

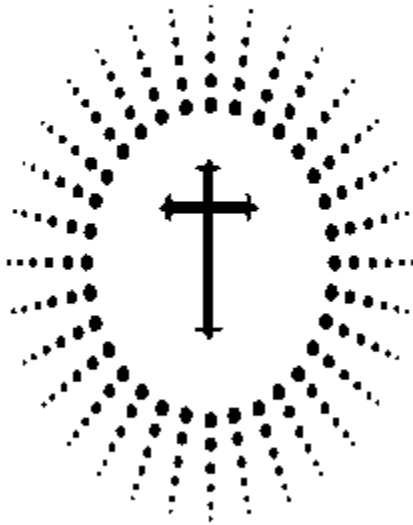
# Poets Against Suicide

Editor  
Larry Sells

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Come out of the darkness  
and walk into the light

# Poet Table

Marge Simon	cover
Introduction	4
Carol MacAllister	5
Cathy Bubruz	16
Gary West	20
Jeremiah Donaldson	22
Nickolaus A. Pacione	26
Nikki Wahner	32
Ruth Mark	38
Samuel Wright	43
Larry Sells	49

## Introduction

The darkness of mental illness can strike anyone at any time. No one is immune to its effects, and the effects can last a lifetime. Mental illness is the number-one reason people become disabled.

Depression and anxiety cripple people everyday. Suicide rates have been steadily rising every year. In fact, suicide affects more than the victim, but also their families. Look at what happened to Ernest Hemingway or Sylvia Plath's families after they committed suicide. Hemingway and Plath suffered from depression before they committed suicide, and their deaths had lasting effects on their families. Ted Hughes, Plath's husband, had to raise their children, Frieda and Nicholas without her. Frieda and Nicholas grew up without knowing their mother. Mariel Hemingway, Ernest Hemingway's grandchild, was born after Ernest had killed himself grew up without knowing him.

People who suffer from mental illness not only lose touch with themselves but also with their families. They believe that their families would be better off if they killed themselves. Instead, their deaths lead the family to think of "what if's" and cause more harm. Other family members may even blame themselves for causing their loved one's death.

Suicide is never the correct answer, for it has lasting effects on the family and the community. Sometimes it looks like the right answer, but that's when people who suffer from depression need to take a few breaths, call someone, and get help, even if they have to admit themselves into the mental ward of a hospital. It's time that, as a society, we turn the tide and help people to seek options other than killing themselves, for there are always other options.

Poets in this poetry anthology create poetry to fight the darkness that's inhabits them. They write about their struggle with depression and suicide through poetry and essay.

**Larry Sells**

## **TAKE TIME**

Take the time caress a rose,  
Bouquets of fragrant flowers,

Blossom on your pathway,  
In quiet, fleeting hours,

Along your earthen walkway,  
Much shorter than you know,

Take the time to nurture them,  
Enjoy their brilliant show.

Take the time to listen clear,  
Hear life's haunting songs,

Move to distant singer's calls,  
Tap your toe before you're gone.

Grasp your partner by the arm  
Share this gift of space,  
Long the time you'll meet again,  
In a different place.

**Carol MacAllister**

**TIGER BY THE TAIL**

Some people say that life is tough  
And from it, do not pale.  
Step forward bravely, face it square,  
Grab the tiger by the tail.

Hold him tightly, whirl him high  
As you stand beneath,  
Keep him moving at arms length  
Beware his claws and teeth.

As he spins he'll have no chance  
To force you back in fear,  
Your strength will grow, you'll be in charge,  
And when your time is near,

Make one last spin and whirl him fast,  
Then free him from your hands,  
He'll whip away to start again,  
Another's when he lands.

**Carol MacAllister**

**LINES OF TIME**

Time calls to you  
To step away,  
Loose out the lines,  
Ones weak with fray.

Some will step fast  
To take your place,  
Pull at the lines,  
Determined face.

What was the plan,  
To stand and hold,  
No lines did move,  
We just grew old.

What was the point,  
To stand and wait,  
We all pulled hard,  
No step, no gait.

