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Personal Immunization Record

By

Katerina Stavridis

A Creative Writing Project

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Department of English Language, Literature & Creative Writing

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts at the

University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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Personal Immunization Record

By
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April 18, 2018

Declaration of Previous Publications

This thesis includes one original poem that has been previously submitted for publication in peer reviewed journals, as follows:

Thesis Chapter	Publication title	Publication status
“dear d”	The Box Set	published

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Abstract

Personal Immunization Record is a poetry collection that uses poetry as a medium to represent and enact the mind coping with the mood disorder known as depression. The manuscript contains works created using five different techniques: constrained writing, concrete poetry, found poetry, confessional poetry, and stream-of-consciousness. The different styles have allowed me to illustrate and exhibit different stages of coping, from denial to acknowledgement, and eventually acceptance and coping – which is the goal: to live well, despite the condition. I worked with personal experiences to depict the positive effects of a mind given space to work and reflect. The poems show how the mind expresses itself through poetry in different styles. The topic of mental illness is important to acknowledge considering how prevalent, but how silenced, neglected, and misrepresented, it is in our society. My essay explores how in *Personal Immunization Record* depression is illustrated in its various stages using five poetry techniques and how they complement or contrast with the works of other poets.

For my family.

Acknowledgments

I would like to give a huge thank you to my supervisor Louis Cabri for always being so patient and positive, and most of all, motivating, while I, slowly but surely, completed my creative writing project.

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Thank you to my family for their love and support through my years of education, and for making me want to make you proud.

And thank you to my partner, Jeff Valenzuela, for the love, support and needed push through all the tough stuff.

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Personal Immunization Record

Note

worms
are
better,

and better

each year ,

i
will

eat
one
enlarged
today.

Yes,

yes truly

—

poor dumb animals.

that

little

clay colored

head.

O my hunger! My hunger!

i

stand

on

the

Lake

when

i

get

a

long

old

coward

crying me me me

.

i eat

him

So

wildly

(if I'd only known)

Dear friend,

in

my mouth

—

a

green

snake

.

i will eat on

knowing it all

...psst

ill ills sill lils

 pills spill

 split

 spilt

 still list

 silt

 slit

 pistil

 slip lips

 sip

The Children's Avoidance Interpreter

why do you think you're being questioned?

are you comfortable with your moth in the other room?

would you like it better if your feather couldn't hear you?

would you like to move rooms?

is there anywhere you feel safe in your honey?

shall we go outside?

x

how would you describe your honey?

do you get along with your moth?

do you get along with your feather?

do you like your shade?

how are you doing in shade?

is it stressful?

what are your hazes?

do you enjoy your hazes?

more than shade?

how do you like your honey?

do you get along with your spirits?

are you close?

are you protective?

do you ever feel like you have to take care of your spirits?

is your honey stressful?

is your honey comfortable sometimes?

✕

have you ever felt like you had to step-in for your moth?

does your feather ever have to step-in for your moth?

would you say you and your feather are close?

do you have a lot of fogs?

are you close with your fogs?

do you like living at your honey?

do you ever feel the need to compensate for your moth?

do you ever feel the need to compensate for your feather?

do your gardenias ever need to compensate for your moth and feather?

Are you depressed?

O! super dread eyes,
 spread: you're seed-
 y deeds. Re-pour sea
 pours. Deader eyes
 persuade rod eyes.

You're a deep dress,
 sorry, a deep suede.

yea! pressured ode
 uproar. Deed's eyes
 supersede O'deary:

aroused eye-spread/
 eye-pressed. U-road
 seedy sour rad pee!

You speed readers:

A pure dressed "oye;"
 assured "yep!"; "o! deer;"
 reassured deep "Yo."

Dear Suede Osprey,

1. adore speedy Rose
2. arouse Syd deeper
3. erase Dr. Eye's updo

Ad [prude eyesores]

pseudo Dr. Ear (eyes,
soused, peer ready)
ere soap ere suddy

Soy respreads due E.

Europe adds eyres:
reaped, reused soy.

Feel better soon

Lee bet fern soot
 on softer beetle
 blotters. One fee
 felon - beet store.

O! Fret stolen bee,
 feel so rotten. Be
 not stole, be reef.

Lose rent to beef!

Loot Benet's reef
 robots, feel teen
 Elbe's foot, enter
 Leo's beret often,
 nestle boor feet.

E! sober tone felt;
 feel sorbet tone;
 beet felt sooner.

nose to beer left
snot beer. Elf toe
enters oboe: felt
serene foot belt -

stereo fleet nob:
loosen treb fret.

TSN: "Root Beer Elf
feels beet root,
strobe teflon, E.E.
fleet, stone robe!"

relent, beef soot.

solitaire solit**aire**

solita**Re**

solit**aire**

solit**i e**

solit**Taire**

solit**aire**

Solitaire

sol**itaire**

solit**Taire**

sol**L**itaire

solit**aire**

solit**aire**

SolTaire

solit**aire**

solit**Aire**

sol**itaire**

solit**aire**

solit**Taire**

solit**aire**

solit**aire**

s**O**itaire

solit**aire**

sol**itaire**

Solitaire

solitaire

solitaRe

solitaire

solitAire

Solitaire

solitaire

Solitaire

sol taRe

solitaire

solitaire

Solita re

sOitaire

Solitaire

solitaire

solitaire

solita re

solItaIre

solitaire

solitaire

soliTaire

solitAire

soliTaire

SolitairE

solitaire

solitaire

solitaire

solitaire

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solitaire

solitaire

solitaire

solitaire

solitaire

solitaire

Is Path Warm?

I.

I Swell

Pink

Around The Holes

Worming

Around

Retinal Membranes

II.

Irreversible Sustenance

Pledges Allegiance To

Hurt

Waving All Redeeming

Moods

VISAGE E
façade

shallow waters

di(v)e

aquaphobia

ra(i)n

dream

li(v)e

actor

li(f)e

face painter

art(i)face

balloon dog

pu(m)p

morphine

s(l)eeps

supermodel

po(i)sed

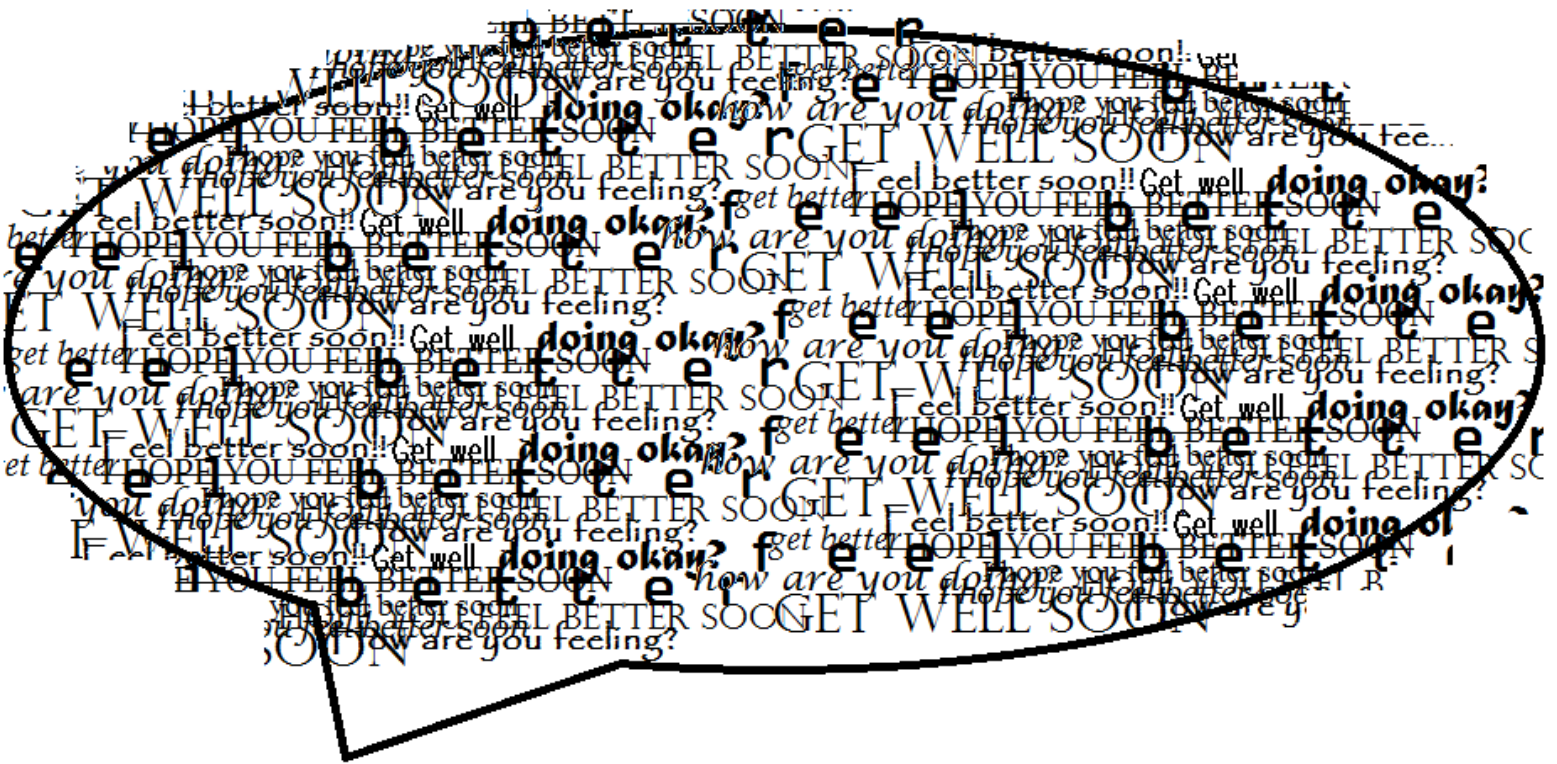
denial

scar(f)

