

Why I Write

Euphoria

Sadness

All thoughts point towards death

What is there to fear about dying?

Nothing

Falling apart on the inside

Screaming, choking but no one hears

No no not again

Mania.

Help, help please anyone

The medicine is not working any longer

Ideas

thoughts

actions

Punch the glass of the mirror

Until the shards stick out of the knuckles

Laugh because they look similar

To sharp icicles

No stopping.

Too many ideas

Even more extreme than extreme

Drive 120 mph down the freeway

Write a novel

Spend 5,000 dollars on local art

Have as much sex as possible-

Faster

Become a professional volleyball player

A model

A psychiatrist

Cure cancer

Discover another planet

Be an author

Then the darkness returns

And drapes a wool cloak over the heart

Can't get out of bed

And Brings the once bright world to a halt

As I sat in my creative writing class last semester, I looked around the room, hoping to gauge a reaction from my first attempt at poetry. Everyone looked shocked, and my stomach knotted as I thought it was poorly received. My preemptive judgment turned out to be false. Overall everyone seemed to think it was a unique idea. I felt proud of a piece and that was when I decided I wanted to write, really write, more importantly not write for myself, but write something meaningful, something that could contain the power to change societal prejudice on social issues and in particular, mental illness.

I fell in love with writing at a young age, probably similar to many other authors. I used a pen as an outlet for my frustrations, my emotions, my dreams. I wanted to write about the cute boy who I sat next to in 6th grade, then the mean girls of 8th grade, make note of records of my high school swim team throughout the years at Lakeview, and document my monumental decision to switch high schools between sophomore and junior year. I wrote about me, my world, my small life. But something was missing.

College is when my writing began to develop deeper. I can remember having an epiphany that day in creative writing, a gut feeling. The reason why I felt my voice previously did not matter when I tumbled words onto a page was because it didn't matter. My life was and still is minor compared to relevant things happening to others today. I may pull from my own experiences, but the difference is I want there to be a bigger picture. I write to advocate and create awareness for mental

illness because there are more stories to be shared than just mine. There is more to this life than me. I write in search of the more.

I write for those who feel they cannot share their struggles.

I write to help those out there feel that they're alone.

I write in order to preserve personal stories.

I write to end the stigma.

No, I write to destroy the stigma.

Think about your family

Your friends

The people most important to you.

Now, guess what?

1 in 4

Are struggling or eventually
will struggle with mental illness.

Chances are it is or

will be someone you love.

Mental illness affects 1 in 4 people in their lifetime, yet it is still not openly discussed or even accepted. Many people feel the shame and guilt for having a sickness that is out of their control. Would you be disgusted with someone who had cancer? Probably not, yet if someone comes forward and says they suffer from schizophrenia, the reaction of others is much more severe.

Why can't you snap out of it?

Mental illness is a sign of weakness.

You must be violent

You probably shouldn't have kids when you're mentally "unstable"

Medications are made for a reason; just take a pill to make it go away.

I don't think I can be your friend now.

There is no hope for people like you to be functional.

These are the vicious lies our society feeds us. People learn to manage mental illness and the chances of personally knowing someone who has or will struggle with a mental disorder: 25%. So let's talk about it. Let's talk about these issues. To begin to educate and address everyone, there needs to be honesty: I have seen the reactions of those who know nothing of these illnesses, outsiders and their judgment. I have witnessed the need for education and awareness. I hope for the stigma to be reduced. I have faith that with more knowledge comes more understanding. I know people who have struggled their entire lives with mental illness. I have seen different disorders first hand.

I write because I am not the only one.