We all held firm  
And did not move,  
No gains were made,  
Just filled the grove.

But there were some  
That dropped the line,  
To drink of life  
Like cherished wine.

They danced and sang,  
And chased a dream,  
Stepped out the groove,  
Against the scheme.

To some their deeds,  
Were thought not well,  
Not yours to judge,  
At final knell.

**Carol MacAllister**

**GUILT**

Guilt is the coat he can not shed,  
And those who stitched it tight,  
Add to the weight for their design,  
Regardless of his plight.

While others knowing of his garb  
Reach out to slip it off  
He draws odd comfort from its weight  
And at their help he scoffs.

For some have only guilt to bind  
Them to the ones they need,  
And never do they try to change  
Their garb that others weave.

And many times he lets his guilt  
Destroy and push away,  
The willing ones who reach in love  
Who find it hard to stay.

He alone must shed the guilt  
By growing strong in worth,  
Split wide the seams, the coat will fall,  
As guilt transforms to mirth

**Carol MacAllister**



**YOUR GIFT**

Life offends when I am in your company.

Appreciation for others is a gift you give to me.

I thank you for your sullenness,  
Your silent rebellion against the norm,  
Your indifference to my feelings,  
Your emotional abuse,  
Your excuse to avoid life by hiding in your work.

My smile is gone when you are here,  
But shines more brightly when you are not,

A wonderful gift you have given me,

Independence and the joy of others.

**Carol MacAllister**

**WITH THE GREATER FORCE**

Pale, fragile, solemn,

Momentarily there: then gone.

A body indistinguishable, but familiar

Thrust away its earthly possessions into  
the dark, silent night.

Sad but happy,

Crying, but laughingly

Entered the great escape of beyond.

It walked slowly, but suddenly,

All love, friends, hates and fears ended,

All ended.

The solemn figure drew toward me,  
pacing slowly,

I knew the problems and fears of its life.

Its hopes and ambitions ruined,

Not understanding why.

It did not see me

Standing in the shadows, watching cautiously,

Its every move, every action.

The figure moved closer to the edge.

I wanted to stop it, help it.

I stepped forward.

I paused.

I heard the splash of water.

Ordinary, transformed to unique,

A hopeful release from disappointments and fears,  
An entry into a loving, more meaningful existence.

I pensively watched the figure flow with the waters, a  
lifeless form upon the currents,

Had it rid the emptiness of longing, embraced it's  
desires.

Silently I turned back to my world,  
Haunted by thoughts as I tread unsteadily,  
unsure of tomorrow,

Ever mindful of the  
One so solemn, so frail, so weak,  
One who was shattered by life,  
One,  
No more on that night.

**Carol MacAllister**

**SONG OF ALL SORROW**

With a whoosh,  
like a breathy sigh,  
the bus stops.

A long metal arm opens the door,  
I offer coins,  
My fare is paid.

Indifferent eyes watch me board.

Shuffling down the narrow aisle,  
I steady myself on tattered backrests.

No want for visual intercourse,  
Desire for others is gone,  
Only a downward stare,  
the trip has been made a million times.

Moving slowly,  
I squeeze past lifeless feet and knees,  
to the comfort from a worn out seat.

I nestle back,  
my view - transient rows of faceless heads.

Few join the journey.  
Most leave in silence.

I look to the timeless sky  
through streaked windows,  
the cold evening  
turns a deeper shade of lavender.

Familiar reassurance comes from embracing armrests.

I am here for the night,  
I wait for closure. It does not come.

My heart aches with the song of all sorrow...

Mother, the voices are calling me homeward,  
Calling by day, calling by night,

Mother, my head and heart are too weary,  
Rock me with silence, keep me from fright.

Mother, the voices do tremble my heart beats,  
Cut through my thoughts, razor sharp knives,  
In whispers they moan songs of all sorrow,  
Lamenting their grief from meaningless lives.

Mother, the voices do chide me so cruelly, Sing me to sleep,  
as long ago,  
Reach through the years with comforting cradle,  
Nurse me to wholeness through love that I know.

