When I found out later that male seahorses
Are actually the pregnant ones,
The ones that care and birth the babies,
It gave me a new perspective on
What it meant to be a parent and,
More specifically, a father.

I remember the stingrays I was too
Scared to touch,
Instead watching my brother pet one,
Keeping a safe distance.

The scariest and most interesting
Was the shark tank.
I didn't know what I do now,
That the chances of being hurt
Are so low that they're not worth
Even talking about.

Leaving and going to the gift shop,
I remember having a newfound
Respect for the ocean, even if I didn't know it.
I knew that this giant ecosystem was
Important to me, but it wasn't until I was older
That I discovered just how much it meant.

Betta Fish

Brenna Ellen

I kept betta fish as a young girl,
Having absolutely no idea how to
Take care of them.

Most of them died from starvation
Or overeating.
Go figure.

As I got older, though, I began
To notice that you

Were much like those betta fish.

The male betta fish have a name
For when they express aggression.
It's called *flaring*, and it's similar to
When a frilled lizard gets angry.

The gills on the side of their head
Turn out, making them look like
An angry clown.
That's what you look like
When you get angry and aggressive.

Except, instead of looking beautiful,

You just look ridiculous.

The USA Check-in (*Modeled after poetry by Morgan Parker*)
Brenna Ellen

In the USA we only
“take the best.”
That means no brown,
No yellow,
No red,
No black,
Unless you’re cheap
And work your ass off.

Even then, we’ll probably
Film you on our phones
And call the police on you.
Don’t even think about having
A family gathering, a barbeque,
Or selling water on the street.

Our president will call you
Rapists, drug dealers,
And murderers.

That means we don’t care
If you don’t get the same
Opportunities in the
“Land of the Free.”
We’ll still pretend that
“We’re all equal.”

There’s no such thing as White Privilege.

“I’m not privileged.
I grew up poor.”
If you convert to these ideals,
If you “act white,”
(Hetero, Christian, European White)
Maybe you can become
What you want to be.

Maybe.

There’s a small chance.

But probably not.

Definitely not.

We don't care
If you don't get the same.
Maybe you should
Just go back to
Where you came from.
Even if you were born here.