

Dark days and vomit

Joanne Hipplewith

Volume 6

Issue 1

Spring 2023

Exegesis

The spoken word piece that follows is from a “witness” sense of us all having mental health, not just those we work with. It is raw, disturbing and provocative. A living assemblage of words, rhythms, sounds, beats, feelings and thoughts that stir. A jigsaw of personal and professional contextual living in and habitation of different and similar landscapes, hxstories and environments. This piece resonates with the near and far, steps and breaths, in settings, books, home and abroad. Relational contexts are performed from inside/outside and outside/inside knowledges. The poem was written in one sitting late in 2022. The rawness of the grammar in places and words combine and create this piece in which a rhythm is created on living substances, a heartbeat, a drum, an urge and whispers.

Citation Link

It is bright outside, Dark inside me, Darkness — instability In my stomach,
Headache,

In my mind, Disconnected connecting, Must mask,

What?

the schismogenesis,

Not of my hand,

Forced hands,

I must show up to be,

To be what ...,

is expected ...,

I don't want to be this.

(Pause)

I want to be me,
(Pause)
Real,
What is real?
Thoughts running, racing, galloping. Exhausted, no rest in sleep,
Can't sleep,
Must sleep,
Must mask,
Must be ...
what is expected,
Damage,
No, I must be what...,
What is expected,
"What" pierces my body. I Must be ignored too...,
To be what...,
is expected...,
Damage, no visible marks. No damage,
More damage,
No visible marks,
Smile, watch your tone, be supportive, be professional, and be authentic.
No,
Yes,
No,
Yes,
Damage, no scars,
As you can see.
Sleep,
Eat,
Bathe,
Dress,

Be good,
Be excellent, Damage, Scars.
Marks. Headaches. Losing weight. Lost mind. Lost and find me. Losing you. Smoking. Drinking.
Cutting.
Risk,

Labels,
Smile,
Despite the damage. Keep going.
Keep going and Smile.
To be what... is expected.
Invisible. Hide. Visible. Hide.

Makes sense. Don't fight. Seek help? No. No use. No Understanding Invisible.

Hide,
Visible,
Hide,
Keep running. Keep showing up.
Depression.
A label of my own.
Hello.
I don't like you.
But I know you.
I work with you.
I'll talk to you.
Not when I talk about myself. You are out there.
Beyond my front door
Vomit.
Light days,
Dark days,
Vomit.
I don't see you.
But I know you.

No comfort. Shame? Not really. Relieved? Maybe.
I don't like you, But I know you. Trauma. Trauma.
Vomit.
Keep going.
To be what ... Is expected.

Mum,
Yes,

Are you alright?

Yes, buttercup.

Are you?

Umm,

You've been quiet and Irritable.

Not eating?

Are you sleeping ok?

Smile!

Brightly,

Watch your tone.

Baby, I am fine, Just tired. Deflect the damage, and Contain it.

Box it.

Package it.

Post it.

Sleep.

Can't sleep.

Thoughts racing.

Do better.

Must do what... is expected.

What did you say?

Anxiety,

Hi,

I know you,

Out there,

At work,

On the streets, You are Other. I don't like you. Comfort Maybe,

Helpful,

No,

Worry Sometimes Trauma Vomit,

Light days,

Darkest days I can handle, On the edge,

Over the edge. No edge,

It's exciting, Safety.

No risk. Uncertainty? Love it, Lived it

Do it,

Friend,

Space to...

To be me,

No pressure,

No must(s). Freedom,

Secret.

Don't get it out there. It's fine!

Try it,

Work,

Yeah!

I can help you, Learn

Share coded stories [nudge nudge, wink wink] Strong!

No one cares,

Paid,

Volunteer,

Care either way damage,

No scars.

You can see Scared from youth Terror as a teen Horror in my twenties, Full body burns,
Invisible.

Delicate,

Smile,

Watch your tone. Must do...

What is expected.

Light days Scary.

Time,

Day,

You know what follows ... Certainty of Uncertainty,

Unknown days,

Scary,

Too uncertain,

I was surprised to find out about you. Something new, Reprocess?

Terror, Horror, Trauma, Everything! Smile, Vomit, Vomit,

To be what... Is expected

Well!

You know what,

Fuck that,

Fuck you,

It is what it is,

White nursery rhymes,

Not made for me. My damage, Trauma,

Terror,

Horror, Is me,

Secret,

Secret, secret,

Public life,

Different from whiteness,

Not visible in systemic training, Whiteness reigns supreme. More damage,

Damage,

Can't vomit,

Need to vomit,

Smiling,

No,

Conforming,

No,

Failing,

Yes,

Failing,

No,

Understanding,

None,

Wanting,

Mask off,

Mask on,

Different mask,

Not of my making,

Vomit, vomit, Dark Days

References

Bateson, Gregory & Bateson, Mary Catherine (2008 [1972]). *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Author

Joanne Hipplewith is a practicing systemic and family psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer. She works in London for the NHS and in private practice.

E-mail: joannehipp@outlook.com

URL: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0420-9376>

Citation

Hipplewith, Joanne (2023). Dark days and vomit. *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice*, 6(1), 92-98. <https://doi.org/10.28963/6.1.12>