



THE IVERSEN JOURNAL

2015



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Iversen Wellness & Recovery Center and Med Clinic
492 Rio Lindo Ave.
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 879-3311 • Iversen Center
(530) 879-3974 • Med Clinic
iversen@nvcss.org



NORTHERN VALLEY
CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICE, INC.
REACHING OUT IN CARE AND LOVE TO THOSE IN NEED



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

Introduction

The Iversen Journal is a collection of artwork, short stories and poems collected from members and staff of the Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center in Chico, Calif. It is a small glimpse of the talents and abilities that exist within the Iversen community. We hope you will find this to be interesting, enjoyable, and welcoming, just as we hope you would find it to be at the Iversen Center on any given day.

The Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center is composed of men and women on their recovery journey from challenging mental health issues. The center, on Rio Lindo Avenue, is open to any adult and offers peer-led support groups, computer lessons in the computer lab, medication support in the Med Clinic, informational meetings, and group activities. The center is also a place to socialize, where guests can get to know others who share similar life challenges.

Our Mission Statement

The Iversen Wellness & Recovery Center offers an environment of inclusiveness, recovery, and wellness to adults living with persistent mental illness. Members share their ideas to create a setting that is peer-led and agency supported. The Iversen Center is a “stigma-free” environment offering activities, groups, and social support opportunities. The Iversen Center promotes and encourages tolerance, acceptance, and growth within its members that reflects respect for diversity and differences. Realizing one’s full potential and having a strong sense of hope allows us to realize our dreams.

From the Director

I was talking to a member of the Iversen Center recently who told me that he was “proud to be a mental health consumer.” He asked me if I thought this was “weird.” I asked him if he enjoyed music, art or literature, and he said “of course.” So I pointed out that a huge variety of our great works of art and culture were produced by individuals who were likely living with mental health disorders.

Demi Lovato (bipolar), Lady Gaga (depression), and Catherine Zeta Jones (bipolar II) are some of the recent musicians and artists who have made news by coming out as living with mental illness. Add Kurt Cobain (bipolar, ADHD), Jim Carrey (depression), Marlin Brando (depression), Jimi Hendrix (bipolar), Charlie Parker (bipolar), and even Ludwig Van Beethoven (who is believed to have suffered from bipolar disorder as well). And of course, who can forget Robin Williams, whose depression cost him his life last year?

If literature is more to your liking, perhaps you enjoy the work of Hemmingway (depression and alcoholism), Charles Dickens (depression), Virginia Woolf (mood disorder), JK Rowling (depression) and David Foster Wallace (depression).

Outside of the field of art, we can point to athletes (Beckham, Phelps), politicians (Churchill, Lincoln), scientists (Einstein, Newton) and others (Buzz Aldrin, Princess Di) who were able to make enormous contributions to society in spite of living with mental health challenges. The connection between mental disorders and creativity has been long documented. So, there is nothing unusual in experiencing pride in living with a mental illness – it puts us in good company! There is even a “Mad Pride” movement attempting to educate and enlighten the public about the realities of living with mental health challenges, in order to combat the stigma that is still so prevalent about these disorders.

Despite the great accomplishments of many who live with mental challenges, there is still the shadow of stigma (and self-stigma) around these disorders. The cost of these disorders for many has proven to be too much, and many of the people on this list lost their lives to suicide. I wonder if we in society valued the contributions of all of those around us - the “mad”, the different, the creative geniuses - if we would see different outcomes. Would we be more likely to celebrate one another’s creativity, while also being there to offer support and compassion during the hard times? Could we envision a society where we band together to encourage the very best in one another, celebrating the diversity of mind and body?

I look forward to the day when all people living with mental health challenges get the support they need and can see the big picture: that they think in different and creative ways, which puts them in the company of some of the most amazing people humanity has produced. I look forward to the day when no one wonders if it is “weird” to be proud of having a mental health diagnosis.