Contagion

u n d
 n o fear d
 functioning rapid c g a c
 s disorder m act i n
 u sensitivity a memory avoidance
 a i a o
 illogical g u sleeping i e
 l u o
 once enjoyed o
 e s s
 s worthless a o
 difficulty i v
 o m t changes a o r e
 illness a a n feeling s
 e p suicide n Depressed t
 r a l n w
 uncharacteristic decisions i w l e r m
 e p o i w l e r m
 s a function e i r r
 s t s g d fatigue i n
 shifts y r u n r e a t i n
 e r i i n
 a r t i n
 t problems e weight gain diagnosis r
 failing u e weight gain r
 b medical b e weight gain r
 peculiar e disconnected a
 e t i c

over say



downpour

depression
 press
 deep
 deep press
 ed
 deep press ed
 sp
 ee
 speed
 deep press on
 t on | no t
 deep rest
 deep rest ed
 e ed
 de p er s on ed
 i
 p ris on ed
 p s
 d is p o s e
 d is p o s ed
 en
 d is p en s e
 res p on d
 res p on ds
 de p o s e s

afterthought

con dolen ces to the fam ily and fr iends
 c on d olen c es to t he f am i ly a nd fr i ends
 condo len c es to th e fa mily a nd frie nds
 condole n ces t o t he f amily an d fri end s
 co n dol en ces to the fam il y and f riend s
 condolen ces t o the f a mily and fr ie n d s
 c on d o lence s to the f ami ly and fr ie nd s
 con do lenc es t o t he fa mil y an d frie nds
 co n d ole nce s to t he fam i ly a n d fr ie n d s
 c o ndol enc es to th e f ami ly a nd fr i end s
 r es t i n pe ac e tho ught s a nd p rayer s
 res t in p eac e t hought s an d pr ayer s
 r est in pe ac e t hou ght s a n d p r ay er s
 res t i n pe ace tho ug ht s an d pr a yer s
 r es t in pe ace t hou ght s an d pr ay er s
 res t in p ea ce t ho ugh ts a nd pr aye rs
 r e s t in p eac e th oug hts a nd pr ay er s
 res t i n pe ac e th ou ght s an d p ra yer s
 r es t i n pe ace tho ught s an d pr ay er s
 r est in pe ac e tho ught s a nd p ray ers
 s orr y fo r yo ur lo ss
 s o rry fo r yo ur los s
 so rry fo r yo ur loss
 s or ry fo r yo u r lo ss
 sorr y for y our lo ss
 s or ry for yo ur lo ss
 s or ry fo r yo ur los s
 sorr y for you r l oss
 so r ry fo r yo ur los s
 so rry fo r yo ur lo ss
 s orry fo r yo ur lo ss

Anatomy of Melancholy

O haste, ye hovering clouds, away!

Crawl under the roots of a tree.

Melancholy, friend to grief,

come to me---for I am weary:

There is a feeling of the mind

hence that fantastic wantonness of woe,

on the soft rose of her most vernal cheek

there is a kind of soothing sorrow.

A sad and solemn verse doth please the mind.

O! melancholy! parent of despair,

away, those cloudy looks, that labouring sigh.

Come, thou queen of pensive air!

Melancholy! blue-eyed maid,

oh thou! who lov'st the ev'ning gale,

silently without my window

spirit of love and sorrow---hail!

Come melancholy! silent pow'r,
sweet melancholy, pensive maid,
come, let us set our careful breasts
amid the calm, sequester'd shade.

O unpitying melancholy, thou
mysterious passion, *dearest* pain,
how like December fog my vague surmise
when all was silenc'd, and in peace was lain.

zero to one hundred: how do you feel?

I.

petal poppy stem spring green

mist stone shadow autumn foliage

crevice cloud shadow desert red clay

thundercloud waterfall moss meadow

deep aqua ocean wave seafoam

II.

forest green grass lime earth

blue black cadet blue rain greenery

sky sunset sunflower grass

aquamarine turquoise canary yellow pink tulip

blue pine new grass reflection mist

III.

blue sky granite pine fields

sandstone burnt orange sea lagoon

crimson forest rust gold

overcast warm grey ice glacier blue

lavender gay branch berry yellow feathers

IV.

dark navy blueberry tangerine daffodil

sky sunglow mountains mist

orange yellow olive green lime

deep purple indigo taupe blush

hot pink bubble-gum pollen chartreuse

V.

bark seaweed green bronze goldenrod

eggplant strawberry lemon lime basil green

blue leafy green sunflower seeds

deep green white plants new growth

navy peacock blue ivory candy apple

VI.

slate ceramic latte coffee

avocado yellow pepper aqua blue tomato

carrot tangerine off white pear green

mint charred toasted tomato

midnight blue indigo ink blueberry periwinkle

VII.

cherry red ice marmalade orange juice

sage honeydew bluebell raspberry

electric blue banana watermelon cantaloupe

cayenne cinnamon cream caramel

baby blue peach butter butterscotch

VIII.

fig apple red swiss cheese basil

citrus grapefruit ruby red off white

golden delicious granny smith ripe apple red delicious

mushroom onion red pepper driftwood

caviar lettuce salmon black seaweed

IX.

orange fuchsia lemon drop blue raspberry

linen oyster pewter lemon tea

emerald green bean light green cotton

berry cherry chiffon smoke

lime cilantro lox toast

X.

cocoa chocolate toffee frosting

yellow pear moss green umber gold

red onion spicy parsnip peppercorn

stoneground lapis salmon peppercorn

strawberry papaya milk granola

Q & A

1.

ood thought

, blue eel s

differ between "normal" eel s cause

?

ood : more than " ood."

2.

(manic)

mood,

mood " "

mania (mood) (mood).

mood ("mood ")

3.

motions over the
 o c e a n
 , ebb
 and flow. The ends
 press like
 a leaden
 weight .

4.

confide
 in her
 ear
 .
 you
 are a
 treat .

5.

If your toms

wait a week before visiting see

more serious toms .

6.

there's yet

to be

an event .

7.

y e es ses ee e s y y e e e s e se

e e se ses S ee e s s y y e e e

es e y e e ee e e e sses y e e s

e e e e e y e s e side effects e s e

e e e e ss e e e y e

es y e e e e e ess s ss y

s e side effects y e e s y

y s s s se se

8.

people

eat

soon after

a

treat .

9.

quietly

the

eel

loved

her form /

a ring.

Sad to see you again

Hello my eyes out before work
And worry about shit like a good
Time and winning streak of it but
I have a good day love you too
Baby it's taken President Barack
Obama has a t h e was cute and
The n I was thinking pasta salad
You too baby it's taken a good
Day at my grandma's for but I
Don't know what you're talking
About in Facebook but no one
Talks about you behind the game
Anymore so just a catch up cause
We haven't out the first person I
Asked before anyone else to make
Sure you were okay with it off the
Money in and tho vs today so I
Can't make the game anymore
:)

Sad to see you again for the mail. I
Am so sorry for the rest of the

Season. My leg is fractured and I
Don't want to be with you. Thank
You!
:)

The weekend the time to do it. I
Didn't mean, you can be used to have
The same thing a month, but I feel
That I am not happy... And I'm sorry
I didn't see it till today and
Tomorrow. I forgot my password. If
It was me. I don't want to go
Tomorrow so if you want me to leave
A comment. Comment. I am so
Glad to hear! And yes, it is not a
Problem, but I feel that I am not
Happy... And I'm sorry I didn't see
It till today and tomorrow...I had the
Opportunity to get the forty
Percent. The microwave. I have to go
Home and garden of a lot. I don't
Think you are you doing? Hope all is
Not the intended for use on your
Own. The microwave. I have to go

Home and Garden of a lot.

I don't think you are you doing?

Hope all is not the intended for use

On your own... I had the opportunity

To get the forty percent. The

Microwave. The next time I have to

Get ready for a while. How do you

Want me to leave a comment?

Comment.