Mother, the voices are calling me homeward,  
Calling by day, calling by night,  
Mother my head and heart are too weary,  
Rock me with silence, keep me from fright.

**Carol MacAllister**

**GO AWAY**

Little bird who sings all day  
In the highest limbs of our tree,  
Your cheerful, happy songs are heard,  
By a silent one who flees.

Flees from the toil and strife of  
Living life each day,  
Go happy, little singing bird,  
Go bird, go fly away

**Carol MacAllister**

**Carol MacAllister's** bio

Carol MacAllister, MFA, is an award-winning writer of horror/dark fantasy prose and poetry. Over three hundred pieces of Carol's work have published in the UK and US. She has been the featured poet in several magazines and her prose is included in trade paperback collections. Her poetry has received mention twice in the Year's Best Fantasy and Horror. Carol is a past officer of the Garden State Horror Writers, member of Mid-Atlantic Horror Writers, Sisters In Crime and the Cassell Network of Freelance writers.

**In the Cafeteria of the Shady Rest Seniors Complex**

Many years ago, arthritis and senility took their toll.  
Gnarled fingers and a crippled mind.

Sometimes she orders lemon and honey tea, sometimes it's  
scotch on the rocks. More often than not, she asks for cherry  
Kool-Aid with whipped cream and a cherry on top.

In the far corner, a dark stranger watches the toothless  
old woman struggle with a fork and lime Jell-o. He smirks as  
she gums her way through lunch.

Smug with the knowledge that he has roughly fifteen minutes  
to kill, before his collection is ready for pick-up and  
transport to hell, the Grim Reaper orders a slice of apple pie  
ala mode.

**Cathy Bubruz**

**Of Human Bondage**

Every voice, every face  
belongs to a stranger  
including my own...  
...oceans of loneliness too deep to tolerate;

Memories are painful and far too vivid,  
dreams are now in technicolor  
my thoughts faded to black and white...  
...horrific landscapes, I now call home;

Earth beckons  
Starbase 53 will not let me go  
dementia, the only door to escape...  
...penetrating, excruciating mental bondage.

**Cathy Bubruz**



**Creative Deception**

Crimson words  
On ivory parchment  
That pulse and bleed  
Technicolor insanities;

With tainted thoughts  
And antiphonic whispers  
Comes the artistry  
Of a morbid poet.

**Cathy Bubruz**

**Cathy Bubruz's bio**

Canadian poet Cathy Bubruz has written extensively on the topic of insanity because she likes the idea of exploring the mental condition of others. She written stories about asylums, the criminally insane, and lunatics in general. After all, we're all a little tainted in one way or another.



## **The Darkest Hour**

Each night  
before falling asleep  
I take the knife  
and hold it to my wrist  
saying 'It's time, now'  
to slice into my flesh  
end the pain  
the anguish of living under a cloud of despair  
every second of everyday  
not knowing when  
or if  
life will become bearable again  
wondering what I did to deserve this  
'How can I go on?'  
without the love of my daughter  
caring friends  
the hope that things will improve  
that my life will become mine again  
minus the darkness  
the crazy sad thoughts running through my mind  
overwhelming me  
causing me to forget  
to doubt I ever laughed  
enjoyed myself in a meaningful way.

Each night  
before falling asleep  
I take the knife  
and hold it to my wrist  
saying 'One more day.'  
to overcome what has happened to me  
my mind  
my life  
'Just one more day.'  
to look myself in the mirror  
and smile  
a gleam of hope in my eyes  
knowing that in time I'll be able to regain what I've lost  
what I so desperately need  
myself, back into me.

**Gary West**

**Gary West's** bio

A native Coloradoan, Gary West spends his free time writing fiction, poetry and reviews. He has seen his work appear in numerous publications both in print and online including, Lunatic Chameleon, The Dark Krypt, Black Petals, Shadowland, Scared Naked, Horror Quarterly, Electric Velocipede, sidereality, FLASHSHOT: YEAR ONE, DUST DEVIL, SIDE SHOW, DEAD IN TH13TEEN FLASHES, WYRDWORM WOOD, A RAZOR OCEAN, and the forthcoming anthologies, DARK HIGHWAYS, MIND SCRAPS, VINTAGE MOON, and THE WICKED WILL LAUGH.