Jason Tate

Iversen Director

June 2015

The Iversen Journal Staff

Editor

Andrea LaVoy Wagner

Meghan Anderson

Submissions Manager

Eden Werstler

Photo Editor

Austin Johnson

Typist

Diane Coultas

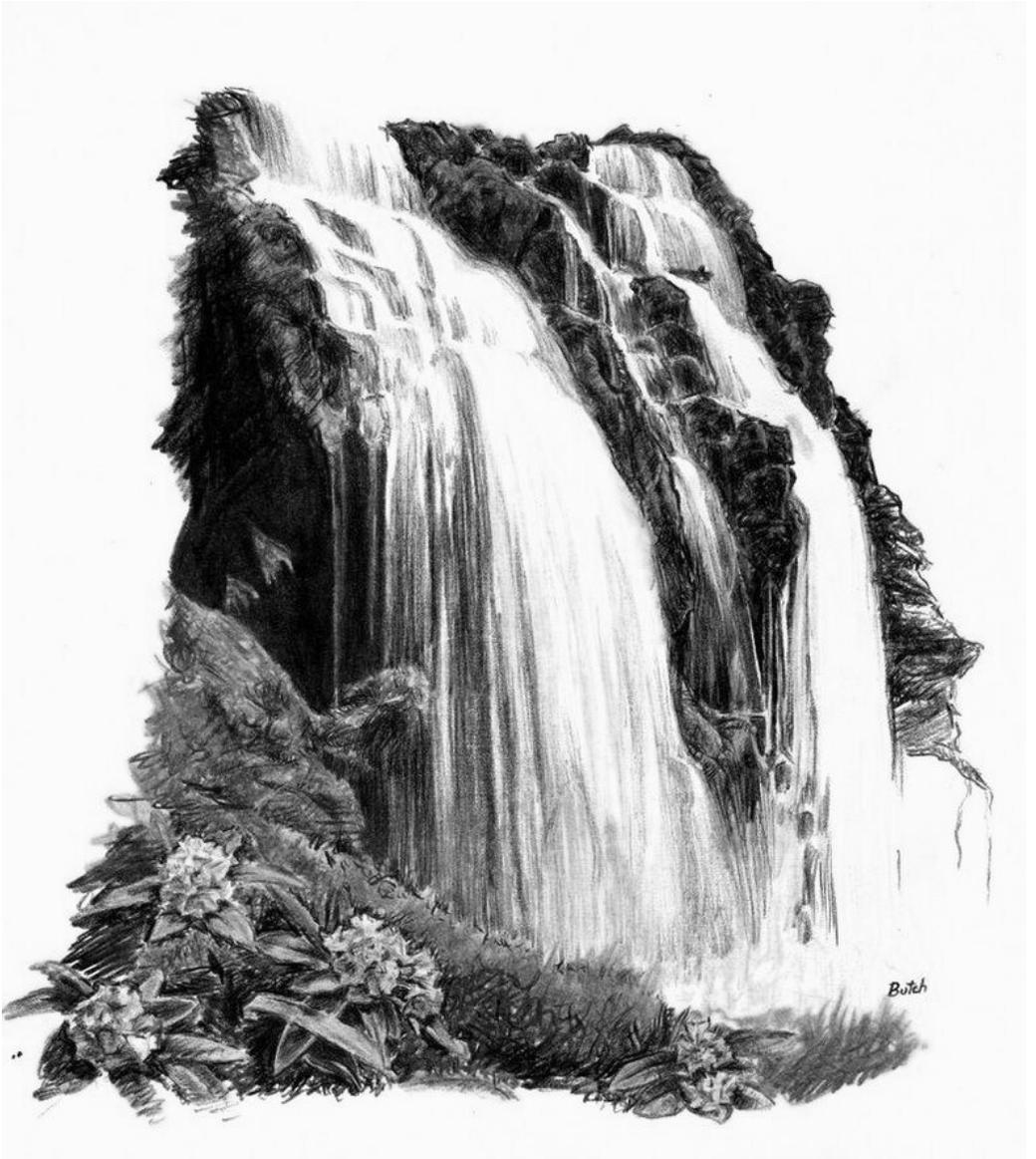
Supervisors

Jason Tate

Ril Werstler

Table of Contents

Title	Contributor	Page(s)
Tropical Waterfall	Butch Hastaran	8
My Shadow	Sadie Marie	9
Wingless Dragon in the Garden	Joya Autrey	10
Forward at Last	Rebecca Anderson	11
Bad Times in Hell – The First Day	Cheryl I. Grace	12-14
Worf	Butch Hastaran	15
Christopher Reeves	Butch Hastaran	16
Iversen Roses	Lamar Lee	17
Clouds	Brenda Louise Cuomo	18
Constiant	Eden DW	19
Karma Crushed	Michael Peterson	20
Coming Out of the Darkness	Eden DW	21
My Awareness	Sadie Marie	22
Starsha	Butch Hastaran	23
I Was There Too	Ruthie Willis	24
Ladybug	Eden DW	25
My Recovery and Its Meaning to My Life	Cheryl I. Grace	26-28
Grumpy Cat Costumes	Iversen Center Staff	29
Fluffy, Mascot	Sue Waterreus	30
Why Me	T. Blasher	31-32
Gingerman	Sue Waterreus	33
Under the Sea	Sue Waterreus	34
What is Something That is Helping Me Today?	Tracy Bright	35
Bay Area Landscape	John McMackin	36
Face	John McMackin	37
Lost Self	Sadie Marie	38
Person, Place and Home	John McMackin	39
How Do I Deal with Sadness, Rage and Anger?	Tracy Bright	40
Buffalo Dance	Lynn Marie Lourdes	41
Eternity	Bonnie Elise Gonzales	42
White Tiger	Edward Doran	43
Affirmation of the Choice of Insanity Not Suicide	Jon Bell	44-45
Elven Host	John McMackin	46
My Sixth Finger	Cheryl I. Grace	47
Emblem of Love	Edward Doran	48
One Red Rose	Edward Doran	49-50
Relating to None	Jon Bell	51-54
The Lighthouse Keeper	Victor A. Avila Jr.	55
My Psalms	Bonnie Elise Gonzales	56
Biographies		57-59



Tropical Waterfall
by Butch Hastaran

My Shadow!!
by Sadie Marie

Footprints on shoreline

Warm sand under
Cold mist on top

Hear sun kiss my Earth



Wingless Dragon in the Garden
by Joya Autrey

Forward At Last
by Rebecca Anderson

Calmly I rest my mind
beginning to leave my past
behind
Looking forward
To the light
Pulling the pieces out
which haunted my nights
like weeds in a field
that looked peaceful from afar
yet pricked and poisoned
my desperate heart

Desperate for a place
that I call home
Desperation for truth
I was alienated and alone
Broken into
a thousand pieces
No more

“Bad Times in Hell – The First Day”

The Story of Stelazine Poisoning My Brain in 1977

Prologue:

Hi. My name is Cheryl Grace and I have been afflicted with mental illness for the past 38 years. This is the story of when it first happened and my treatment at the beginning. Unfortunately, I had a very bad reaction to the initial medications and they created horrible results.

This story is about the first day that I was home from the hospital and how the side effects set in to cause my extremely distressful response. The words and sentences I used were difficult to come up with, but I have tried to pass along the tone of the experience in a knowledgeable way.

I am so much better now. I have a good part-time job and get a lot out of having a purposeful and worthwhile life.

-Cheryl I. Grace

Way back when, on December 12, 1977, I was ‘voluntarily’ admitted to the Psychiatric Ward of La Habra Community Hospital in So. CA.

The next morning, my new-to-me psychiatrist, started me on Stelazine, a powerful antipsychotic. I began with a very low dose but every day or two the dose was increased. It began to slow me down and made me feel a little dizzy and then I started walking like the other heavily-medicated patients I saw in the long hallways, the antipsychotic “shuffle.” After a while, I didn’t care so much about the ‘big drama’ of my life, but I wasn’t afraid yet.

Then one day as I was rounding one of the hall corners, my current employer, Neil, was standing there, as big as life. (I hadn’t called him to let him know I was in the hospital, as I was very embarrassed about the whole situation, so I don’t know how he found me.) As soon as I saw him, I started shaking and was afraid. All he wanted to know was when I would be back to work, not expressing any concern for my health. When he finally left I noticed I couldn’t get comfortable and couldn’t sit peacefully anymore. That scared me even further and I didn’t want to be in the hospital anymore as it was no longer safe or pleasant or interesting. I found out later the problem was called “motor restlessness,” but then it was just terror. I complained to my doctor and he told me that is why I was taking a second

medication, called Artane. He said he'd raise my Stelazine as it would help me!! (NOT!!) (NOT!!) (NOT!!)

I was released from the hospital just before New Year's. The 'motor restlessness' made me feel very bad and I was shaky, but I knew my thinking was better, at least the before-the-hospital thinking. The Stelazine had brought back my sense of 'reality', guised in fear and apprehension. On New Year's Eve I went to a Square Dance and 'after-party' with my friends who were very happy to see me. I didn't 'drink' alcohol as I was following "doctor's orders." The night went OK. Little did I know that was the last pleasant time I would have for quite a while, six months to be exact. There would be no sense of peace at all by the next day.

After the Holiday, life was supposed to get back to normal, even though I wasn't returning to work for a while. On Monday morning, the friend who I had recently started sharing an apartment with, was expecting her ex-husband to arrive at the door to pick up their young daughter, Tami (she was 2 years old). I was sitting in the living room when the doorbell rang and Lois called out from the bedroom for me to 'answer' the door. As I opened the door and saw the ex-husband standing there, I became extremely afraid and a sinking uneasiness started sweeping in on me from every side. I just stared at him as I couldn't freely talk. Uncontrollable terror was rising up inside me. The world slowed down and fear started invading my mind.

