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A Furious Sleep {1:00 a.m.}

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A Furious Sleep {1:00 a.m.}

Josey Noab Meats

The following story is an excerpt from Josey's senior thesis "In Cold July." To read more, please visit commons.cu-portland.edu/engtheses.

I'm a crazy person. There's no other way to put it. I don't mean it in a way of slang or pride. Not "oh that's crazy" or "I'm crazy good at that." I mean crazy. Bonkers. Nut-job. Loony. It's not the most PC way of putting it, but for me, it's the most honest way to put it, so that's how I'll say it. I'm a crazy person. Funny thing is I can play normal, for the most part. No one expects or knows about my craziness unless I've told them I'm bipolar—and I don't mean that as a dig to others with mental illness far more or less severe than myself. I'm crazy. I do crazy shit and I look at that crazy shit and say "that's some crazy shit." I get some ■■■-ed-up ideas in my head that I just can't shake, and that's the thing: being bipolar in this world is so ■■■-ed. The other night I tossed and turned for hours, ideas churning in my head. Mostly thoughts of dying—a cold anxiety that I'm violently ill. I noticed a figure in my room. A dirty little Middle Eastern man was standing before me. I understood him to be Christ. He crawled to me, grasped my hand, pulling the tips of my fingers into his wound. I pulled away at first, but then I felt a sensational pleasure. A spasm washed over my body. And I felt loved—so, it's not the weather changing. Unless mother nature shifts from a hurricane to a month-long drought. And I do think most people are starting to get an idea of what mental illness is—how doctors like to put it anyway—and that's true. Mostly. Truth is it can't be

defined. These things grow from within a person's brain, unique to each person—a chameleon. Do you get how mysterious that is? It's part of my O.S., but it can't be flushed out or cut away. And illnesses like bipolar and depression, along with cancer, are sure as day to kill you. If left untreated. But treatment is ■■■ed here in America. Managing bipolar—gritting through it and playing normal—is (as one of my therapists once so eloquently put it) like diabetes. But, unlike diabetes, sometimes your brain just decides to put you through a good 'ol pyramid-mind-■■■. Like right now. Never in my life have I ever been as disgusted with human existence as I am right now. I feel internally like the world I see around me. I'm the Middle East of a man—non-stop conflict. And thinking back, I don't recognize this as mania or depression—whatever this newfound madness is, it's ■■■ing me up. My mind is a vortex of constant commentary: why my existence needs to end. I sweat constantly, break out in hives randomly, and feel no sympathy at all. Call it what you wish: depression, mania, or mixed—this is the end. If I make it out surely at some point true mania will come my way again. While the party will be fun, the hangover will be awful. I do not want to live through those terrible times—even more so than I do not wish to be breathing right now. Often when I am in the shower, just doing my thing, a wave will come over me and I'll get the sudden urge to just grab my razor and rip open my wrists like the Christmas presents I'd open as a boy. Most of the time my tattoos stop me. I don't like ruining art. Or I'd be apt to fill my mouth with water and just inhale. Or walk in front of TriMet when I head out the door. Most often I think about taking sleep aids, NyQuil and DayQuil, and go out with my friends, and at the end of the night go to sleep and never

wake up. Go out with a good time. I'm not going to puss around when I do it. When I do it, I'm going to do it. SPLAT—from the roof of the library. And that's mainly why I don't, the possibility of waking up or being saved, and it'd also be hell for the people around me. Especially my roommate; finding their roommate's body is the last thing a college kid needs. Then I have to ask: is that why? Or is there more to me stopping that I can't recognize within myself. And that thought makes the whole thing worse. I do have things I wish to do in life. Write. Teach. Laugh. Drink. Love. [REDACTED]. Just have a good time, but it's hard to have a good time when half the time I'm so [REDACTED]ing over what I see outside and inside I want to end it all. At some points, I'm in the midst of existential paranoia. I'm convinced I have AIDS or that my lungs are failing, or that at any second something terrible will happen. A war just raging inside my head. Different forms of me fight over me, but in reality, it just is me. My dream is only to do as I want, nothing bad, but it's awful when I know my work will, for the most part, go unread. And who actually kids themselves with the prospect of asking questions in a literary form in a world at war. No one can be alone anymore. People can't help but post or tweet. Our species, [REDACTED]ing humankind, loves the fact of mixing fire and books, it makes a bigger fire. And OOO-AHHH, so pretty—honestly, [REDACTED] me. It's a vicious cycle of despair we humans live in. The life we live really amounts to nothing in the end—I woke from some furious sleep to find everything burning around me and no one giving a shit. I'm a spoonful of pudding that's been flung through the air and I'm waiting to go splat on something. But it never comes. An agonizing spiral of constant existential crises with one way out: break the cycle. Just [REDACTED] it. There's no other way to put it. No

other word to use. [REDACTED]. The greatest word in the history of words.