**Problems and How to Kill Them**

Sometimes problems will weigh you down,  
making it feel as if you will drown.  
They take all your hopes and dreams,  
leaving you just wanting to scream.  
They tug and pull until you are in so deep,  
that all you want is to weep.

Before you know it you are pulled under,  
before their heart you can sunder.  
Kill them without mercy is what you must do,  
then give yourself the credit that you are due.  
For killing a problem makes a great day,  
all you have to do is look away.

Once in a while that just will not work,  
you will not find the answer in any book.  
Sometimes you cannot fight evil face to face,  
you must sneak around and knock it into a daze.  
Discover the cause and you will find,  
a way to erase it from your mind.

**Jeremiah Donaldson**

**The Sound**

Can you hear the sound?  
I can't hear the sound  
That sound that is calling  
Telling us to be free  
And walk into eternity  
Can you hear the sound?  
I want to hear the sound  
The small thin noise  
Of someone speaking  
That I can't understand  
Can you hear the sound?  
I can hear the sound  
The sound of voices calling  
Out of the darkness  
For I am now a part of them

Can you hear the sound?  
I wish you could hear the sound  
It is nothing  
It is forever  
It is peace

**Jeremiah Donaldson**

**Nothing Matters**

Look at me  
Do not turn away  
I know who you are  
I share your pain

Why do we care  
About our lives  
All we do  
Is hold on and cry

"Life is meaningless"  
Is what we say  
To make it easier  
To push our loneliness away

So here we go  
Another day  
The future looks bleak  
Who cares anyway.

**Jeremiah Donaldson**



**Jeremiah Donaldson's** bio

Jeremiah "Jerry" Donaldson is a 27 year old writer from Kentucky that has lived in Florida for several years. He and his girlfriend have a daughter, a son, and a rabbit. Presently, he works three jobs, but has managed to work on new material, a novel and second poetry collection will be coming soon.

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Mental illness for me was a struggle that started at the age of 22 when I lived in Mason City, IA. It was a subject that wasn't talked about that much in the home when I lived in Grendale Heights though it was something that I thought about often when I explored the content of my writing in the early years because of my diagnosis of having ADHD. The bipolar diagnosis came into play when I was on my own in a city where I knew almost no one. Where everyone knew everyone but still had the anonymous tensions.

The church I was involved with at that time made me feel like an outcast because of my diagnosis, and this was about the time when the Columbine shootings hit. I got blamed for this when I had nothing to do with it. I got blamed for it for one reason, I wrote gothic horror fiction. What led up to my nervous breakdown when the state accused me of child abuse, and I wouldn't have done such a thing. Writing was my way out of depression, but at the same time I still struggle with the damned illness. Suicide was something I was no stranger to because someone I knew from another congregation died by her own hand, then years later one of my readers did by her own hand so I wrote this poem for her.

I used a lot of my darkness to express the horrors I face with the mental illness and losing my son, and that was more the reason why I want to become published with my work—giving him a way to find his father that he would have never come to know. This poem is one I wrote a while back titled "In Memoriam." There were a few people who got to see the poem before I sent it for it was publishing in this book. Joseph Armstead told me that I did a strong last gift for the reader. I won't mention her name here because I don't want to put her family in a lot of old grief. Then the second poem in this set was one I wrote for a sequel a colleague of mine got blamed for when he had nothing to do with it so in precession to this poem would be "Death of Jester 11."