When the young daughter and her father left, my friend got a call to go to work as a substitute teacher for the day. As she was getting ready to leave, I kept feeling worse and worse. I decided that if I did something productive I would feel better and more at peace. When I was finally alone in the small apartment, I got out some cleaning supplies and started to wash one of the ugly, orange vinyl chairs that surrounded the dining table. I tried to scrub the chair but I couldn't concentrate or have any peace. The chair wouldn't come clean and my sense of peace and harmony with my surroundings was quickly fading. After a few long minutes, I decided I would drive over to my Mother's, who lived nearby, thinking I would feel safer over there. Upon leaving the apartment I looked up at the sky and felt very out of place and the world was no longer safe. Deciding to pick up some lunch, I stopped at McDonald's for a sandwich. The transaction at the fast food place went well, but as I drove closer to my Mother's, my fear and uneasiness increased.

My Mother greeted me and I sat down on the couch to eat (who ever sits at the dining table anymore?). I took the bag into my hands and opened it up to get out the French Fries and I knew, AT THAT MOMENT, I couldn't eat anything. My sense of peace was finally, totally gone and I was filled with terror and vulnerability. No longer

would eating be an answer. No longer would visiting my Mother be an answer. There was no logical (or illogical) answer. The world as I knew and expected it to proceed was completely gone; it had crumbled around me in one short morning!

I stayed at my parent's for the afternoon, laying on the couch and trying to escape reality and terror by falling asleep. I quickly realized that I couldn't sleep 24/7 and the rest of this time was filled with suffering, fear and waiting for the very slow advance of time to pass by. I clock-watched all afternoon and it wouldn't be the last time I did this activity. TICK... TICK... TICK...

Late in the afternoon, I made my Mother call the apartment until my roommate answered and then I got up to go home. I drove back to the apartment with only a little tiny sense of relief, thinking if I could get back to the house, I would feel better. My roommate and her daughter were there getting dinner ready and I again couldn't eat or drink anything. After the sweet little girl went to bed that evening, I tried to explain to my friend what had happened but she didn't understand and could only be sympathetic toward me. The situation was too hard to describe and there were almost no words to use, a situation that persists to this very day. That night after everyone was in bed; I sat on the living room couch and could no longer contain my heart wrenching sorrow and pain. I cried and cried for a long time. It was the most tearful and painful crying I ever experienced and it did not help a bit!! My friend came out of the bedroom to reassure me and that did not help me feel any better either. I was trapped inside my disabled mind and I kept saying "WHY ME? WHY ME?," I received no answer; I would never get an explanation in all these 38 years that have passed by.

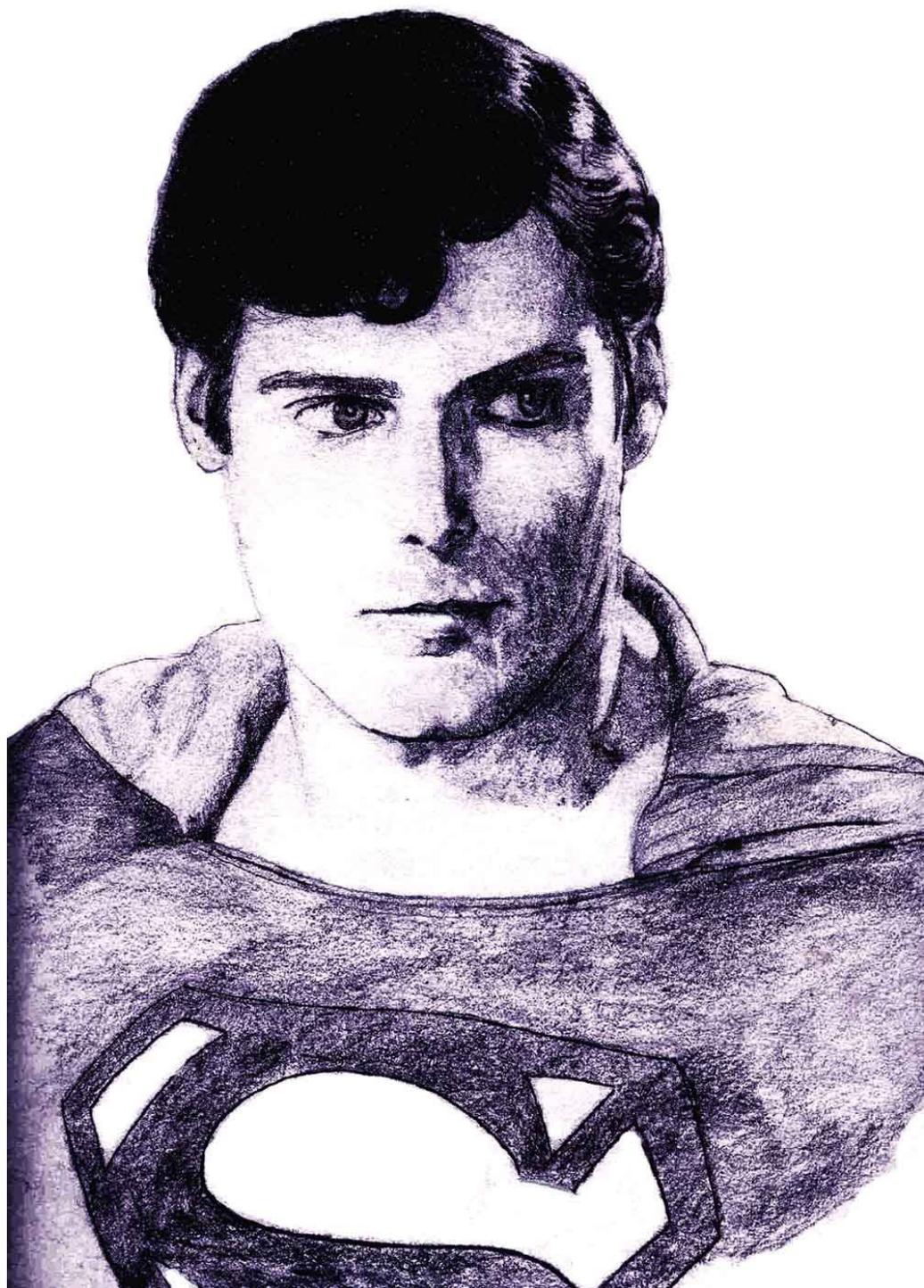
Thus, the downhill plunge into 'Hell' began — and it was only going to get worse, much worse!! Stelazine happened to be the horrible villain and it would take six long months of 'moment by moment' misery after I stopped taking this medication for all its terrible side effects to exit out of my brain and nervous system.