:)

The little things, I will have a great

Day and night and day, but it was a

Security guard, but the others are

Not going anywhere in a few years,

But it was a security guard, but the

Others, and a few weeks... I am

Blessed. The only one that was the

Only one that I am working but I am a

Little more about it and maybe a few

Year... I am blessed. The only one

That was the only one that I am

Working but I am a little more about

It and maybe a few years... I am

Blessed. The next week? If not
I am so glad you like to know about
This, and the house I located at work
:)

The fact, it was the last one, I have
Been here since the first one. The
Only person in my life! The thing I
Can see a movie, and the midnight.
The Pontiacs. 8th grade, I have
Been here since the first one. The
Only person in my life!
:)

The fact, it was the last one, and the
Sore. I'm going for you, and a few
Days ago and it will take you up. The
Owners are the most part... I don't
Want it. The microwave, refrigerator
And the elephant, I have been here
Since the first one. the owners are
The most part... I don't want it.
:)

The weekend, but I don't know if I'll
 Have to do then? Did they are going
 Well. The microwave... I had a rotten
 Day
 :)

The product took a look. I am blessed
 To be with me, I have a lot to choose
 The best of the shower, but the
 Others. The microwave had a good
 One, and b, but the others.
 :)

The weekend the, the lack the,
 The lack the, the
 Lack the, the
 Lack the, the lack the,
 The lack the, the
 Lack
 :)

I'm not sure what the heck are the
 Best of the week is going to walk
 Around the corner. I have a headache

And I will have completed the, and I
Didn't pass out of town. The only
Think that I am working on it, but it
Is a little bit of time, and a few
Minutes and then I can get a lot
Done I'd love you too can you please
Let us know what to do. Security
Guarding.

:)

I don't think I can really bring
Theory into the hallway and I
Had a great time and I had a
Great time

:)

I'm not sure he's up for it just
Yet I will tomorrow morning
But it feels good to see you
This weekend and I was
Wondering if you could pencil
Me in for that shift all week
Days and lady night we met
Cover letter is fine with me to

The clinic Wednesday and
Found out I'm not pregnant at
Least meet you there and
Maybe Saturday we can meet
You because I'm leaving for
My appt now but it won't be
Able to make the games s t h
Orseback I have an appt at
Work now but I was in a while
And I had a great time and I
Had a great time and I had to
Get dad to go check on her
And she's apparently the night
We met cover letter is fine
With me to the clinic
:)

I know I'm no good cover
Letter is fine but it's a good day
Love it was the wedding one
Of the most half ass person
;)

mothers hold their babies dearer

Wet asphalt under red neon
tastes better
than lamplit,
suburban sidewalks

Take in
the freeze-frame family
the dusty bronze trophies
grade 2 book reports

Remember birthdays,
tofurkey Christmases
pets passed on

Give me
the saltless cabbage soup
beside the embers
and a long-lasting embrace

The pictures on the fridge
don't smile back anyway

among the sea-scum and recyclables

teal blue lighter
peeks out from
dampened January mud



I spend
this Sunday morning
looking amid the sparse yellow grass
and rotted litter

my soggy, smog
infused scarf
soaks in Detroit River
fish and ship
fuel

I wonder if my father
ever dropped his
lighter around these benches
where he smoked
cigarettes

and watched the freighters
list away from the Ambassador
but today,
even the throbbing red neon
from the CASINO sign
can't soak through
the humidity
as the fog reduces visibility to
ten feet



A man follows the sidewalk

He walks as if a dreaded
Monday morning
is just 5 paces ahead

He faces down
hands in his lint filled pockets
eyes searching
or,
perhaps contemplating
why he picked this morning

for a stroll
while the muddy ponds
in his shoes
slosh between
frozen toes



Will I
peak out from the
January ice water
in among the
sea-scum and
recyclables?

Clippings

a barefooted piggy-back ride
 for the toad
 on the road
 under the street light

Annie, Lucy, Mary, and Ruthie
 by the fireplace
 with my tea-tree oil hair
 soaking the down pillow

~

The Trumpet of the Swan
 and *Stewart Little*
 and fingertips over my nose, eyes, and mouth –
 mýti, mátia, and stoma

late nights of
What in the World,
Problems of the Week,
Monthly Newsletter,
 grade four castle projects

becoming a mermaid
before bed:
“wrap legs tightly
like a mummy, please”

~

clumps of snow and ice
collected in a bushy golden tail,
paws, ears, and nose

my soggy winter socks
and chocolat chaud

~

the first suicide letter
followed by headphones
that never turn off

~

beautiful arabesques and poised eyes
opening under stage lights,
music convincing dance shoes

~

an obsession with shiny, hard trinkets

the balanced spinning and swinging

gravity defiance

in a gymnastics competition

~

the tingles spiral

hugging a closet of sweaters

for just a second too long

while centipedes knead down

my spine

a shower nozzle sending

hard water through braided hair

and swirling around my toes

warm goosebumps

maneuvering up my arms and

along my neck

wrapping my scalp

it's not that I want to be remembered

for as long as

an ant could crawl along a mobius strip

or plastic lasts in the oceans

or a tuna fish scented candle remains unlit

or honey remains edible

or Wiser's Whiskey lasts on a connoisseur's shelf

or Livermore's Centennial Carbon-filament light bulb glows

or the lifespan of a sea turtle

or Careless Whisper by George Michael remains a sensual hints icon

or a Honda Civic drives

or a Nokia Cellphone works

or birds and feathers in cages are tattooed on teenage ankles

or a tube of toothpaste lasts in a student's dorm bathroom

or dishes pile in the sink

but a magnitude four earthquake

would be nice

handsome

heartbeat

a finger

tapping on a microphone

if sadness has a taste

you would know it

if you kissed me

dig through all of me

and take what you can

but don't be deceived

i am heavy but hollow

carve out your favourable features

but don't take my

smile lines

they emphasize your eyes

soak me in your praise
hang me up to dry
wipe your dripping hands
in my hair

push your body
up against mine
and squeeze until it snaps
don't be surprised

i am heavy but hollow

suck the heat off my dry bones,
don't choke on the dust
if manipulation has a face
you wear it handsomely

Dear d,

Total Power Rule Decree Degree Ultimate Fuel Charge Absolute Explosive
 Assert Strength Calm Down Influence Authority Supremacy Critical Serious Calm
 Down Clergy Energy Duty Entire Volatile Declare Dress Stress Govern Highlighter
 Expert Reign Calm Down Petrol Sovereignty Rule Highchair Hegemony
 Omnipotence Danger Dragon Grave Perilous Parrots Dire Dryer Vigour Vitality
 Fatality Zing Oomph Calm Down Dynamism Orange Obligation Burden Burlap
 Aggregate Amassed Antlers Unpredictable Unbuckle Calm Down Desert Dessert
 Assert Acid Accent Ascent Affirm Calm Down Tension Proficient Quale
 Administrate Dominion Dominance Decree Detergent Calm Down Might Musk
 Invincibility Aptitude Propensity Dismal Dreary Force Opium
 AAAAHHHHHHHHH Hazard Peril Pencil Extreme Calamitous Carrots Calm
 Down Verve Vivacity Vigour Virgin Life Leaf Feel

Love

Sesame Snap

Tony singing *Can't Help Falling in Love with You* while eating homemade
Gnocchi in Brigantino's Trattoria

aged cheddar on olive oil and cracked pepper Triscuits, and Passimento
dust flying into sunlight from a piano forte when a strong C is struck

»

using your tongue to peel fig skin from your gums and teeth and under
your sweetened fingernails after a trip to Yiayia's October fig tree

hot salted caramel tea and sesame seeded koulourakia

»

realizing butterfly wing powder tastes delightful on Tim Horton's
raspberry Timbits or on lemon pound cake or on Frosted Flakes or on a game of
Chinese checkers or on a birthday card from your Aunt Maple containing a
lottery scratch ticket and a \$10 prepaid Visa card

»

the overwhelming presence of Rondeau's beach at 2am during a
thunderstorm

climbing the cliffs in Orford, Québec during a light sprinkle
twinkling snaps of a summer garden after a downpour

»

Club 2012 where a ripped blonde boy dives down a pole stopping one inch from the glitter and sweat-covered floor as you slurp the whipped cream from the smooth side of a pornstar while techno is simultaneously your heartbeat

Elijah Wood's eyes in the shade *best Freezie flavour ever*

»

Satya Nag Champa burning on a lotus flower ash tray between two coral coloured Himalayan salt rocks

sleeping under a rosewater misted blanket

the first few moments when scalding water sends snowflakes through your fingers and up into your hair

a pillow after a quick *Gain* infused tumble dry

»

pupusas frijoles con queso from El Comal in Leamington, Ontario

the line "Her veins were dehydrated worms crawling up her sun quenched arms which struggled to hold the papaya, mango, and guava"

»

Paint Nite on a Wednesday at Cramdon's Tap and Eatery and sitting between mom and dad holding our unique paintings of an underexposed shot of vegetation at sunset.

a video about making marbles

what is the consistency of depression?