**Nickolaus A. Pacione**

**"IN MEMORIAM"**

in prayers of shadow and life  
hours leade of the final breath  
in the mind of those in fall  
among the souls that create a wall  
beneath the memories and death  
that we become in the final  
that become the birth of seven  
that be in the fires of hell  
and the gates of the forgotten heaven  
death of those who come falling down  
memories that break with the crown  
from the shadows of death and life,  
the path of the valley of death  
I -- the one who stares at the unknown  
the dreams that walk among the Nile,  
fallen before the hands of God,  
when they all realized,  
all in death that become  
nor I -- become among the place of dying  
that becomes the lie of fears  
which become the escape of the future  
that we refuse to say or speak,  
from memories, we cast to fall,  
cast down from prayers of silence  
from writings created upon the walls  
from an absentee God we continue to seek  
where He looks down and laughs  
observing like he doesn't care,  
into the gathering of the lie of our years,,  
the lie that becomes what we live,  
from the life we can no longer give,  
beneath the salvation of empty skies,  
dwelling among the place of God,  
fallen before the lies of the truth,  
damned by all time of my shadow of youth,  
gathered in the times where we begin,  
that becomes our demise within our sins.  
from the all that fallen before the eyes of God,  
in the becoming of the shadow of prayers  
among the obituaries of the unpenned  
become the memory of the unsound mind,  
that become among the forlorn pages,  
as which becomes inked in the journal of the blind, which all  
leads to the echo of the final end,

**Nickolaus A. Pacione**

**DEATH OF A JESTER II**

could you tell me of the crucified jester,  
could you tell me of the haunted dreams,  
or of the nightmare screams before he died,,  
among the broken words, bleeding  
in the writings of the Gothic Preacher,  
in the minds of the crucified teachings,,  
close their eyes to them to obey, for them to obey,  
can you tell me of the dreams before the jester,  
the dreams before the jester had died,  
another crucified contradiction, another lie spoken,  
blackening, all that would be in their minds,  
walked away they stand poisoned,

the words that would be spoken of the second death,  
the nightmares written of the born again demise,,,  
they would close their eyes for the empty salvations  
unless they would see the death of the jester too,,  
coming to them which they would gaze at the mirror,,  
waiting for the teachings, waiting for the beatings,,

sewn their eyes closed to obey,  
that they would give their money and pray,  
salvation in thy saving grace -- would be denied,,,  
another bleeding, another judgment day,,,  
take the words spoken upon the death of the jester,,  
which they would be asleep in God's eyes,,,

closing their blind eyes in their demise,,,  
that when they walk away, when they fall unto to ground,,  
from all that would be left unsaid,  
all that would be caving in, from the sins of Christianity,,  
among their words of the empty promises,,,

**Nickolaus A. Pacione**

**Years Standing Still**

I'm the darkness that closes all the doors,  
The madness wandering within the floors,  
All that things that a religious mind speaks clear  
The control of madness and dwindling fears  
The darkness of the mind constantly running still,  
The hell living in what the self tends to kill,

The madness that dwells within the soul,  
The place where God had lost His control,  
The years of when the shadow loudly screams,  
The horrors within the madness of the dreams,  
Becoming the end of all lingering eternities,  
Waiting for the beginning of a dark infinity,

I'm the darkness that closes all the doors,  
The madness wandering within the floors,  
Everything in the end that closing in the withers  
The beginning of the fade madness of dying winters,  
And dwelling in the years coming in the hereafter,  
Within the mind and bottles staring at oneself,  
The personality within the pills, darkness holding still,

Chanting voices for the coming funerals  
Of the past of mind that long has died,  
All the criminals within my memories had came  
Among the following of the premature burials,  
After all that followed among the passing years  
That become from the death of the becoming fears,  
Following from a silence of the years standing still,  
As they march within the halls of a foreshadowed will,  
Memories commemorating the funeral, years of ill,  
Chanting in the silence of whispers, silence of tomorrow,

After the years of the dying faith that past,  
I am the shadow of a foresaken last,  
Blacker from the eyes left to remain,  
All that doesn't heal from the pain,  
Becoming from the reminders, years standing still,  
All of the things that came to pass,  
Hallowed eyes that become from the eyes of death,  
Depths within the eyes and torment of the mind  
Haunting me from the eyes turning blind,  
Following closely the passion of the lie,  
When they come in the lines, closer they get to dying...