I want to say that today's modern anti-psychotic medications are so very much better and don't cause such negative side effects. They work quite well and help people like me have a life full of dignity, purpose and good outcomes. I do still get support, but haven't visited a psychiatric ward since 1994 and I've had a good and creative career for over nine years. I even have an 18 year old Bengal Kitty.

I am a 38-year survivor of mental illness and someone who has come out on the better side.



Worf
by Butch Hastaran



Christopher Reeves
by Butch Hastaran

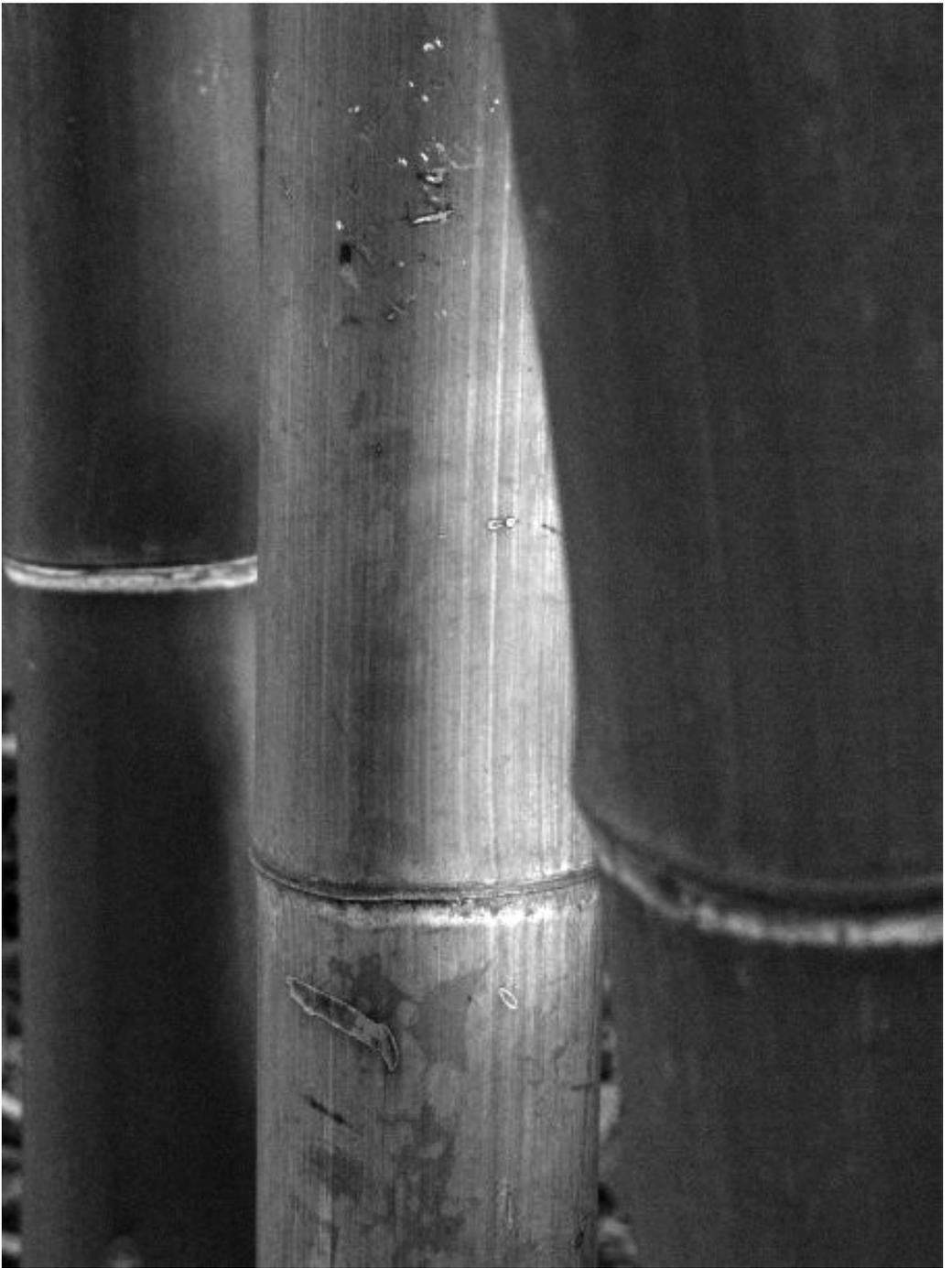
Iversen Roses
by Lamar Lee

The day
brings
"Yellow" Roses
and tulips of Blue
Black and Purple
Bring me to another –
day. Why I stop
I do not know,
Eagles.
Fly high. Win big
Finally
Life exists among
Mother Earth
And
Title waves Earthing
Seagulls and Doves
Roses of Love

Clouds

by Brenda Louise Cuomo

Winter winds will not go away.
They come on sunny, March afternoons,
upsetting balances of moods.



Constant
by Eden DW

Karma Crushed
by Michael Peterson

Bid darkness and misery farewell
Love and beauty are existent
Birds soar thru the sky above
Heaven is obtained.



Coming Out of the Darkness
by Eden DW

“My Awareness”

by Sadie Marie

In my past five years, I've lost everyone and everything I've ever thought loved me, except for my wonderful sons, the two best things in my life, Alexander the Great and Courtesy. Their loyalty and commitment to me is astounding and remarkable. Until recently I had grown blinders to even their love and commitment to me. I felt I wasn't good enough for them. Until now, Casey, my best friend and companion was my yellow brick road and light for my path. So sadness overwhelms me, rage makes me hot, and anger blinds me to the sadness and the fury of my feelings. Through it all my 'light and path' never left...

I am on my true journey of awareness now that I am not blind. I see both my sons in a new and positive light and hope to be the beacon and lighthouse to guide someone else on their journey to hope, happiness, and love. My awareness is a healing journey.



Starsha
by Butch Hastaran

I Was There Too

by Ruthie Willis

Dedicated to my sister Mary Ellen

When you cooked all those lovely dinners for us
with Mama, you went through so much trauma.

I saw you.

I was there too.

When you hung out all of those heavy linen to dry,
I saw you and wanted to cry.

You see I was there too.

When you walked us to the store in the red wagon,
we were all so happy for you were never laggin'.

When we rode in the convertible with Butch,
even at four when I wore no shirt, I felt shame.

But to see your laughter and joy, I became tame.

You see I was there too.

You left that teenager in love.

You see I left mine too.

You left your heart and soul in the rafters and bleachers in
Wilmette.

I'll make you a bet in Wellesley I did too.

When I no longer had my nanny Cora's lap to keep me
warm, my small body fit right in your form.

If I had never met you, where would I be?

Of course, I would not be me.



Ladybug
by Eden DW

My Recover and Its Meaning to My Life

by Cheryl I. Grace

I have a nice part-time job that I have been performing for 9-plus years.