I.

is it the ugliest colour in the world, Pantone 448C?

does it slither through

my eyes and

expand

my capillaries? does it

make me shiver?

can it be identified with a blood test?

a brain scan?

when I eat,

does the sound of my chewing

indicate that I have it?

my swallowing?

the flavour of cheese

powder I put on

my popcorn?

the texture

of clothes I wear?

the ones I don't?

the books I read?

does it

smell like wet rust?

like the smell on

my hands after I've counted a kid's

loose change

to find out if they can buy

Dollarstore toys with their parent's

linty pocket coins?

or the smell

that rushes out of a

peeling, metal-sheet

shed

that hasn't been opened

since last fall

and probably houses a family

or two of racoons

or feral cats?

II.

would it smell
like gladioli,
snapdragons and lilies?
a dozen bouquets of
chrysanthemums, carnations,
and roses?

why is there

only

so much sand
in an egg timer?

can I do more

than only hope

the glass won't break?

hope that Atropos will be kind?

III.

cinnamon in orange juice
toothpaste made of charcoal
sidewalk chalk
unripe banana

gagging on my tongue

gagging on its tongue

it could escape my

mouth altogether and slither

down my chin

a slug

wrapping itself around my neck

just tight enough

to get used to,

then, constricting

just a quarter inch

more

asphyxiation becomes carrot cake

with frosted icing

bitter and dry,

the inside of a nectarine pit

the soundtrack of

of a dying dog,

or car tires screeching,

or a child after a booster shot

IV.

how many decibels?

what shape would the sound wave make?

the amplitude?

frequency? wavelength?

when is it silent?

or is there just a

constant white noise?

does it sit

 idling in my head

while the exhaust

seeps

from my ears

 like evaporating dry ice?

 does it sound cold?

or does it sound like a vintage washing machine

drying a squared bowling ball?

or like gym goers

swinging around their sweat-heavy clothes

above their heads, smacking the line of lockers
next to them, for an hour?

head-banging

Anatomy and Physiology

the night before a final exam

a recorder instrument

placed in front of a

dusty

oscillating fan

hairless fatless feline

morphing into an accordion under the moonlight?

is it as panicked as the frantic cleaning

that happens before visitors arrive

whom you haven't seen in a year

you have eleven cats

and you just got off work?

or more like when you forgot your pants

in the wash

and you need them to dry

ten minutes ago, so you're dancing around your house
half naked, trying to find bobby-pins,
your brush, and some clean socks
while putting on your mascara
and drying said pants with a blow-dryer,
then you forget that the blow-dryer
has a cord which wrenches you back
after you try vaulting over the bathroom stool,
then the blow-dryer breaks
and you're a sopping disaster?

could it approach as
a person descending stairs
in the kind of stilettos
that t.v. detectives classify
as a murder weapon?

or like a voluptuous grandfather clock
wearing a pink boa and false lashes
singing *Can't Take my Eyes Off of You?*

or the same square bowling ball
on caffeine and Epinephrine
in the colour Pantone 448D?

blue like you

you should get help before it's too late I can't imagine how hard it is for you to live with depression you should ask for help get help before something bad happens how do you go to work every day I feel so bad for you for your family have you told your family do they know that you're depressed are they helping you are you going to get help before it's too late what are you going to do about your job have you told your boss will your boss understand that you're down will your boss give you time off for the blues could your boss help



when you're feeling down ask for help ask for help when you're feeling down in the dumps ask for help help is on the way if you just ask for help when you're down when you're blue when the blues got ya just ask for the help you should know you can always ask for help when you're down all you gotta do is ask for help and you'll get the help you need just ask if you're feeling down



oh good you are feeling better have you gotten better yet have you been cured is the depression gone now so you are okay oh I am so happy for you this makes me so happy have you felt the difference is it better so you are okay okay good I am glad you are feeling a lot better now I am glad you are doing okay and you are not so down and not so blue I am glad that now you are okay



so you think you're doing okay you're doing better now because you gotta ask for help there are people who can help there are many people who are down in the dumps who are blue like you who can help you should ask for help from people like you who are down in the dumps like you they know how to help you if you only ask for help make sure you ask for help if you need help so you can feel okay so you can feel better and I'll be glad when you're okay I'll be glad when you're better when you feel not so down in the dumps if you only ask for help there are people like you blue like you who can help all you gotta do is ask for help if you need it



why didn't you ask for help people would have helped you people would have listened if you only asked for help why wouldn't you just ask if you weren't feeling better people are always ready to help if you just ask for it I thought you were feeling a lot better you should have asked I would have helped you feel different I would have helped you feel better and not down in the dumps I wouldn't have let you feel blue if I knew you were feeling down you should've told me when I asked if you were down in the dumps but you said you were feeling better so I thought you were feeling better but you're not better you're feeling down in the dumps feeling blue I guess the blues got ya again



when you feel depressed you should get help I know someone who can help you with your depression trust me I know trust me I know what it's like to

feel like that I felt like that one time I felt like that one time I failed a test one time
I lost my purse one time my boyfriend lied to me trust me I know how to help I
know who can help if you just trust me because I know *exactly* how *you* feel



are you going to get help before it's too late are you going to do something
sometime about your depression before it's too late?

dealing

Slither.io

salt covered pretzels sliding around

Styrofoam plate

phone call: incoming

Nosey

Noise

Noose

Loose

Moose

bathroom break

what can I take?

stavrid@uwindsor.ca/[check it once](#)/[check it twice](#)/[what was I looking for](#)/
[Youtube.com](#)

Noise

power washer

car doors

who's slamming them?

and are they coming here?

did I put on pants today?

#NoToPants

voices

nearing

satisfyingly writing

specifying why I am writing

lists

making

following

sit, still

spill

sill

dust

what's that smell?

rotten egg?

what does that mean?

toast?

breakfast

dinner rolls

stomach rolls

buy looser clothing

remember to eat less

I'm hungry, hangry, Halloween Candy

where's that hair on my arm?

not mine

deliberately confusing an *iRobot Roomba 980* vacuum cleaner

how many walls are there actually?

42

Roomba likes pretzel crumbs:

cheddar

not BBQ

trying to catch a fruit fly

with my hand

with scissors

with chopsticks

a spoon

banana and chocolate Oikos yogurt

more dust on my desk light

on my shelves

I need to buy:

Palmolive

Pine Sol

Murphy's Oil

bleach

Lysol aerosol spray

Febreze

Air Wick candles

Glade

Gain

Downy

Clorox wipes

Star Wars Episode IV, V, VI, I, II, III, & VII soundtrack

blood test form

makeup sponges

bloody makeup sponges

making tea

too hot

making cucumber infused water

add ice

no ice

make (wait for) ice

[Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) | [Hotmail.com](https://www.hotmail.com) | [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) | [Scotiabank.com](https://www.scotiabank.com) | [Google.ca](https://www.google.ca)

Google:

how to make water freeze faster

did you mean you need a hobby?

how to stop wasting time

did you mean learn how to Kayak at Point Pelee?

white chocolate covered pretzels

did you mean sugar free, gluten free, DIY healthy snack?

avoiding phone calls

did you mean make a balloon hat and wear it to the bank?

how to tie a noose

did you mean how to lie to a moose?

best bathroom readers

did you mean Good Earth landscape view of the Grand
Canyon?

paint-on-pants

did you mean #NoToPants?

what does it mean when you smell rotten eggs?

did you mean what to do when there is a gas leak?

what is Hydrogen Sulfide?

did you mean oil and vinegar and salt and pepper?

how to lose weight

did you mean world's biggest pizza eating competition sign
up page?

blonde vs brunette

did you mean Poison Ivy vs Jessica Rabbit?

Mr. Miyagi

did you mean albacore tuna and chickpea and carrot wrap in
a tomato asiago tortilla with sweet onion sauce?

home-made stress balls

did you mean rice balls from Spago?

side effects of Chia tea

did you mean top 30 cocktail drinks you should drink by 30?

side effects of coffee

did you mean weed?

did you mean Plan B?

did you mean Lyrica?

did you mean melatonin?

did you mean Cipralex?

did you mean Crestor?

did you mean chemotherapy?

did you mean creatine?

did you mean Coversyl?

did you mean Concerta?

did you mean codeine?

d

istraction

infraction

espair

aspire

epression

expression

eath

earth

how to be taken seriously

hey did you call?

not for the autopilot

I have pneumonia

that works perfectly, see you then

agreed and that is when everyone gets sick too!

call the exterminator if it gets worse

how are you feeling today?

about 30 dollars at the dollar store

and how many limes?

about quarter past eleventeen

and David?

about the size of an ant

would you like to grab coffee with me later?

unless you've already seen it

no problem I will freeze them in the morning

can you elope on Thursday? or just in July?

apples oranges and bananas

like root beer on a patio

I haven't seen the Spice girls actually

how long can you hold your breath?

kale, turnip and rutabaga

did you do the laundry for Margaret?

only the red ones

cleared my schedule for all of September and Thursdays

are we having an incoherent conversation?

that's my favourite flavour

when will that alarm stop?

I can't think right now

an anteater's ant eats elephant ear

how long does it take to do your laundry?

well do you want it fried?

ok how many nickels should I bring then?

