

## WHOLE MESSY THING

This sadness is bigger than B vitamins, it  
is not interested in working around my schedule, or  
all your good ideas, it arrives anyway  
on wings of fog and stays awhile

“Love Is a Messy Broken Thing, Part 6,” Jacks McNamara

Depression, the word, is useless. There’s no music  
no romance, no reclaiming it. Neither word nor illness  
can be made into bedroom play. Comedy, maybe?  
“So a guy walks into a bar ... I mean the ER,  
no I mean a bar ... no I mean ER.” Same difference.  
Divorced from the root  
depression divvies, clinically scores me  
into that and this and this and this.  
But sadness is bigger than my last relapse.  
*This sadness is bigger than B vitamins, it*

is bigger than the SAD lamp that brightens my desk.  
Bigger than ten milligrams twice a day.  
Sadness holds more than all the second-  
hand coffee mugs at an AL-ANON meeting  
takes more time than the self-help  
workbook my poetics professor gifted me  
longer than the long-distance collect call  
my mother refused to accept.  
Too urgent to be wait-listed, it  
*is not interested in working around a schedule, or*

another referral from the Red Book.  
So tremendous, sadness  
doesn't know where the world ends  
and my body begins.  
Sure, no bullshit about communing with the universe  
but you won't catch me being laissez-faire  
about upper case "W" Wholeness.  
I practice sadness because it subsumes  
all my shady moods and  
*all my good ideas. It arrives any way*

it can and yet it is always here  
like a lake forever fed by a cold creek.  
Damn right a nature metaphor!  
Want more? Sadness always has more  
to offer. Its occupation is fluid. It's air.  
Notice you're breathing? Sadness  
is as wide as rain on one end of town  
and a heaven-sent break in the clouds  
on the other and on the other  
*wings of fog, and all of it stays awhile.*

## AUTOPHOBIA

Where does one  
live when one fits nowhere but in fiction  
and insanity? Even today  
That's what we call our in-betweens: insane.

“Postulation on the Violent Works of the Marquis de Sade,” Elizabeth Bachinsky

At the twenty-bed  
psychiatric facility for short-term  
crisis intervention I was  
given my own room, the intake  
nurse told me I was lucky  
that so few women  
were checked-in.  
Men hemmed the common room.  
The biggest always wore his fly undone.  
*Where does one*

heal when the wound  
is diagnosed a disorder?  
Each morning at ten I joined the other  
patients in mandatory art therapy.  
I obliged yarn and popsicle sticks. The therapist  
asked, "What have you made, Amber Dawn?"  
I said, "A bird house  
where no bird will never nest."  
Where else can the absent  
*live when one fits nowhere but in fiction?*

Only the spine-broken  
*Grimm's Fairy Tales* shelved in the quiet room  
offered reason, babe in the woods  
juniper tree. When the therapist put pens  
in our hands and bid us to "personify  
our feelings" I tantrumed, scared  
to write my own name  
at the top corner of the page.  
Autophobia: to fear oneself. Loathing  
*and insanity. Even today*

I sometimes crave that Haldol injection  
long sleep, then scores of slurred speech  
I voluntarily discharged the day  
we were supposed to draw a body map.  
I was angry, lying on the butcher's  
paper. My empty silhouette profane.  
Coloured crayons and glitter glue ragged.  
I told the intake nurse I no longer heard voices.  
She said, "Treatment's not for nits and crybabies."  
*That's what we call our in-betweens. Insane!*