

SELF CARE

They say you need to take care of yourself. They say you need to know your limits. They say nobody can do it all. They say respite is there.

What they do not tell you is depression is contagious. What they do not tell you is the monotony. What they do not tell you is the identification.

When you care for someone with severe depression, sometimes you do nothing all day but sit with them, maybe cry a little. Why cook what they will not eat? Even though you do nothing after a while you have no energy. Of course there are also those nights you lay awake hour after hour for no reason.

There seems to be no reason for anything after a while. You tell yourself not to judge your patient. You care about them, but you cannot help them with your little jokes and morals and smiles and stories. It is chemical. So they say.

You look at their flat face with no affect. Do they even recognize you? You no longer recognize yourself. You begin to look like them. Your clothes are unkempt. They will not care. You get stains on them. You sweat. Who cares? Not you!

Then you go out in the light one day. There is a burst of energy. You get all the errands done. You whistle while you work. You say hello to everyone. You remember there is a world. Then you go back in. To the dark.

Your patient has not moved. They say nothing. You are back in the depression. You are in it. That you can live with. If only you could escape though. If you could go back out of it- back to your wife and children. They are long gone. Everyone has left you. Everything has left you. You are no longer in the depression.

The depression is in you. You are your own patient. Nobody else is there to care for you. There is no respite. You are it. You are the only one. And you do not even exist. Then one day you go out in the light again. There is a burst of energy.

They say you are manic depressive. They say you are bipolar. Those are words and words no longer have any meaning. When they ask the name of your patient and you give your own, they say you are schizophrenic. But those are just names. Names no longer have any meaning.

Tell them you are a Buddha. They will say you are megalomaniacal with paranoid tendencies. Tell them to fuck off. They will call you psychotic. They do not know what

pill to give you. You do not know what moon to eat. There is no respite. You are your own patient.

Be patient now. Take a breath. Self care is important.

Fuck you! And you too! And you and you and you...