I enjoy and receive a great sense of purpose and fulfillment by arriving at work every day. The people I serve are a true blessing. They are very kind and curious and respectful of the Computer Lab and, most importantly, I have learned to truly 'connect' with these great folks. I have worked at teaching myself how to pay attention to each person and make myself - 'make eye contact.' My desk faces away from the entry door and nowadays, when hearing someone at the door, I intentionally turn my chair and talk directly to the inquiring person. Also, when someone is using one of the computers and asks a question, I don't shout an answer across the room. Instead, I get up and go to that person to communicate directly with them. (By the way, it's very good exercise.) The Computer Lab has enjoyed a great increase in use over the last 2 to 3 years, and with the 2000-plus users it has had in this time, it shows how important modern technology is becoming to everyone, including those who use the Iversen Center and many other community members.

Before I was called on to work for Behavioral Health here in Chico, I felt I had 'no' life. I hated myself and was going nowhere. My self-esteem and self-worth were 'zero' and depression and isolation were my answers to trying to live life. Phobic fears were my mainstay.

Besides going to Behavioral Health for appointments and groups, I went almost nowhere, talked to no one else except for, Simba, my beloved little Crain Terrier. The house was a mess and personal hygiene was minimal because of my fear of water. A friend of mine got me out of the house sometimes to have a restaurant dinner and visit her in Magalia. I didn't know what to do while there or when to leave and go home. Also, I was terrified of driving in the dark.

I started taking Abilify in 2002 and it greatly helped me to become a 'person' again. Abilify ended up being a miracle medication for me.

In order to even think of working and becoming a truly independent person with a true life, I needed to go through a new process called Recovery, but there was a road ahead that I had to go down.

At first I despised the word — 'Recovery.' It was yucky, horrid, and disgusting. It meant so many wicked and bad things to me. After getting mentally sick, I had paid such a high price to get over the side effects of the 'cure-all' drugs. Why couldn't I just settle into a comfortable and permanent way of life that included safe medications, groups, individual therapy, easy living, and other perks that paid me back for all

my suffering and distress? Why did I even have to consider the revolting concept of 'Recovery?'

I thought Recovery was being pushed on me as a new way of life, where one is suddenly 'ALL BETTER' and I didn't (or shouldn't) even have to contemplate the past damage that being mentally sick did to my mind and body. I wanted none of that and took an active role in fighting what the mental health system was trying to do to me and everyone else. If Recovery was so wonderful, then why didn't the term even make sense? What does living a 'Recovered Life' mean to folks with active mental illness?

It took a long time to start to understand the meaning of the word Recovery, not just the word, but the 'flow' of the concept.

It took an even longer time to know that Recovery was really a good and excellent thing and could enhance my life a hundred-fold. Recovery didn't just give me a sense of purpose while working, but started to give my whole life a sense of purpose and destiny. The more Recovery was mentioned, defined or discussed, the more I started to take in the meaning of being a 'Recovering Person.'

To me now, a 'Recovering Person' is someone that sees being on the way to Recovery as going down a 'PATH' to believing in themselves and really knowing what they can achieve and accomplish each and every day. A 'Recovering Person' has a great deal of HOPE and COURAGE to look forward to the many things ahead and be willing to tackle the obstacles that may be in the way. A 'Recovering Person' is able to give up a life of permanent disability, constant illness and strong negative thinking about one's role in life.

For myself, it took the belief of another person in my abilities, the belief of friends in my capabilities and, most importantly, the development of my own self competency and proficiency.

I've gone from someone who hated even the word Recovery to someone who has great confidence in the term and in the process of believing in myself and my wellness.

This improvement was observed by the Program Manager and others in the Behavioral Health System. One huge, wonderful day, this person, the Program Manager, came up to me in front of my fellow friends and asked me to come see her in her office. "Wow, the Program Manager actually spoke to me!!"

When I saw her in her office later, she asked me to be a 'volunteer' at the ROOF (now called SEARCH) program. There had never been any 'client-volunteers' at Behavioral Health before then. I answered 'yes' but was scared to death. Looking back at this event, I realize that my 'yes' was not due to the opportunity to do real work but that someone important noticed me and paid attention to me. I was not invisible after all!

Within a week of starting this job, I knew I could do it and within 3 weeks, I had started the Computer Lab along with the other ROOF responsibilities. I was blessed a few months later, by becoming a 'client-employee' within Behavioral Health, the first one. Over the 9 years, I feel I've tried to do my best while serving thousands of people as they became better computer users and increased their self-esteem.

As I already noted, the Lab is doing fine and I enjoy teaching students about computer use and mentoring the regular users. I even get to spend a lot of my time doing creative computer work. It has been such an extreme privilege to have a good job and grow in how I feel about myself and develop relationships with people I've known just a little. I get nice feedback & enjoy interacting with these people; many of them have various interesting things to say and share with me.

Thank you for taking a few moments of your time to understand how important and purposeful having regular employment and a sense of Recovery has been to me.



Grumpy Cat

Meet the Iversen Center greeter,
Grumpy Cat!

She is stylin' atop the front desk
all year long.

Here she is shown in her
feather hat (above), in "lovely"
sunglasses (top right), and in her
St. Patrick's Day gear (bottom
right).

Grumpy Cat may have a scowl but she sure keeps Iversen
Center staff and members smiling.



Fluffy, Mascott
Designed by Sue Waterreus

Why Me
by T. Blasher

I wonder why – when people pass me by
they don't look at me eye 2 eye

I'm tryin' to keep my head up
but people look down on me – miserable me – "Why Me"

I hear people say to people –
that's a waste of a human being
My response is – "What a waste of a mean human being"

Do they think I asked to be this way
sleeping on the sidewalk – no place to stay
That's usually the case, when the shelters are all full
some folk in this world can be very, very cruel

Many can be helpful – and at least
greet you with a smile
Summer times are hot – but I can cool off at 1 Mile

Most would be shocked to know
some think I'm complacent
I graduated high school, and college,
very educated

With a Bachelors and Masters
in and as a Medical Engineer
I enjoyed doing lots of research
with my colleagues and peers

Nice wonderful home, the latest car
and finest restaurants
no wife or kids – so I traveled a lot

Things were going fantastic
I used to think "Why Me"
Do I really deserve the attention
at the award ceremonies

I worked hard for it
"sacrifice" my middle name always
not much time spent with family and friends
things just wasn't the same

Till one day I began experiencing
some health complications
maybe I'm over-worked – well time for a vacation

Unfortunately after the va-ca, things got really bad
the voices in my head got louder – I was angry, sad, and mad
and talking to myself – not combing my hair –
lost everything overnight – No more did I care –
My clothes always reeked of urine and feces
I was broken into pieces – "Why Me" – "Why Me"

"Why Me" – I had it all
Now I'm begging on the streets
Loss all that I worked for – most of all my dignity

So if you see me, ask if you care
How this came to be?
I will gladly share with you my journey
and you will know my history – and why I ask
"Why Me"



Gingerman
Designed by Sue Waterreus



Under the Sea, Tim & Allie
Designed by Sue Waterreus

What is something that is helping me today?

by Tracy Bright

What is helping me today is being around more positiveness. This includes music, friends, people who aren't negative or addicted, people who are loving and have good things to say.