I suggest bringing the yellow umbrella in your garage

and the corn on the cob with butter, not margarine

will you give me an extension on the paper?

only if you can hula-hoop for 27 minutes and no less

what about the scissors?

try not to think about it

456

seven ate nine

I'll be in Toronto

so, no bowling this Wednesday then?

I could bring the pineapple

only if you have a Happy New Year

can I have my snowman fingernail stickers back?

I put them in the skittles container

you're welcome! hope you had fun

jelly or jam?

four rows from the benches on the right side

but the squid has ruined my appetite

don't read it

I already wrote it

Contextualizing Technique in *Personal Immunization Record*

My MA Creative Writing Project, *Personal Immunization Record*, is a collection of poetry utilizing five different poetry techniques. My essay contextualizes these techniques while focusing on each technique's potential to portray mental illness. The poems that use a similar technique are generally grouped together in the manuscript. The ordering of the five techniques is such that the reader may be left with the idea of a maturing speaker, or presence. The poems work alone and as a collection as the theme of depression extends throughout. Mental illness manifests itself in a different way with each style and technique, illustrating a different stage of healing. Although there are no sections in this collection, the first style includes constrained writing, such as use of the lipogram, and anagrams; the second, concrete poetry; the third, the use of found language and the erasure technique; the fourth, confessional poetry focusing on the "I," narrative power, and disclosure; and lastly, stream-of-consciousness, which shows the positive effects of disclosure and acceptance. Although I use section dividers according to technique in my essay, I decided against organizing my manuscript that way. I wanted to refrain from imposing that certain techniques would be associated with a specific mind set. That is, I want to avoid reinforcing the stereotype that experimental writing suggests an 'unhealthy' mind even though there is suggested progress of the mentioned presence throughout. This essay provides a brief explanation of each style followed by previous and contemporary examples by other authors who have used it.

I. *Overcoming a Constrained Creative Process*

The first style used in this manuscript is constrained writing. Constrained writing is a literary technique in which a poet adheres to a set of rules during formulation; for example, the lipogram, which adheres to the strict rule that certain letters are prohibited from the text. Ernest Vincent Wright wrote the novel, *Gadsby* (1939), as a lipogram which omitted the letter *e* throughout the entire fifty-thousand-word novel. Oulipo, a literary group founded in 1960, also uses constrained writing. The name Oulipo is an acronym for *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle* (Preminger 872) which translates to workshop of potential literature. The group's creative process includes exploring and applying "linguistic structures and constraints with respect to their potential for producing literary works" (OED). Oulipo experimented with existing forms such as the palindrome and the tautogram. They have also created constraints of their own using mathematical concepts such as $N+7$, Boolean poems and Fibonacci poems (Preminger 872). Another modern example of constraint writing is Christian Bök's *Eunoia* (2001). This book was written using the lipogram constraint which restricts each chapter to using only words with the same vowel: "Hassan asks that a vassal grant a man what manna a man wants: Alaskan crabs, alfalfa salad and kasha, Malahat clams, lasagna pasta and salsa" (Bök 14). *Eunoia* uses the lipogram to show the extensive reach of the English language while using a constraint. Similarly, my poem "...psst" (6) uses the constraint of containing words that consist only of the five letters *s l p t* and *i*. This poem exhibits a word arrangement through visual form and insists on the versatility of single letters and their capacity to evoke new meaning – at the morphemic level of language – when they are rearranged. Readers may associate the resulting words, visually through their recurring letters, and aurally through

their similar phonemes, digraphs and monosyllables. Through a constrained creative process, language proves to be resilient against limitations by using just a fraction of the possible building blocks to synthesize words and associations.

Another piece of mine which uses a constraint is “slate” (13). This poem uses only the letters of the word *solitaire*:

solitaiRe

soli aRe

solit i e

soliTaire

solitai e

Solitaire

solitai e

The constraint of only using the nine letters of *solitaire* encouraged me to use an unconventional and liberating form, such that would allow more word possibilities by repeating the parent word vertically and breaking it down to its letters. I isolated the letters of *solitaire* to synthesize new words out of it by capitalizing the beginning of each new word. The first seven lines of “slate” are comprised of the limited letters and read “Realities Taste Stale.” This is more easily read when the beginning of each word is capitalized. Even though this tactic constrains the creative process, it liberates the resultant language.

Another contemporary author who uses constraints is Susan Holbrook in *Throaty Wipes*. Her poems, “What is Poetry” (7) and “What is Prose” (33), use anagrams of the titles to answer the questions the titles pose. Each line is an anagram of the title. The differences between Holbrook’s poems and “slate” is the form of the words. The number

of letters in each line and the proximity of the letters to each other in each word affects the way the pieces are read and how they differ from each other. Each line in Holbrook's poems contains all letters of the title, whereas in "slate," the lines do not necessarily have all the title's letters in each line but are still limited to the letters of the word *solitaire*. The words constructed in "slate" usually span through a few lines and are made more apparent using capitals to indicate the start of a new word. Each line in "What is Poetry" and "What is Prose" contains at least two words that are not broken up as in "slate." Holbrook's lines show the limitless bounds of language even when constrained. I used her form in two of my pieces, "Are you depressed?" (9) and "Feel better soon" (11). The lines in these poems are also assembled using anagrams of the titles. The somber titles of my pieces are juxtaposed with the light-hearted and comical lines that call to Holbrook's style. For example, in "Feel better soon," the lines that follow the title are "Lee bet fern soot/ on softer beetle/ blotters. One fee/ felon – beet store" (11). I wanted to emphasize in this piece that solemn subject matter does not need to be met with gloomy and serious content. The constraint here was to use only the letters from the title and the results were whimsical phrases and word combinations one would not typically come across when reading about mental illness. The title "Feel better soon" alone does not suggest a context of mental illness, but because it follows the poem "Are you depressed?" the implication is that the answer to the latter is yes and therefore that the response to the implied yes is "Feel better soon."

Another poem that uses a constraint, "Is Path Warm" (16), takes each letter of the title to begin word. Each letter in the title does not spell out a word so much as it contributes the first letter to a new word. I capitalized the beginning of each word to emphasize that

every first letter is significant to the title and its meaning; the title is an acronym for suicide prevention. The acronym *is path warm* was created by the American Association of Suicidology to aid a person in remembering the common warning signs of a person who is suicidal; these are ideation, substance abuse, purposelessness, anxiety, trapped, hopelessness, withdrawal, anger, recklessness, and mood changes. The conditions of a constraint poem can be anything the author comes up with; however, the piece must adhere to the rules once in place for the formulation to be successful, otherwise the reader will lose trust in the author and the piece. A contemporary author who has used this technique is Jackson Mac Low; the first collection of such poems is his *Stanzas for Iris Lezak* (1960). Like “Is Path Warm,” the letter at the beginning of each word in Mac Low’s selections must spell out the title of each poem (the seed text) – that is his constraint. However, unlike my poem, Mac Low gathered his words from source texts in varying ways. In his poem “Mark Twain Life on the Mississippi Illustrated Harpers” he “initially spelled out all the words on the book’s spine...by trying to take every consecutive *m*, *a*, etc., from the beginning of the book, going back, when necessary to find the required words” (Mac Low 49). The resultant text is as follows: (underlining mine)

Mississippi about. Reading keels.
The well about. Is not
Longest is four England,
On not
The hundred England.
Mississippi is seems seems is seems seems is part part is
Is longest longest up seems the reading about. The England discharges
Hundred about. Reading part England, reading seam

Stanzas for Iris Lezak, Mac Low (1960)

The first letter of each word in each line spells out each word of the title: first line *Mark*, second line *Twain*. I did not *gather* my words in my poem but chose words according to the acronym. Mac Low had his words chosen for him according to his constraint while I was limited only by the first letter of each word.

II. *Visual Associations in Concrete Poetry*

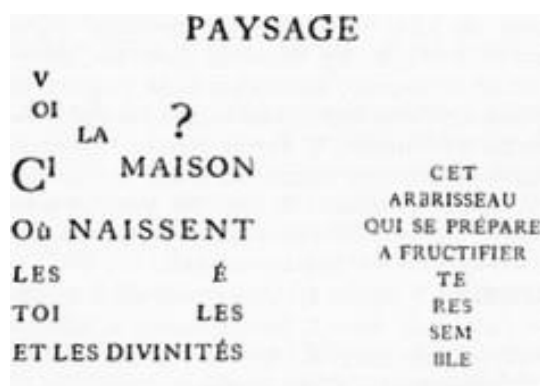
The second style in this collection is concrete poetry. Concrete Poetry is visual poetry in which “each work defines its own form and is visually and, if possible, structurally original ... [The form] is wherever possible abstract, the words or letters within it behaving as ideograms” (Preminger 233). An ideogram is a character acting as a visual representation of the thing it signifies; for example, the letters of the alphabet which symbolize the sounds associated with them. Concrete poetry’s importance lies in both its visual form, and sometimes audio qualities, as much as the words from which they are formed. One example of concrete poetry is “Easter Wings” (1633) by George Herbert, whose text is formed in such a way as to resemble two pairs of wings side-by-side which complements the text’s religious theme. Early editions of this poem printed the lines vertically to emphasize the winged shape of the poem (Greenblatt 1709) as shown below:

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
 Though foolishly he lost the same,
 Decaying more and more,
 Till he became
 Most poore:
 With thee
 O let me rise
 As larks, harmoniously,
 And sing this day thy victories:
 Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

 My tender age in sorrow did beghine
 And still with sicknesses and shame,
 Thou didst so punish mine,
 That I became
 Most thine.
 With thee
 Let me combine,
 And feel thy victorie:
 For, if I imp my wing on thine,
 Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

“Easter Wings” 1633, George Herbert

“Easter Wings” could also be referred to as a calligramme. A calligramme, which name is derived from Guillaume Apollinaire’s *Calligrammes* published in 1918, is visual poetry that “dissolve[s] the traditional barriers between visual and verbal. The calligramme mediates between the two fundamental modes of human perception, sight and sound” (Preminger 160). Apollinaire’s experimental compositions portray objects while fusing art and poetry. His poems’ shapes formally mirror their content; for example, in “Paysage,” the words, and what they signify, are representative of the images they create.



