

POETRY | SPRING 2022

The Doorbell Rings, I'm Off My Meds

By Maya J. Sorini

I write this poem over again
Each time I forget that my mind cannot
Independently create
That which it needs to survive.

I write it walking out of psychiatrists' offices,
On the way into therapy,
When I have finally arrived at something that approximates
Wellness, or, more accurately,
When I reenter myself.

I write the poem even though I have not been fully off the meds
For 11 years. The pills in the poem become a metaphor
For every mistake I have ever made.
The anxiety becomes a woman my age standing at the door, wanting in.

In every poem, she rings the doorbell.
In every poem I apologize to her, because each time,
I have decided yet again that I will stop
The self-destructive urge to shirk medications,
And that means she will not be allowed to stay.

The poem is always too long.
It goes into too much detail,
It waxes poetic on the transformation of anxiety over time,
The way panic morphs constantly to scare whoever you have become in her absence.

The poem is always trying to say something about blind spots,
How I am still surprised,
Even after a lifetime in this fearful body,
To find most terrible thoughts in my head are not organic:
They spring from her. She has had so many children.

Each time I write, I make the same mistakes:
The poem is too specific, too vague,
Far too long, self pitying, and vain.
The poem should only be one line:

“You’re back, you must be freezing, please, come inside.”

Maya J. Sorini is a poet, performer and medical student with a background in trauma surgery research. She has a master's degree and has taught in Columbia University's Narrative Medicine program and continues to work as a freelance Narrative Medicine workshop facilitator. Her work has appeared in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Tendon Magazine*, *Snapdragon: A Journal of Art and Healing*, *Tofu Ink* and *Doxy's Op Med*. She has performed her work as part of Resilience Dance Company St. Louis's multidisciplinary performance, "Stanzas and Sculptures" and for Frontline Art's Annual Benefit. She attends Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine and lives in Bergen County with her grandmother.

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