

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.”



***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.



***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.