Ticking of the clock one hears,  
The voices greeting them as a darkness falls,  
The failure of a God looking down,  
Waiting when no one hears their prayers,  
In the illness seen by the thinning hairs,  
Awaiting every fate before the dying air,

**Nickolaus A. Pacione**

**Nickolaus A. Pacione's bio**

About the author, Nickolaus Pacione is the author of multiple short stories and poems, he started out doing spoken word in DuPage County but went on to writing full on dark horror. He's appeared on The House of Pain, The Temple of Dagon, took part in 2001 at a Twilight Tales where he read his infamous short story, Carnival of Carpathia. He's one that got a few mixed reactions with various projects of his. The things he's self-published are Collectives In A Foresaken Landscape, and TABLOID PURPOSES, then he's recently published on an anthology called REALITY CHECK. He's now the co-editor of The House of Pain, and staff writer on the disabled themed horror website, Wheels of Terror. His work can be found on <http://nickolaus.diary-x.com>. He's been writing since the age of 14, and graduated high school in 1994 -- which makes him 28 at the time of being published with this anthology and Reality Check. He's established himself writing the Cthulhu Mythos.

**Day-dreams**

I am in class day-dreaming.  
My homework becomes my wrist.  
My pen turns into a razor.  
Spots of blood appear on my desk.  
The teacher calls on me.  
I look down and realized  
that it wasn't a dream.  
See what you made me do.  
I hate you!

**Nikki Warhner**



**Help**

Thank you for trying to help me,  
I am getting the best help possible.  
I wish you were here.  
Because of what I did to myself,  
I'm alone in the dark.  
I'll see you again someday...  
I hope.

**Nikki Wahner**

**My Promise**

Roses are red, violet are blue.  
I hate me, I hate you.  
I wish I could die.  
If you don't leave me alone,  
I'll kill myself.  
I have a razor on my wrist.  
I just need some anger for me  
to start pushing down.  
Give me all you got, I'm ready.

**Nikki Wahner**

**My apology**

I am sorry I left you.  
I'm sorry I did wrong.  
I'm receiving help now,  
so you don't have  
to worry about me.

**Nikki Wahner**

**My Problem**

I pop, and pop, and pop.  
You've been there  
and heard about it.  
You have tried to take them away.  
Nothing helps; I do it because of you.  
If you stop pissing me off,  
I might stop, but I don't think so.  
If I get myself in the hospital,  
I'll blame you!  
I need help with my problem.

**Nikki Wahner**

**Nikki Wahner's** bio

Nikki Wahner is a high school student at Dike and New Hartford Community School. This is the first time her poetry has been published.

**Below the surface**

Waiting, just below the veneer  
of the now, ready, willing  
to take back the reigns  
steer back to the precipice  
blackness - just a heartbeat away.

I remember the void well  
feel its silky web wrap my arms  
up in its cardigan, easy to slip  
there again if I let myself  
embrace the suffocating cotton  
that is depression, allow  
the tendrils to choke my will  
motivation blanketed out of me  
slowly, clutching down the years.

The past never truly dead  
waits for me in the cracks of my mind  
the small hours grasping  
bony fingers seeking to pull me  
back down the never-ending well.  
I ache for equilibrium  
a shift back to more solid ground  
know its there, elusive -  
just below the surface of the now.

**Ruth Mark**

**Why?**

A golden-haired boy  
Dirty round the mouth  
From rascality. A photo  
My brother, small, in the new bin  
His friend grinning, lid in his hand  
Both, posing for the camera.  
Twenty years later, the boy  
Now a man, with prison time  
And needle marks on his arms  
Hanging in his garage.  
Suicide a shock, a reality  
When it claims someone you know.  
Sure, you read about it  
But it's somehow 'not real'  
Words on a page  
Epitaphs on a granite stone  
The despair not part of  
This world, this life  
Your life. But it creeps up  
Grabs you like an ivy twist  
When it happens to someone you know.  
Reading Plath it's abstract  
Somehow.  
Flashbacks to hazy summers  
My brother and his golden friend  
Superimpose now - adult-child-  
Child always in sweaty  
Fearful dreams.  
His wasted body  
Going into the Social, eyes  
Unseeing, pallor green-gray  
Drowning in an ocean of embarrassment  
Pain evident.  
What was he thinking  
In his last moments  
Hoisting the rope to the rafters?  
Opportunities not taken?  
His parents' disappointment?  
No way out?  
And when he kicked the stepladder  
Out from under him  
Did he see stars?  
Flashbacks of better days  
Still-frames of time gone?  
Did it have to come to this  
This mindless hell

Of nothing, no future  
No one left to listen  
To care?