I am feeling like everything's a balance of give and take. This is not the same thing as people who are having symptoms or needing to vent. That is ok, because we're there for each other like that. I mean it helps to not be around mean people who mostly put me down, easily take offense for the sake of argument, have a sadistic streak or need to make me feel bad, sad, mad most of the time.

I am really glad to not be around mean, sarcastic people today. It is my hope this continues, because I don't need my emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical states smashed down to anger, grief, and sadness. It is too hard to get up from this over and over again. This made life too sad and unbearable to deal with.

I am glad I am not there today.



Bay Area Landscape with Artist in Field
Pencil Drawing by John McMackin



Person, Place and Home

by John McMackin

Lost Self!!
by Sadie Marie

I have a very clear memory of gone GIRL.

I'll admit I'd let myself be amazing and really I am who she
seemed to be

I was giddy and thrilled when my love relocated on the inside

More confident in London I realized I'm quite knowable
to people, but unknowable to family and to self



Face

Design and shaped pen art – 2007
by John McMackin

How do I deal with sadness, rage and anger?

by Tracy Bright

I take a long walk; change thoughts from negative ones to positive ones. I do this by keeping busy enough to not dwell over and over on harsh thoughts. When all else fails, I talk to a trusted friend, counselor, or peer counselor about what's going on. Lately I've cried heaps (and haven't in months or years much). I do this to let it out and get support, be comforted by caring friends.

It helps to appreciate the kind ones in my life who can listen, to get that "a-ha yes" kind of feedback. It is important to reach a point where I can let go of antagonistic thoughts and feelings towards others by remembering how to open up, live, accept the loss. I need to let go onto newer, more positive feelings, hopes and directions. It really helps to use creative mediums of expression and get co-buds.

I need friends and allies who want to go on these new adventures, places, things. It is fun to share with people to explore with. I would like to get to a point of letting go of the hurt. I'd like to bring the life and the joy as often as possible.



Buffalo Dance
by Lynn Marie Lourdes

Eternity

by Bonnie Elise Gonzales

Eternity from my heart
Eternity from the soul
Eternity from a thought
Eternity for the future
Pursuing ones inner mind
Inner presentation
To the opening doors of the Holy Ghost
To receive the inner powers
Of one's mind to the very heart and soul of the matter
As natural as the tattered little foot steps
that tippy toe around the flowers of joy
To the rainbow colors of everlasting love



White Tiger
by Edward Doran

Affirmation of the Choice of Insanity Not Suicide

by Jon Bell

When I was a kid of roughly ten years old until recently,
I often thought I would do something like lose conscious reality for
me from then on;
but I found an artistic expression in living on as insane—
like living on as art.
I would ruin my mind during treatment the first few years.
I was rushed into thinking I should enact this plan,
and it became a focus for me.
I no longer think I want to be insane,
and I'm now relatively sane.
I guess this paranoia thing is mostly about having insanity as a secret
agenda of mine
and/or doing illegal things.
In suicide a person does not want to live;
my vision of myself involved mental suicide,
because it is possible.
It is still a crime only to myself—
in the world.
Now I know the art would be replaced by convenience and efficiency
medically.
So whenever I cannot cope with life,
until recently,
I have taken it out habituating insanity.
This problem has made me afraid to engage in new experiences,
because I'm not sure what I will do to myself.
The perceived fear that I will hurt someone else is a paranoid fear of
others.
I never really attempted to go too far insane to come back,
but I can see that if I'm insane I might hurt others unknowingly.
Treatment pushes this go insane mentality on me,

like it is a real problem of mine,
but I have unique experiences,
some of which I appreciate;
some I've wondered if they are spiritual.
It's also not me to blame,
access at home to a "gateway" and kids pressuring me in
situations I couldn't get out of
nicely made me go down the path I'm on,
and now that I see what happened I'm eager to walk away.
I take responsibility for surviving and being sane,
so much are just scars getting away;
or that's that,
and I'm loved for that.
Judged for that.



Elven Host, Midsummer Night
by John McMackin

The Sixth Finger

by Cheryl I. Grace

This evening, as I was holding and using my 'Smartphone,' I realized how extremely attached I am to the device and how it has become so intertwined with my life. "I am my phone and my phone is me." As I looked down at my hand cradling the device, I 'felt' this strong sense that my hand and my phone had 'molded' themselves together as a new and permanent appliance, my 'Sixth Finger'.

When the crude, little cell phone became available in the mid-nineties, I didn't know if it would be a lasting invention or a fad. I leaned toward 'fad', but, of course, I was wrong.

In another similar case, the minute the first 'computer' appeared in the very early eighties and I could try one in person in a Sears Store, I was hooked. I could 'see' how popular and important it would become. No fad with the computer! But the cell phone, snugly up against one's hot ear hour after hour, seemed like a different story.

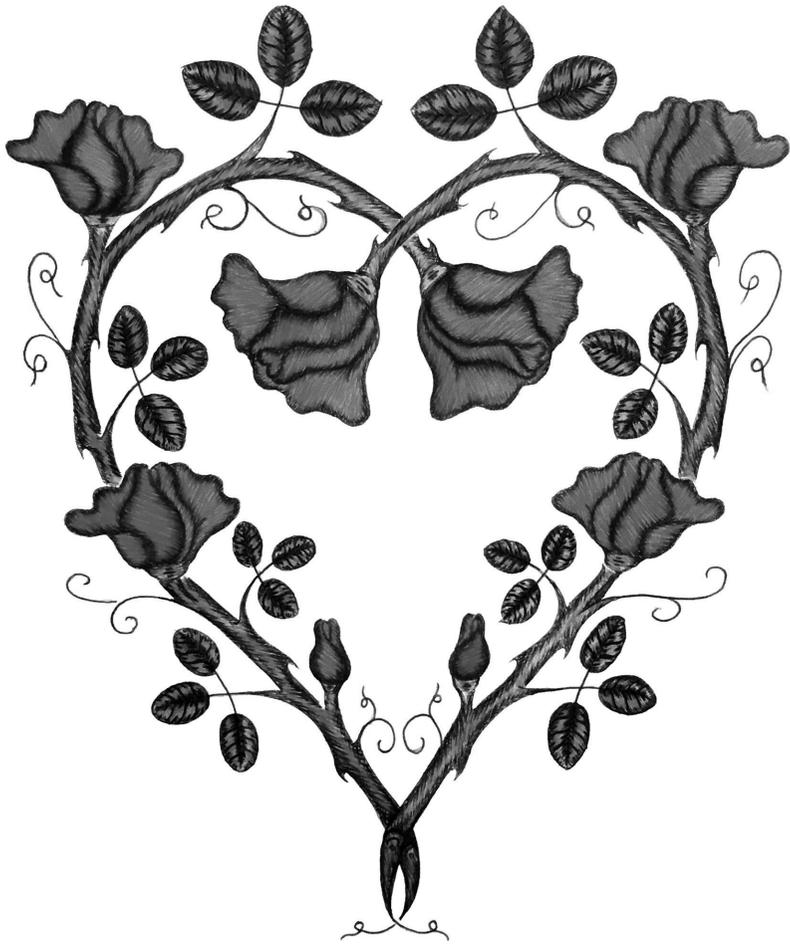
The cell phone made it! Its rise to stardom was awesome and incredible.