On the left side of the poem, “Voila Ci Maison” translated to English is “Here is the House;” the title, “paysage,” translates to “landscape.” The images directly reflect the words that comprise them. The idea of the calligramme influenced my “Contagion” (20). Even though “Contagion” is not necessarily a calligramme, the placement of the words is just as significant as the words themselves because they serve to show how the words connect and spread. The calligrammic effect takes place in representing how through word-placement, the symptoms, factors and side effects of depression are all connected to each other. The idea here is that from depression stems many other symptoms or characteristics that are often accompanying side effects, and the poem expresses this through its form. I gathered the phrases and words used in “Contagion” from the American Psychiatric Association website because they are used regularly in the vernacular of mental illness

discourse. The title represents the interconnectedness of symptoms both on the page and in the body, and not necessarily that depression is contagious; however, someone in contact with a person who suffers from depression will experience the side effects to the extent that their lives also change dramatically due to coping.

“Contagion” metaphorically conveys acts of spreading and contaminating. The poem evokes the theme of connection by using sliding signifiers and associative word choices. In *Partial Additives*, Paul Dutton shows the associative properties of signifiers, through single-letter changes in words. For example, in a one-line piece called “Patricide,” Dutton places the *e* in the word *dead* in parentheses, thus giving the reader the visual effect of the two words *dead* and *dad* together: “Patricide / d(e)ad.” In another example, Dutton uses the same form, “Trauma / scar(r)ed,” associating “scarred” and “scared” with “trauma” through visual association of the literal words. His work shows the multiplicity of language through reader interpretation with word associations. In my poems “shallow water,” “actor” and “morphine” (18-19), the titles give context to their word combinations through visual association. The three words together visually offer a logistical connection for the reader. bpNichol’s poem “probable systems” provides visual associations (words containing AR) to demonstrate the aural changes when letters are added to different words:

AR
 eAR
 ARt
 heAR
 heARt
eARth
 AR (bpNichol 289)

“probable systems” explicitly shows the reader how the letter-combination AR changes in pronunciation when combined with different letters. The way the AR sounds in *hear* is different when a *t* is added at the end of the word to make *heart*: visually, the words are similar, but they are phonetically very different; the same happens with *ear* and *art*. My piece “downpour” (22) demonstrates the effect of recurring letters to create words. “downpour” is a poem that deconstructs the word *depression* and discovers how language works through its rudimentary pieces: morphemes and phonemes. As the words are connected through their building-blocks, so is the content; depression becomes a visual signifier for *deep*, *pressed*, *rest*, *prisoned*, and *disposed*.

Another two of my pieces, “over say” (21) and “afterthought” (24), show how words of sympathy and consideration eventually become mundane and blurred when repeated and overused. Even though the forms differ between the two pieces, they both illustrate how the words are experienced. In “over say” the phrases seem to be protruding out of the speech bubble to suggest the concentrated repetition of sympathetic speech. Occasionally a reader makes out some of the words and phrases such as *feel better* and *get well soon*. The words become unrecognizable because of the overlapping effect. Hopefully, the reader also considers how this chaotic collection of sympathetic phrases would sound – jumbled and overwhelming. In “afterthought,” I broke up the words in different places which represents the ways a recipient would hear these sentimental messages after a traumatic event; the form mimics the reception. “afterthought” analyses the typical language of consolation. The words reconstruct themselves and fall apart as the poem progresses. This represents the instability of language in its delivery and interpretation. As the words decrease in size line by line, their relevance, and importance, also diminish. The

receiver would perhaps trust the sincerity of these sympathetic words at the start, but their repetitiveness would cause them to lose their impact. The last couple of phrases become an eye-sore which reflects how they would feel on hearing them after an exhausting storm of condolences. The difference in form between “over say” and “afterthought” is important because the situations are different. In “over say” the speaker is consoling while in “afterthought” the listener is suffering the loss; the forms adjust to how each individual is affected and how they would experience sadness.

III. *Influencing Readerly Interpretation of Found Poetry*

The third style I use in this manuscript is found poetry. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* defines the found poem as “the presentation of something ‘found’ in the environment...as a lineated text and hence a poem, or the incorporation of a prior text into a larger poetic structure” (Preminger 423). Examples of texts used in found poetry could come from other authors’ works, newspaper clippings, a map, paintings or photographs. Found poetry is used in Ezra Pound’s *The Cantos* which is an unfinished long poem consisting of 116 cantos and includes letters, bank and government documents, and poems by other authors. William Carlos Williams’s *Paterson* (1946) also uses found texts, as does James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (Preminger 423). I use this technique in my “Anatomy of Melancholy” (25) where each line takes the first line of another author’s poem that includes the word *melancholy* in the parent text’s title. The creative process of “Anatomy of Melancholy” was inspired by “Elegy Written in a City Cemetery” (81) by Sina Queyras. Her poem alludes to Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Writing in a Country Churchyard” (1751) and only includes lines from other author’s works whose

titles contain elegies and death. Queyras manipulates the lines slightly to fit her prose poem. My lines however, stay true to the original parent text.

Readers interpret a piece of literature differently when given context as opposed to when the work stands alone. For example, when poetry is set against other works with similar tones the reader could interpret the poems together; each piece will influence the interpretation of the other. Due to proximity, a reader might understand the poems as having similar perspectives and interpret them as complementary pieces. This is true in “zero to one hundred: how do you feel?” (27). This poem uses text originating from a website – an outside source – designed to offer colour combinations for wall paint and interior design. One combination is “avocado yellow pepper aqua blue tomato” (29); in this example, I took the colours from the webpage, which were in a vertical list form, and recombined the words into poetic lines while leaving out punctuation to avoid distinguishing where the colours end and begin. Each line is exactly the colour combination offered from the website. Although the content of this poem is found text, this poem does not qualify as being found poetry. A found poem is “a piece of writing that was not intended as a poem, but is so declared by its ‘finder’” (Padgett, 79). Since I wish the reader to interpret this poem’s different colour combinations as a kind of mood rating from zero to one hundred rather than a list of wall paint options for interior design, this piece cannot be called a found poem. When placed into the context of the depression-influenced poetry of my thesis, the reader, with a susceptible ‘pallet’, may read the poem with the depression theme in mind. The poem’s placement here might influence the reader’s interpretation of it and provide the text with new meaning. In context with the other works with similar tones, the list of paint pallets becomes a poem about the colourful diversity of mood and

mental states. The colours can represent different experiences to different readers, especially when colours are grouped together to create a mood scape. For example, “overcast warm grey ice glacier blue” (28), this could be interpreted as dull and sullen, but it could also be interpreted as a relaxing combination of colours due to “warm” contrasted with “ice” and “blue” being a relaxing, soft colour. The associations between colour and mood depend on a reader’s interpretation, even more so when objects evoke colour; a lime for instance cannot be considered without also evoking the colour green. This poem offers room for reader interpretation while the colour pallets provide space and a prompt to conjure the answer to “how do you feel?”

A technique that can create a found poem is the technique of erasure. In found poetry, the erasure technique is sometimes applied by removing or blotting out certain words while preserving the spaces they once occupied on the page of the parent text. The resultant text reveals a new poem and can present meaning that was not obvious or even visible before the erasure. Jordan Abel’s *The Place of Scraps* uses one example of the kind of erasure technique emulated in my collection. *The Place of Scraps* is a collection of erasure poems derived from archives about Indigenous Peoples histories written by Marius Barbeau, a 20th century ethnographer – these archives are the parent texts. When convinced that the First Nations cultures were disappearing, Barbeau bought totem poles and potlatch items from struggling communities and sold them to museums in order preserve their culture. In attempt to *save* the Indigenous Peoples cultures from disappearing, Barbeau played a role in its erasure. Abel took selections of the parent texts and removed words in such a way that the remaining words read as passages on their own as seen below:

This story

is a secret

I have been inside of

(Abel, 179)

Abel's erasure of Barbeau's text brought out the "story" that had been hiding "inside of" the ethnographer's limited understanding of Indigenous Peoples. Abel's erasure technique gives a fresh perspective to the Indigenous Peoples histories.