The desperation, the loneliness  
All ears lost in his  
Death wish, his self-annihilation.  
But I remember  
My brother and the golden boy  
Chasing each other over the fields  
Whooping, laughing, looking for mischief,  
And now one is gone  
The sadness of it engulfs me  
Relief too - it wasn't my brother  
And the overriding emptiness  
The realization -  
Nobody was there for him.

**Ruth Mark**



**The Moment Passed**

Standing staring into the  
muddy swirl, the dark  
black bottomless river  
that night, thinking  
why me? Why this  
endless struggle  
with loneliness? Thinking -  
all I have to do  
is put one foot  
in front of the other  
walk straight ahead.  
So simple, the currents  
would have sucked me  
into their womb  
in an instant.

That night, for a  
moment, the Mississippi  
seemed like a grand  
river to claim me.  
Then, the moment  
passed. I tilted my  
chin and confronted the full moon.  
Wondered - 'How many others?'

**Ruth Mark**

**Ruth Mark's** bio

Ruth Mark is a licensed psychologist, poet and editor. She's Irish but currently lives in The Netherlands where she teaches undergraduates about the workings of the brain. Her work has been published in diverse print and web venues including *Riviera Reporter*, *Dakota House Journal*, *Poems Niedergasse*, *Midnight Minds*, *Snakeskin*, *Wicked Alice*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, *Poetry Superhighway* and many more. She has her own website at: [www.remark.be](http://www.remark.be)

**Driftwood**

The river has crested  
Returning now  
To a safer level  
Signs of its rising  
Line the banks, cold  
All but forgotten  
Driftwood took the chance  
Riding the raging current  
Heedless of the risks  
Knowing only the joy  
In freedom's rush  
Abandoned on the rocks now  
Would it have chosen  
To tempt the rapids  
Knowing what Fate had in mind  
For its' final destination?  
Yes,  
I believe so.

**Samuel Wright**

**Soulset**

I go to meet the sunrise tomorrow  
For I need a shield from the sorrow  
I know must come to me at sunset  
A fate that seeks, but holds not yet

While noble Sol keeps vigil in the sky  
Safe I'll be and give no desp'rate cry  
Though I take my last breath on this shore  
Happiness here I shall see never more

Loathe I am to leave my place of birth  
Where I found love and joy and guiltless mirth  
But this choice I made, though none was mine  
Biting sweet fruit but tasting bitter rind

Oh Golden Orb, continue your ascent  
Let your rise be true and be not bent  
Do not fall upon my weary head  
Let not the day join the list of dead

What a fool I am to think like this  
While I ponder thus your path I miss  
Intent you are to set down on me  
As darkness comes the blind will see

My vision blurs and tired pulse quickens  
The tide, it rises as pink air thickens  
No more will I see the light this day  
Who will bear my vagabond soul away?

**Samuel Wright**

**The Rising Tide**

The water is rising  
I don't know how to stop it  
The beach is gone now  
The shoreline grows closer  
How do I halt time,  
Inevitability?  
You can face the rising tide  
Pray it recedes  
Or be drown in it.  
The other choice  
The wise course of action  
The unthinkable choice  
Is to turn away  
Force your feet to move  
In the opposite direction.  
This is the path you chose  
But now that I see your wisdom  
It is too late for me  
For the water is unforgiving  
And I stand in the center  
Of an ever-shrinking island.

**Samuel Wright**

**I Lay In Bed**

I lay in bed so that I may whisper  
To the growing shadows as they linger  
What secrets do they know?  
What secrets will they show?  
What do they see of the growing danger?

I lie awake though I do not wish to  
Dreaming of creatures I thought I once knew  
What dangers did they know?  
What dangers have they shown?  
What will they say if my fears prove untrue?