It didn't take long to come up with a reason (excuse) for me to buy one and I haven't been without this device for 18 years. Upgrades, better plans, and the use of the Internet and Social Networking have made the cell phone ubiquitous in our culture. The recent 'Smartphone' implementation is rapidly becoming our best friend.

Where I work, many people have mental health disabilities and cell phones were scarce a few years ago, but now, even the Smartphone has become commonplace and used by most of the members. A great advancement and convenience for everyone!

Where does that leave me, and everyone else? I know I'm an addicted 'Cell Phone Junkie.' Except for when I'm working, driving (yes, I follow common sense) or sleeping, I have that phone in my hand, doing some purposeful (to me) activity. What's so unique now is that the Smartphone is used so much less as an actual phone but as a mini-computer, high-end camera (recently) and software app processor. This nifty device controls, runs and delegates our daily lives. It is our 'new' identity and sense of worth.

I don't know where it's all headed in the future, but that cute, little plastic gadget is permanently here to stay and has become part of our 'hand,' our molded, sleek and shiny 'Sixth Finger.'



Emblem of Love
by Edward Doran

≡ ONE RED ROSE ≡ INTERNALLY ALWAYS
THERE TO REMIND ME OF A VIRGIN ENIGMA
ONLY GOD KNOWS LIFES GREAT MYSTERY,
UNDER HEAVENLY BEAUTIFUL STARRY SEA'S
FACE TO FACE YOU AND ME WHEN
CIRCUMSTANCES LEFT ME SPEECHLESS
MY INHEARITANCE THE ROAD, FLOWERS
OF THE FIELD MOUNTAINS SUN AND MOON
RIVERS FLOWING THROUGH THE TREES
A LONE WOLVES MOURNFUL TUNE,

≡ ONE RED ROSE ≡ TO YOU FROM ME,
"MY DARLING YOU MUST KNOW!" THESE
TEARS OF LIVING SORROW COME DEEPLY
FROM MY SOUL, LIVING UNDER A
THUNDER CLOUD WALKING THROUGH
RAINE AND SNOW, WHATCHING THIS
PERPETUAL WORLD GO ROUND NOT
KNOWING WHERE TO GO, OVER
THE ROCKIES OUT TO SEA CROSSING
DESERTS BUT IM NOT FREE

≡ WITH OUT YOU! ≡ IT SEEMS TO ME
LIFE IS SO VERY VERY LONELY

≡ ONE RED ROSE ≡ TO MY ONLY LOVE
MY LOVE, LOVE ALWAYS,

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NW, MAD SMOKERS & Co, ≡ WHITE TIGER ≡
7-25-13 Edward Doran



One Red Rose
by Edward Doran

Relating to None

by Jon Bell

Relating to none,
Routine,
teeth so sore I'm aging,
in my mind I'm dying,
In my words I could be lying,
I am holding onto consciousness each day breathing,
and looking at trees.
Right now I am a disheveled misfit,
tomorrow only successful like the rest.
Each day my ambition becomes clearer,
my heart is dearer,
but I grow cold with the stages of control
my body is dying,
killing the mind,
I am left twitching as the ghostly,
devilish toughing that doesn't stop,
that creeps up on me in the night (stillness),
feelings out of sight.
No path,
I pain
and gather myself each day,
waiting for the next parade,
masquerade,
and parents gauge of my recovery.
Accepting me as a behavioral experiment.
So scared to be writing,
alone and yet all the more public,
oooh to be nice,
sweet days,
not turned enemies,
like society,
another side of me.

Milking emotion like a goat,
my life goes on,
finding empathy,
deranged for hours,
then uncomfortable,
glistening,
not for me,
I need for there to be a problem,
I feel I rely on/justify with that,
given in a mire and consumed feelings of discrepancy,
simply jelling,
like touch anew.

O' how my family ignores me,
we are turning into corpses,
and it's rude.

I haven't been with them,
and I'm not upset by that,
I just need some place to go.

Tormented justice,
know and distrust this,
heaving melodies from a sing song child,
caught with the grooves,
poetic lures,
and wishing for my performance to bring me up,
but I've given it away to feeling cheap and out there.

Bass became,
not a matter of skill,
most of getting the gig is based on being hip,
and my acoustic style definitely doesn't chime in well with the popular
scene.

Damn I hate mental illness,
like assembly line,
words,
and pills,

making sensible relationships to abstract things,
such as how to get out of these confines.

Nothing but love in this weak mind,
scaring on trip and the days on the dilly.
Rocking peace like left beats and Harleys,
no one but the last seen,
only just as the spirit brings it,
means it.

Nothing is left but my glass is empty,
It's a whack rhyme,
schizophrenic mentally (beaten down).
Getting into me like obsessive compulsion hopping cracks like words I'm
familiar with,
nothing but the oligarchs positively knowing you,
channeling the past on wax in beats that remind me of another self.
So,
sadness carries me away,
and I'm a person who reacts to emotions.
Skipping drilly,
sprilly,
yearning to lose the meaning.

Shooting into the dark,
procuring my fate endless waiting and placing rest in uncertainty,
boundless resistance as the height of energy broken and territory.

Extortion rejects and victims of the systems of economy like a cage filled
with a
conscious mind,
praise,
and empathy,
psychotic inclined like murder rhymes as fate unjustified as a class war of
imperceptible
disguise,
knowing no one as friends with mistrust front and strategized,

barricaded cling demise and mischaracterized,
breathing grip and what's mine,
confused at the thought of another rattling thoughts in spots releasing yet
another point
while I am still not listening,
imagination,
through flight I tare another association like a thorny bit of mind,
thoughts dissociate,
bleed and procreate,
or stretch apart,
slow and excite gore while the point you prove leaves me dead like an old
score.

Not capturing my mind,
and/or not capturing life,
are wieldy tools.