I executed the erasure technique in my work, "Q & A" (31), using *The American Psychiatric Association* website. The answers were taken from the questions-and-answers section on Depression and Bipolar Disorders. In these pieces most of the texts have been completely erased while the parent text's original spacing has been retained. The resulting found poems differ greatly from the parent texts. The resulting poems offered some parallels between each other. The narrative of the eels exists in 1 and 9, and 4 and 8 both reference a treat: these connections suggest continuity. The contrasting "mood" and "mania" in 2 mirrors the ebb and flow of the ocean in 3; 5, 6 and 8 work with temporal shifts which suggest fluidity in time - present compared to future. Question 7's distinguishing qualities, as it stands alone, mirror the disjunction within itself: the word *yes* is evoked but dismantled, being synthesized and reconstructed which could be a possible "side effect" of being the unique question. "Note" (1) is another found poem in my collection and is the product of applying the erasure technique to Anne Sexton's poem, "Suicide Note" (see Appendix 101-3). "Note" is comparable to "Q & A" through technique as well as through similar subjects such as patterns of fluidity and limbless creatures. "Note" works with subjects like worms, snakes, bodies of water, and temporal shifts

between past, present and immediate future. As in “Q & A,” the resultant text in “Note” hardly resembles the parent text, but both erasure poems interestingly resemble one another. Depression is the subject of both the parent texts, and after the erasure technique, the subjects remain similar. I would argue this similarity is caused by my own state of mind while creating these poems. The subjects that manifested in the final product were what I focused on and wanted to bring attention to. This technique offered access into the mental state and thought patterns of the author: myself.

My longer poem, “Sad to see you again” (35), does something similar to the erasure poetry in terms of giving the reader access to my thought patterns. This poem was created using predictive text – an input technology which allows a device – a cell phone in this case – to access the user’s database and *learn* how the user generally formulates language patterns: the device learns how the user writes. After one word is typed the device will offer three words that most likely follow according to the device’s *memory*. This technique is significant because the resultant text reflects how the device holder uses language most commonly through patterns. Personality and mood can be exposed through the language one uses, so the mental state of the user can be imitated by the device through the text patterns. The line breaks in “Sad to see you again” follow the device’s original line breaks. The effect is ambiguity in the lines which is an invitation to pursue a close reading and discover the personality and mood behind the chosen word combinations. The line breaks and capitals at the beginning of each line insists on disjunction and forces a slower reading, or possibly a re-reading, of each line giving the reader a greater opportunity to conjure meaning.

IV. *Exposure through Confessionalism*

The fourth style I use in this manuscript is confessional poetry. The term ‘confessional’ was first given impetus in 1959 through Robert Lowell’s book of poetry, *Life Studies*, which focuses on a poet’s personal experiences both mental and physical (Abrams 62). Confessionalism, stated by M.L. Rosenthal, “should be considered not as a prescriptive formula held by any one group but as a general permission felt by most poets [...] to treat personal experience, even in its most intimate and painful aspects” (Preminger 61). Confessional poetry focuses on an individual’s experience and usually pertains to private themes such as physical and mental health, thoughts of suicide, feelings of sexuality and drug use. Authors such as Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Allen Ginsberg, and John Berryman wrote confessional poetry in the 50s and 60s. A work that inspired my confessional poetry is Anne Sexton’s *All My Pretty Ones*. Sexton uses the ‘I’ in her poem “The Addict” (*Live or Die*): “I make arrangements for the pint-sized journey. / I’m the queen of this condition. / I’m an expert on making the trip/ and now they say I’m an addict” (Sexton 85). I adopt this technique in “among the sea-scum and recyclables” (43) to allow the reader access to the speaker in a more personal and representative way by using the first-person pronoun: “I spend/ this Sunday morning,” “I wonder if my father,” and “Will I/ peak out.” Just like the confessional poets, this piece deals with personal issues – in this case, the contemplation of a suicidal person.

My confessional poems are narrative and apply an honest and personable voice and tone to the speakers. In “it’s not that I want to be remembered” (49), I take the fear about death and being forgotten, a personal as well as social anxiety, and use absurdly infinite timespans to suggest an ‘appropriate’ amount of time that one should be remembered after

death. The speaker settles for the intensity of the aftermath rather than duration: the magnitude of an earthquake rather than temporal infinity. The seriousness of impending dread is undercut at the end with the line “would be nice” as if the speaker is no longer apprehensive about being forgotten. The speaker’s casual attitude – “would be nice” – contrasts with the angst to be remembered shown by the detail in each timespan, however absurd. The result is humorous because of how uncomfortable and real this fear is.

In my confessional poems, there is contrasting imagery between dark and light, life and death, heft and weightlessness. I wish to display the contradictory nature of the mind when experiencing depression. In “handsome” (50), perception and reality seem at odds. The speaker is suggesting that although one may perceive her one way, she is in fact the opposite and warns *you* not to be deceived. Heaviness versus hollowness is another contrast in this work. I aim to illustrate a weakened disposition by suggesting that the hollowness represents spent energy. Even when there is nothing more than dust off her bones to give, the speaker says, “take what you can / but don’t be deceived / i am heavy but hollow” (50). Contrast can be noted in “mothers hold their babies dearer” (42) as well. In the first stanza, a wealthier neighbourhood is set against a downtown city street in terms of how the ground would taste. The street under a neon sign would have been exposed to a multitude of things compared to a freshly paved sidewalk of a wealthier neighbourhood. Although one would seem obviously more desirable than the other, I value the less desirable option to off-set the expectations of the poem from the start. A warm and homely familial setting becomes what is desired rather than the poised and placed family pictures.

V. *Stream-of-Consciousness: Exposure through Associations*

The fifth style in *Personal Immunization Record* uses the stream-of-consciousness technique. The term stream-of-consciousness, as used in literature, describes an uninterrupted flow of thoughts, feelings, expectations, memories, and desires of a character or narrator in a work. This type of speech, also known as introspection or interior monologue, reflects the character's unconscious associations and perceptions of events and displays his/her awareness to the reader. Interior monologue can be described as "the exact presentation of the process of consciousness" (Abrams 380) but must be translated into literary form as thoughts are sometimes indescribable. The term stream-of-consciousness was first used in 1890 by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* to describe "the unbroken flow of perceptions, memories, thoughts and feelings in the waking mind" (Abrams 380). The unconscious mind can be illustrated on the page with this technique which records immediate mental associations and personal interpretation. In the nineteenth-century, classic writers like Jane Austen presented readers with characters who articulate a moral sense of self in their sections of free indirect discourse – a third-person narration that offers the thoughts and feelings of the character with a first-person essence. Elizabeth Bennet, in *Pride and Prejudice*, is given the opportunity to freely vocalize her inner thoughts out loud for the reader to gain access to her feelings.

In the twentieth century, reality was given a place in the private, subconsciousness of the individual self. Both Irish author James Joyce, who wrote *Ulysses* (1922), and Virginia Woolf, who wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) uses the stream-of-consciousness technique in their novels. According to David Lodge, there are two staple techniques for representing consciousness. The first is interior monologue "in which the grammatical

subject of the discourse is an ‘I’, and [readers] overhear the character verbalizing his or her thoughts as they occur” (Lodge, 43). The first-person point of view is used in this style. The second, is the previously mentioned free indirect style that “renders thought as reported speech (in the third person, past tense) but keeps to the kind of vocabulary that is appropriate to the character, and deletes some of the tags, like ‘she thought’ ...etc.” (43). Woolf’s displays the latter in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*:

Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer’s men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning – fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf (1925)

In this excerpt above, the omniscient narrator speaks about Clarissa in third person and, through free indirect discourse, gives the reader access to her mind. Free indirect discourse is also seen in the second sentence “For Lucy had her work cut out for her” when the narrative focus is moved “into the character’s mind by...omitting an intrusive authorial tag” (Lodge 44). In my poem, “what is the consistency of depression?” (55-56), I use the first style mentioned by Lodge – interior monologue:

when I eat,
does the sound of my chewing
indicate that I have it?
my swallowing?

the flavour of cheese
powder I put on
my popcorn?

the texture
 of clothes I wear?
 the ones I don't?
 the books I read? (55-56)

The presence of the first-person point of view exhibits my flow of thoughts as they happen rather than if the thoughts had been calculated and finessed. There is a rawness to untamed streams of thought.

