

Poetry that Speaks Back:

Fighting Stigmas About Mental Health through Poetry

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Loneliness

Loneliness sits on my front porch
waiting for the days when I forget
to lock my door
so he can come in and hide himself
all the places I will not expect to find him.
Last time, I was careless and too focused on work
and ended up spending weeks picking him out
from the bottom of my t-shirt drawer,
the half-empty pantry,
underneath the couch cushions.
He slipped himself in-between
Angelou and Emerson,
disappearing in the shadow of Beauty and Wisdom.
He made himself at home
in my third desk drawer
where I would find him while reaching for address labels
for letters that I would never send.
Loneliness would show up
in the old photographs I have
hanging above my bed,
usually standing next to Grandpa and Uncle
where my grandma should have been.
It's hard to keep Loneliness out,
but he does not belong inside these sunshine walls
I have built as my home.
Still, he'll slip through the doorway
if someone doesn't shut it tight
on their way out
and again I'll spend weeks
scrubbing the stench of him from my skin.

Slowly
his intrusions become fewer
and further in-between,
and finally, I find Courage tucked into the toes
of my rain boots
and she'll help me beat Loneliness off of my porch
with a wooden handled broom
and at last I feel like
I have reclaimed my home.

Healing

Chaos is not a catalyst for healing
so I know that when I rise
from the debris of my worn-out life
I will rise alone.
Through this solitude, there is strength,
and yet the line between solitude
and loneliness is blurry
and I'm still trying to find where it lies.
Even so,
I never expected healing to be this lonely.

April

When the earth comes back to life,
the sun will peek out
from behind bud-red trees,
tell me
this is your chance to start again;
if the squirrels could talk, they'd say
keep on fighting,
better days are coming;
the song of swallows outside my window
is a hymn on repeat:
there is always time
to keep on trying;
the wind whispers
you were made from this earth—
listen to how it sings for you.