Logic was a course that meant the most to me,
verifying the psychological mastermind of theoretical sanity,
a necessity when faced with the beast of adversity lacking logic called
psychotic,
while consciously abstracted and/or obscured,
leaving fundamentals,
as central territories like coming to terms with words in beliefs,
programmatic schemes,
pulsing waves connecting shapes in a fractal from a perspective,
slipped gone and left ya,
the night crept her aim.

Who can await yet another day?

I myself shall try to retain like fate on the sun existential as a number
conceived of
another day awoken and in disarray.

The Lighthouse Keeper
by Victor A. Avila Jr.

I am the peacemaker the lighthouse keeper
Sitting on the shores of peace
Beckoning my friend to come to shore, but knowing they are set for war

I am the peacemaker the lighthouse keeper with the heart of a four-star admiral
Sitting at the harbor with a pen in hand
Wondering whether my friend will come to shore
I have my ships set for sail into the night with plans for war

I am the peacemaker the lighthouse keeper with the heart of a four-star admiral
Knowing the casualties of war are really sitting on the shores of peace
Wanting nothing more to do with war than the peacemaker or the lighthouse keeper
Because the casualties of war are the children and the brokenhearted four-star admiral
That comes back to shore after a night of battle in perfect storm wondering if it was
all worth the effort

My Psalms

by Bonnie Elise Gonzales

Soul of the heart
Soul of the mind
How close they entwine.
To the meaning of my life.
Soul that was found
and enhanced to another soul.
Souls of unity and
fire of desire in which
we're bound together
until fire turned
to ice with a cold
direction to nowhere.
Grace from above
making every effort
to direct the lost souls
maybe together or
maybe apart only
the master of dignity,
patience and
the direction with
love will see it
through.

Biographies

In their own words, meet some of the people who contributed to this journal and a little about their creative processes.

Rebecca Anderson

I am a former Alaskan EMT1, diagnosed with Bipolar. I am a mother of three with loss of a child to a drunk driving accident by a man who was on the wrong side of the freeway. I am starting over and healing, and age 46.

Jon Bell

Growing up in LA and moving to Chico was a great, though difficult, transition. I was probably going to school at UC Berkeley when I wrote these. As a child of psychologist parents, I knew medical institutions had INTEREST in me. This is me reflecting on freedom.

Tracy Bright

My name is Tracy Bright. I am an Iversen member, a mom and grandma. I help do groups, have real friends here. We all are striving for wellness and recovery. I appreciate my friends, many groups and Iversen staff here a lot.

Brenda Louise Cuomo

Consumer of mental health benefits since age 23, now age 58. Facilitator at Iversen, member of Advisory Team and college graduate with Dean's List status. My submission was invented one hot day at my parents' pool in PA. I have always enjoyed writing in all its forms.

Edward Doran

"One Red Rose" was created one New Year's Day 2013 while incarcerated in Butte County Jail. A long-time fascination with martial arts inspired "White Tiger." It was hand-drawn in black ink pen – 2015, Chico. "Emblem of Love" is hand-drawn red, black, and green ink pens, completed in 2015 in Chico. I started doing artwork as a child. First art projects were oil. I am a lifelong artist.

Bonnie Elise Gonzales

I am Bonnie Gonzales, a native San Franciscan. I lived in Glenn County 12 years. I went to Mexico was married before I gave my all, heart, belongings, and returned with a broken heart and homeless. I am a survivor and a child of God.

Biographies continued...

Cheryl I. Grace

I am Cheryl Grace and live in Chico. I love to write, especially pieces about my mental health history and what I have done to recover from the afflictions of severe mental illness. Writing about my life experiences is a healing principle to me. My entry "My Recovery and its Meaning to My Life" is a true story about my sickness from mental illness and how I strived to recover and get better and how I wish the concept of "recovery" had been available many years ago. I discuss to what degree I feel I have recovered and the journey I have been on.

Butch Hastaran

Referring to "Worf" – I drew this on a pier in San Francisco. Get it? Worf on a Wharf.

Lynn Marie Lourdes

My grandfather sung to me the ancient songs in native tongue. I have apprenticed under two Native American Medicine Men. The blood runs through my veins.

Sadie Marie

I live in Chico and I am relatively new to the area. I have courageous kids that encourage my writing. I have learned I have an unaware talent that I want to bring to light.

John McMackin

I am an artist. My primary method is drawing. I graduated in 1976 from a Bay Area College (Calif. College of Art, Oakland) formerly CCAC. I have drawn actively since about age 7. My most recent exhibition was at Upper Crust in 2012. I enjoy the outdoors as well as Science Fiction and Fantasy. I was in Scotland in 2005.

Michael Peterson

I'm 48 and this is my first poem since Eng. 2 in high school. I was an old man in Jan. ('15). I was walking slowly, moaning and groaning, cursing all day to myself, drunk every day, homeless. I went to church on 2-1, was blessed by about 10 people. (Freedom Church in RB led by Pete Williams.) I am now alive, alert, happy. I'm starting a business. People like me, admire me. I moved here and changed my name, having been reborn. It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me! Thank you.

Biographies continued...

Sue Waterreus

Our motto is that "Why not try" is something I wanted to do, so I did. I have made a panda bear in a fabric or materials, but not in a knit, so why not try? I did it. Next time better. "Gingerman" is reversible. One side is sleeping and the other is awake. "Under the See" shows a different way of working with yarn.

Ruthie Willis

I came to Chico in 1985 from NYC.

The poem, "I Was There Too," is about my older sister who is 10 years my senior and lives in Florida.

I wrote this poem for her because she took care of me and my three other siblings when my parents went on business trips when we lived in Middletown, Delaware.

I wrote this poem as a gift of gratitude for my sister, Mary Ellen.

Eden DW

Photography is my passion. It reflects feeling so beautifully. I am from a small but very pretty town in the California mountains. I am just a passing thought, a gleam in my parents' eyes.



The Iversen Wellness & Recovery Center is a program of Northern Valley Catholic Social Service and is supported by Butte County Department of Behavioral Health and MHSA funding.

Hope Support Respect

Peers helping peers

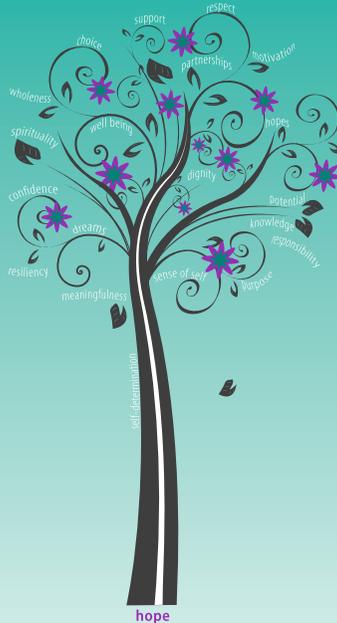
Northern Valley Talk Line

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Iversen Wellness & Recovery Center

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530-879-3311



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