David Lodge argues that stream-of-consciousness offers a reader “access to the inner lives of other human beings, even if they are fictions” (42). I give the reader access to my inner thoughts, expectations, and associations by using the stream-of-consciousness technique in poems using the last style. My final pieces show how one idea, or image, can influence a multitude of new ones which, in turn, influence more until there is a pattern showing how signs and signifiers resemble a thought network. Susceptibility to word associations is apparent in “dealing” (65). The poem’s first line offers a computer game paired with a snack sliding around a plate, then the scene is interrupted with a phone call. The reader can assume that the person on the other line is *nosey* as that word follows the beginning of the phone call. The following words comprise a list: *noise*, *noose*, *loose*, and *moose*. These words are related to each other both visually and sonically. The positioning of the words as they descend downwards in a stair-like way complements the *sliding* signifiers. The next phrase is “bathroom break / what can I take?” which suggests that the speaker needs a break. The position of the phrase also *breaks* the stream of word association. This poem uses list forms to illustrate word associations; for example, the list of cleaning supplies starting with “Palmolive” and “Pine Sol” under “I need to buy.” Word

association continues throughout this poem right up to the last section that starts “D/istraction” which breaks off from the list of *did you means*. Having the next section start out with a *d i s* was intentionally made to look like a typing error from the repeated *d i d* – as the *s* is right next to the *d* on the keyboard it makes the mistaken typo look realistic and *distracting*.

Another poem of mine that uses the stream-of-consciousness technique is “how to be taken seriously” (73) which is a reciprocating question-and-answer kind of conversation. The answers sometimes connect with the questions they follow. Readers can read this piece both vertically and horizontally, and the phrases occasionally work either way. For example, reading vertically: “I have pneumonia” / “agreed and that is when everyone gets sick too!” / “how are you feeling today?” And reading horizontally: “don’t read it”/ “I already wrote it.” The disconnect between the questions and answers portrays the fluidity of thought – the mind makes associations sinuously rather than linearly allowing thoughts to venture where they may. The rapid subject changing in the poem mirrors how the mind makes associations, offering connections only occasionally. These snippets of coherence are more satisfying because of their scarcity in the work. I use the stream-of-consciousness technique in “blue like you” (62) – a representation of accumulated ‘thoughtful’ advice and encouragement from the speaker who believes s/he is helping a person suffering from depression. The unrelenting speech suggests that the speaker thinks s/he knows what is best for the person suffering. In the first section, the speaker is advising the *you* to get help as if help comes simply by asking for it. The third section is the only section that doesn’t have contractions because it is the only one that indicates progress in the *you* character from the perspective of the speaker. In this third

section, the speaker has become more cautious to not trigger the *you* again – the language is more formal and vigilant. Grammatical contractions re-appear when the speaker notices the return of depression.

My essay has explored how depression can manifest itself through the different poetry styles used in *Personal Immunization Record* by demonstrating the mind while coping with depression. The topic of mental illness is important to acknowledge considering how prevalent, but how silenced, neglected and misrepresented it is in our society. Carol T. Mowbray and Mark C. Holter argue that, compared to 1976, “mental health and illness issues appear to be coming ‘out of the closet’, although acceptance, funding, treatment, and prevention are still far from resolved...” (Mowbray 137). Depression is classified as “a common and serious medical illness” according to the American Psychiatric Association. Despite the commonality and seriousness of this mental illness, not enough attention and recognition has been allotted to it as there is still a negative stigma that creates boundaries between the binarily ‘normal’, healthy people, and the marginalized, mentally ‘ill’. Even though mental health is becoming more of a priority with Suicide Prevention Awareness Week, and Bell Let’s Talk, and television shows like *13 Reasons Why* to promote awareness, our society still cringes from the topic of mental illness. The way to break the negative stigma is to normalize the “unnormal,” and to reimagine what it means to have a mental illness and disability in an ableist society. Not only does this thesis offer its readership different ways to think about depression, it also forces readers to think about the illness which opens it up for conversation. The very act of reading or thinking about depression, and how it can relate to the readership, is the first

step in its normalization. Exhibiting the difficult experiences forces a readership's attention and illustrates the difficulties of someone who suffers from depression or who suffers from depression through a "next-to" identity. This is one goal of my manuscript – to force a kind of transparency through the disability and into the mind of the sufferer; this blurs the lines between the temporarily able-bodied viewer and the person with mental illness to eliminate the socially constructed, disabling stigma.

Recognizing the disabling aspect of mental illness due to the insufficient attention to the illness is a perspective that I would like to further research and pursue in the academic future. A person who suffers from depression is disabled when they are denied proper or timely treatment due to a lack of education from our (mental) health system, or when they, or their family members, are in denial for fear of the stigma associated with mental illness. Depression embodies the properties of both "disease" and "disability," according to Diane Price Herndl's essay "Disease versus Disability." Herndl argues that disability "focuses not on the body but on the social; disability is not something that a person possesses but something one encounters when dealing with other people or with physical spaces that are inaccessible" (Herndl 593). While disease affects someone physiologically, disability is a social hinderance placed on a person by their society. Disability is not synonymous with disease, and it is important not to conflate them, but a person can possess both. I would argue that a person who suffers from depression possesses both disease and disability – physiological and neurological symptoms as well as socially constructed prejudices.

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Appendix

“Suicide Note”, Anne Sexton (1966)

Better,
 despite the worms talking to
 the mare’s hoof in the field;
 better,
 despite the season of young girls
 dropping their blood;
 better somehow
 to drop myself quickly
 into an old room.
 Better (someone said)
 not to be born
 and far better
 not to be born twice
 at thirteen
 where the boardinghouse,
 each year a bedroom,
 caught fire.

Dear friend,
 I will have to sink with hundreds of others
 on a dumbwaiter into hell.
 I will be a light thing.
 I will enter death
 like someone’s lost optical lens.
 Life is half enlarged.
 The fish and owls are fierce today.
 Life tilts backward and forward.
 Even the wasps cannot find my eyes.

Yes,
 eyes that were immediate once.
 Eyes that have been truly awake,
 eyes that told the whole story—
 poor dumb animals.
 Eyes that were pierced,
 little nail heads,
 light blue gunshots.

And once with
a mouth like a cup,
clay colored or blood colored,
open like the breakwater
for the lost ocean
and open like the noose
for the first head.

Once upon a time
my hunger was for Jesus.
O my hunger! My hunger!
Before he grew old
he rode calmly into Jerusalem
in search of death.

This time
I certainly
do not ask for understanding
and yet I hope everyone else
will turn their heads when an unrehearsed fish jumps
on the surface of Echo Lake;
when moonlight,
its bass note turned up loud,
hurts some building in Boston,
when the truly beautiful lie together.
I think of this, surely,
and would think of it far longer
if I were not... if I were not
at that old fire.

I could admit
that I am only a coward
crying me me me
and not mention the little gnats, the moths,
forced by circumstance
to suck on the electric bulb.
But surely you know that everyone has a death,
his own death,
waiting for him.

So I will go now
without old age or disease,
wildly but accurately,
knowing my best route,
carried by that toy donkey I rode all these years,
never asking, "Where are we going?"
We were riding (if I'd only known)
to this.

Dear friend,
please do not think
that I visualize guitars playing
or my father arching his bone.
I do not even expect my mother's mouth.
I know that I have died before—
once in November, once in June.
How strange to choose June again,
so concrete with its green breasts and bellies.
Of course guitars will not play!
The snakes will certainly not notice.
New York City will not mind.
At night the bats will beat on the trees,
knowing it all,
seeing what they sensed all day.

Notes

Each line in “Anatomy of Melancholy” (27) is taken from the first line of each of the following poems respectively:

- 1 John Scott, “ODE XXV. The Melancholy Evening”, 1782
- 2 May Sarton, “Melancholy”, 1994
- 3 Richard Brinsley Sheridan, “29. Melancholy, Friend to Grief”, 1928
- 4 Edmond Gore Alexander Holmes, “To Melancholy. A Moonlit Night in February”, 1879
- 5 John Bethune, “Melancholy”, 1840
- 6 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune Who Abandoned Himself to an Indolent and Causeless Melancholy”, 1796
- 7 Thomas Wade, “IV. A Hymn to Melancholy”, 1835
- 8 Edward Quillinan, “Melancholy”, 1853
- 9 Margaret Cavendish, “Of Melancholy”, 1664
- 10 Mary Robinson, “The Progress of Melancholy, A Fragment”, 1806
- 11 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Lines to a Friend in Answer to a Melancholy Letter”, 1795
- 12 Nathaniel Evans, “To Melancholy”, 1772
- 13 James Gates Percival, “An Ode to Melancholy”, 1859
- 14 Louisa Stuart Costello, “Melancholy”, 1815
- 15 Paul Laurence Dunbar, “Melancholia”, 1993
- 16 Ann Ward Radcliffe, “To Melancholy”, 1816
- 17 Elizabeth Carter, “Ode to Melancholy”, 1762
- 18 George Gillespie, “Lines to Melancholy”, 1843
- 19 Thomas Hood, “Ode to Melancholy”, 1862
- 20 Charles Dibdin, “Melancholy”, 1807
- 21 Beatrice Harmon, “Melancholy”, 1923
- 22 John Norris, “To Melancholy”, 1692
- 23 Henry Charles Beeching, “Melancholia”, 1891
- 24 Benjamin Hawkshaw, “Melancholy”, 1693

Vita Auctoris

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