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Depression Is ...

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Depression Is . . .

Senior Thesis Excerpt

Hana Whisman

Depression

Depression is the black poison running through my veins. It seeps into my skin when I'm idle and suffocates my senses. When I crawl into bed, when I drag myself up, when I lose attention in class, it pours into me and contaminates every inch of my body.

I have to let it out of my veins. I have to cut myself open.

It's dirty. It's venom. It's a voice. Sometimes it whispers, "You're useless. You're ugly. You're forgettable. You're a disappointment." Sometimes it screams, "You're stupid. You're a slut. You're such a fucking bitch."

Sometimes it sounds like some other voices I've heard.

Whether screeching or hissing, it always slithers out when I set it free.

A blade. A knife. A razor. A goddamn pencil. Anything will do. All that matters is that I bleed and that it hurts.

The pain satisfies the voices and the blood lets them crawl out of my skin.

I used to wonder how anyone could harbor so much self-hatred so as to permanently scar herself.

But now I know it's mostly about the scars.

They are comfort. They are proof. Proof that my body is real and my life is real. Proof that the poison is gone. For now.

Depression is four trails of blood. They're parallel. They're perfect.

Wet & Dry

I can divide my depression into two forms: "wet" and "dry."

Wet depression is just as it sounds: blubbery and drippy.

Wet depression is what happens late at night or alone in a bathroom stall.

It's shaking and sobbing.

It's crying so hard my shirt sleeve is drenched with tears and snot and my back is dripping with sweat.

Wet depression is the damp mist of an inhaler when I'm crying so hard I stop breathing.

It's matching wine and blood stains.

This is the depression others can see. They can feel it. They can feel my tears and my tremors.

Wet depression is the rarer form, for me.

Dry depression is invisible. It's staring at a wall. It's lying in bed. It's floating through the day.

Dry depression is baring teeth in the place of a smile. It's laughter that echoes. It's the "Everything's fine" I'm obligated to heave up.

Dry depression is using every ounce of my power to put one foot in front of the other to walk to class.

Dry depression is spending the entire car ride convincing my eyelids to stay open and my foot from shoving down on the gas pedal.

It's the casual thoughts of death that occupy every cavity of my brain while my body maneuvers through my obligations.

It's wondering how people can care about. . . anything. It's wondering if anyone else is faking the same as I am. . .

And wondering, if they are, why the fuck do we keep bothering with the lie?

Recovery

Recovery is an even scarier place.

It's waking up in the morning and everything seems alright—but you know it won't last.

It's waking up another morning wishing you were dead, and wondering if this relapse will last a moment or a lifetime.

At least when you're depressed, you know you cannot possibly sink any lower.

But in recovery, the possibility of falling yet again is omnipresent.

It's wondering whether you feel better because you've found true Happiness or because the chemicals you put in your mouth every day have finally reached your brain.

It's spending every day hoping that tomorrow will be better than today, then spending all day convincing yourself that it won't be.

It's the hope that even if today and tomorrow and next week and next year are bleak and miserable, maybe in a decade you'll be in the mood to be alive.

It's allowing the same hope that betrays me every morning that I wake up beckoning death to rule my day and lead me to a less-miserable tomorrow.