

Motivation for Writing

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In addition to my first person account writings, I like to write poetry. Should someone ask me to use an analogy to describe my writing process, I would answer that writing to me is like water skiing. In writing, as in water skiing, there is that tug that I feel when an idea tries to take hold. My schizophrenia causes words just to pop up, and sometimes I have to maneuver around them, not knowing what will make sense. All it takes is an idea to pull me up, and I hold onto it, letting the words flow.

In water skiing, there may be a few wakes to cross or obstacles to dodge in the path. I try to get all my ideas down on paper, knowing that some of my written thoughts will be edited to make my writing clear and easier to understand. Sometimes I am the only one who knows exactly what I am trying to say, and when I talk it out with someone, I find a better and often shorter way to describe my thoughts.

A poem I just wrote called: “Another Dead Rock star”

Don't be fooled by the shadows.
Another dead rock star.
Whether or addiction or suicide,
You're not a kid anymore.
A tsunami of dead end thinking.
Pain rages up the spine towards the brain.
You are not alone;
You are not alone.
Your best prescribed escape,
Only brings a sleep
From which you will not awaken.
What can we learn
From the shapeless form of pain?
It can't be restricted,
Or pushed outside a boundary.
We cry as a release,
Or to create.
It's a subtlety.
Another war against distress
And another dead rock star.

The first line of the poem, “Don't be fooled by the shadows,” was a thought I had a few days ago when I saw a shadow on the carpet in my bedroom. At first, I wasn't

sure if it was painted on my carpet, or not. I had to do a double-take to find out that, in fact, it was a shadow. I was almost fooled by the shadow. I held onto that thought thinking I could use it sometime in my writing.

The next line of the poem says, “Another dead rock star.” I read recently about a pop star who was found dead in her hotel room. What could have been the cause of death? Lately, in the news, suicide or addiction to opioids has been determined to be the cause of death for many creative celebrities. I asked myself: Are they so famous that they don't think anyone can help them? Another dead rock star... .

The line, “A tsunami of dead end thinking,” is the feeling I had during my last hospital stay. I felt a wave of apathy and sadness splashing over me. At the time, I tried to write about it, instead it turned out to be a suicide note. I was under the wave. That wave is probably the same wave creative and talented people sometimes ride to escape a bump in their lives, like depression. Many creative songs are written about being down, being in a swamp. I wish they could know that recovery is possible.

The second stanza, beginning with “The pain rages up the spine towards the brain,” and following is my warning to anyone who is choosing not to get help for addiction or other mental health issues, along with hope in the form of “You're not alone.”

The “shapeless form of pain” is what I was experiencing on that day before I went back to the hospital. That shapeless wave of pain rushed over me, and I didn't know how to react. I was doing everything I was supposed to do, but I still felt that depressing wave sweep over me.

The poem ends with a stanza beginning with “We cry for a release, or to create.” So much art and poetry is written by someone telling the reader about being in a hole or a swamp. For me, with a diagnosis of schizo-affective disorder, words pop in and out of my mind. Should I ignore them, or find a way to share. By sharing, I am helping myself, as well as others.

Reading essays about schizophrenia has definitely helped me. When I join in and write about my own experiences, I feel less like an outsider and more like someone with something to offer. I contribute my words to help

mental health professionals, as well as their patients. Knowing that I am potentially making a difference in the quality of life for others, as well as myself, sparks my creativity and desire to share my thoughts and symptoms. A beginning water skier relies on the thrust of the boat's

engine to overcome the resistance of the water. Using my words, whether in poetry or in essay form, hopefully, will help the person who is just facing a mental health diagnosis, rely on the professionals around them to overcome their symptoms.