

Living with An Invisible Illness.

Craving knowledge for the sake of safety.

Hiding from truth.

Hoarding information that's readily available.

Cuddling fear.

Fear sprouting into willful ignorance.

Consumed.

Hate. Distrust. Criticism. Assumption.

Categorize people and put limits on their character until they aren't people anymore!

Failure of critical thinking.

Failure of interpersonal analyzation.

Failure of education on historical truths.

Failure of empathetic understanding.

Upon discovering something new and unacceptable, we deny, deny, deny!

This is wrong. This is bad. This is crazy.

You are wrong. You are bad. You are crazy.

From the in-group to the out-group in a single misstep.

My newfound behaviors must be a reflection of my wants and desires.

Isolation. Anger. Lack of words. Locked doors.

I choose to stay home and ignore you *because I don't cherish you.*

I have occasional bursts of anger *due to my irrational, mean character.*

I return home in silence *because you're not worth speaking to.*

I lock the door to my bedroom *as a sign. Stay away. I hate you.*

Little do they care to know...

I can't go out without the weight of the world baring down on me.

My emotions are wild, consuming waves that I can't comprehend.

I can't laugh and dance, knowing my pain goes unseen.

I lock myself in this barren box to gain a sense of security that I so desperately crave.

In the dark, cold, dry air of this bedroom, I lay still.
Hours go by. Then days. Then...How long has it been?
All I've done is squirm and cry.

A knock at the door; I flinch then freeze.

It's been weeks, what are you doing?
I wouldn't know how to tell you if I tried.

You can't skip school and sleep all the time.
I haven't slept in days.

Answer me.
What am I to say?

What's wrong with you?
Inch by inch, my heart falls to the ground.

Say something.
Daggers are thrown at this pitiful lump of tissue as it pumps away on the hardwood.

This is ridiculous.
Believe me, I know.

Are you on drugs? How'd you get like this?
The fatal mistake has been made.
Assumptions before questions.
Judgment before an attempt at understanding.
Disgust and shame before comfort and love.

As friends fall away, family does faster.

American ideology promotes the sweeping of baggage under the rug.
Hidden baggage rots. Eats away at the soul.

But what matters?

What is true wellness? Good grades? Sports and school involvement? Tons of friends? Being loud and boisterous? Infinite happiness?

I ask, what about my mind? My body? My soul? My identity?
Do I sacrifice that to meet all of my friend's and family's needs of appearance?
Is their denial a sign that my life isn't what matters?

A cycle of never-ending madness.

This is the lack of education. The lack of necessary care. The abuse of those who struggle.
Years pass. A diagnosis arrives. Truths are uncovered.
Depression. Anxiety. Complex-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.
Sexual assault survivor.

I remain the subordinate in a society of the unyielding standardized dominant ideals.
This "disability" is either something to be hidden away or stigmatized by others.

Invisible illnesses.

Quit being dramatic. You're fucked up. Stop seeking attention. Just get up. You're bound for failure. You mess up all the time and it's all your fault. You're too broken for me to handle. You're not normal. Stop being a baby. You're not dying. You can't talk about those things: they're scandalous; taboo.

Push! Push! Push! Ignore it and the ugly thing will go away!

Hash it out. I'll take it again and again, one person to the next.

*We must lock them into this box!
Lock them in tight, shove this discrimination down their throat!*

What am I to do?

As my illness goes ignored.

My anger builds until—for a period—it's all I am.
My social identity is but one thing: a broken and willing fuck-up in the eyes of all.
See me god damn it! See me for what I've been and know I don't have a choice!
I'd choose any other path than my own!

Internalized stigmas bring shame.

*It's my fault.
Why can't I snap out of this?
What is wrong with me?
I must escape these feelings.
I must be like everyone else.
What if I was like other people?*

I fall further.

The breaking point. Hospitalization. Fear. Anguish. Remorse. Resources. Education.
A budding empowered targeted group member.

Knowledge is power.
Compiling strategies, I begin to thrive.
I'm looking in the mirror and I'm surprised what's looking back at me.
A person just like everyone else.
Of the same worth; just a different story.

I'm forced to ask, what is true social justice? Social equity.
Give me what I need just as you'd give a mentally healthy, "abled" person what they need.

What if people were aware of what depression looks like? And didn't ignore the signs?
What if society gained a sense of respect for not only successes, but for reasons people fail too?
What if people were open to discussions about boundaries necessary for my mental safety?
What if we were all more willing to help than we are to criticize?

What if people counteracted assumptions and asked about the experiences?

"Why? –why are you avoiding people? –why are you doing drugs?"
"What happened?"
"How are you feeling?"
"Can I help you in any way?"
"Here's a number you can call, if you need something I can't provide."

A dream world of mine. Eyes open. Knowledge greedy. Inclusion supporting. Advocacy.

My illnesses are not something to be joked about.
My illnesses are not to be belittled.
My illnesses are not yours to judge at all.
My illnesses are mine to accept and manage.

My illnesses do not define me.

I'm getting comfy. So you better as well or leave me to get healthy on my own.