There's no equivalent, it just is. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Twenty-two [REDACTED]s. One for each year I've been alive. Twenty-two years I can only thank my parents for. They've kept me alive, but right now some woman is getting raped. I'm walking home and you're sitting on your ass. And yes, what can you do? Nothing? Volunteer at some non-profit? Tweet #metoo on Twitter—and I have no beef with #metoo, it's great. But, just saying, the name of the sexual assault campaign literally reads “pound me too.” But yeah, someone's getting raped right now, or murdered, or a mom somewhere is whaling on her kid with a skillet. This world's so [REDACTED]ed up, and it's not for me. And I know I'm a hypocrite. Actually, once in a blue moon, there are real people, my saving graces—Mom, Dad, Dr. K., Silly Goose, my ex—and to think I... me... I was with this guy for two years and was convinced he was the one. He's something between ecstasy and torture. I do love him. And I thought I'd never love again. Yet, I am in love. There's this boy. He's perfect: suave, blonde, sassy, and intelligent. He doesn't show that side enough. He's the perfect flirt, he makes you feel so good—confident and proud, but [REDACTED]ing angsty. But I have the same problem with him as any person I want to get close to: I say and do [REDACTED]ed up things. The other night we were just kicking back in Nora's yard. Just having some beers and bong rips (a lil B&B)—I know I probably shouldn't be doing that, but it helps me digest the world's bullshit—and just chilling. Shooting the shit. It was Nora, and Gabby, and of course me, and this boy. We're all having a good time, sharing a few laughs, and this giant spider pops up on the

table and bleh—is being all spidery. So I crush it with the lighter and set the little shit on fire. “Oh, Kevin! You’re [REDACTED] sick! What the [REDACTED] dude?”—see? The late night walks home from Nora’s are always clearing. Cleansing. It allows me time to think about how nonsensical the world is and appreciate it. There’s a certain openness in being alone at this hour, after a day of making it through. Playing normal. For the most part, I’ve had a great life. The best parents, a great family. Real friends. My school is almost a certain type of tick feasting on its neighborhood community. But the profs are solid. People are solid. I mean, we have our fair share of bigots: those holier-than-thou [REDACTED]s who low-key hate you because you’re a fag. Or black. Or maybe you just dress like a slut. They have a reason. But they’d never say it. Yeah, there’s hate there. Definitely. But hate is everywhere. Maybe that’s why I’m so disturbed. Who am I kidding, I’m a crazy person. But that’s the “why” that bothers me most: Why am I this way? A chemical imbalance? Genetics? Or maybe, just maybe, I’ve just happened to peek behind the curtain of bullshit and know there’s only one way out. Isn’t it funny that, out of all the living things on earth, humans are one of the only species that will purposely end their own existence? It’s nonsensical—but it does make sense, because we’ve done this to ourselves, and this is our one act of true free will. And I don’t see myself here for much longer. Tomorrow is July 8—100 years ago today Hemingway was severely wounded on the Austro-Italian front. He was serving the Red Cross as an ambulance driver. I like Hemingway. You could say I identify with him. He saw the world as it was. Maybe I should take off to some war-ridden area, get a little dose of that humanity. I think that’s the writer’s poetry—human truths that you can

only learn from “real people.” The working folks, and the homeless. And the druggies. I know one thing to be true: There’s no way in this slaughterhouse of an existence will we save ourselves from each other. So, why should I save myself from me? It’s a damn cold night. I can’t wait to get home, cool room—warm blankets. Comfy-cozy. A shelf full of literary classics that I read in a manic haze—I should reread. Or just read more. My scribblings of poetry. And the letters—every night I write one. A suicide note. Put a reason for eating a bullet on paper. It’s sort of a therapy—it’s sick. I’m sick. Actually, I’m a crazy person. Ahh, I don’t know how many more strung out nights I can take. This darkness casts a shadow of paranoia over all I do. I don’t trust anyone. I feel very little. I can’t wait to be home. Maybe I’ll eat a pickle

A sudden blow—two assailants begin to beat Kevin.

WHACK! WHACK! WHACK! Big ‘ol blows from bats.

Crack of legs, crunch of ribs. A leaking skull. ■■■■■ing fag, this is what you get—*spit. Kevin reaches up in terror, they break his arm at the elbow. They throw him into a planter and flee. Kevin lies nestled in a nook of the retaining wall that surrounds the tree in the campus center. A birch. His arm darts up and over the wall, dangling off the outer edge. Blood fills his nostrils and pools in his eye sockets, spilling over, soaking his copper hair.

His upper half contorts as his bottom half twists—nearly backwards, hips flush with the ground. Mid-abdomen down is numb, the rest of his body tingles. His blood is beet red and makes mud with the soil.

A final breath: *Yhaanw*. Broken ribs make room for themselves as natural knives.

Blood runs over the body's right hand and drips into the engraved quote at the bottom of the small wall:

“And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?”

I did.

And what did you want?

*To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.”*

— Raymond Carver

W A K E U P !