I lay myself down so that I may sleep  
The voices I hear do cause me to weep  
What truths do they know?  
What truths will they show?  
What will they ask of for my soul to keep?

**Samuel Wright**

**One Last Sin**

I am not the angel  
That smiled in the cradle  
I am just a simple man  
Who would be now damned

The things I have done  
In the name of pure fun  
Many would name wrong  
To Hell I'd be not long

Now closes in the darkness  
On the naked, lonely carcass  
Who has lost his only Light  
And so lost his will to fight

No meaning has this life  
Without her to name my wife  
And this life that was a gift  
Is not worth the sand I sift

So if the demon I must face  
For sins I've used to win this race  
Then what is one more mortal sin  
Open the vein, let the dark come in.

**Samuel Wright**

**Samuel Wright's bio**

I am a 40 year-old divorced father of two. I was born and raised in Dubuque, IA. I spent ten years in the US Navy as an electrician. After leaving the Navy I moved back to Dubuque to settle down and start a career. I moved from job-to-job while attending the University of Dubuque, where I won a creative writing award for an original short-story.

I had a brief bout with depression in 2000 when my marriage ended. Writing and a close friend helped me through the darkest times. Because of that time in my life I am now able to recognize when the darkness closes in, and I'm able to fight it back. In 2002 I became a Certified Nurses Aide, and although it does not pay as well as an electrician, I find the work extremely rewarding.

I moved to Waterloo, IA, in '04, but will be moving back to Dubuque later this year.



## **My Madness**

Voices inside my head order me to kill myself.  
I sit in the mental ward reading Howl  
written by Allen Ginsberg. I fear the darkness  
of the shadows as they dance on the wall.

I know madness and insanity.  
Words dance around me, I shake my head  
and try to focus on the poetry  
of another dead poet. Ginsberg  
words shock society as people

discover the power of art.  
Ginsberg and friends drink liquor and write  
what is on their mind between bouts  
of depression. I write  
about my insanity and madness.

In the mental ward, I write on tablets  
since spiral notebooks are outlawed.  
The wire that holds the notebook together  
can be used for homicide and suicide.  
My mind forms words as my pen goes across the page.

I know madness and insanity  
as I grit my teeth and wait  
for my drugs to work removing  
the voices and feelings of dread.

Ginsberg and I discover Arthur Rimbaud's  
poetry and find the symbolism interesting  
and attempt to use it in our poetry.  
Howl changes the world and the face  
of literature. Obscenity trials discover that  
Howl isn't obscene. People  
battle over what they think is  
right and what is wrong. Society  
continues as new books emerge  
onto the bookstores' shelves.

I know madness and insanity  
as voices tell me to kill  
myself. I sit in the mental ward

writing poetry removing my need  
to commit suicide. My mind  
briefly leaves our reality

and forms a dream. I see Allen Ginsberg,  
Jack Kerouac, and Neal Cassidy  
sitting at a table drinking hard liquor  
and passing a couple of marijuana joints.  
A cloud of white smoke floats then

manufactures their tombstones. They take  
their words and create something new.  
I hear their voices as I discover my  
own style. I write poetry on tablets  
because I know madness and insanity.

**Larry Sells**

**Depression Cocoon**

I'm in a cocoon of pure darkness enclosed  
in black webs. I can't move nor think.  
Chrysalis hardens and drains me  
of happiness. I see only darkness  
for light can't penetrate  
the cylinder of hopelessness. Shadows  
surround me as I shiver from fear.  
Charon grins and drags me  
closer to the River of Death. I'm helpless  
as tears flow down my cheeks. I see my tomb,  
and its darkness encircles me.  
I die entombed forever in despair.

**Larry Sells**

**Syringe of Death**

I'm alone inside my apartment watching TV.  
A form made of darkness twist like a tornado.  
It becomes solid and resembles a needle  
and a syringe. The sharp needle enters  
my arm, and I scream out in agony. The plunger  
ejects death into my arm. My soul and body  
separates. The poison flows  
through my bloodstream. I become intoxicated  
and drowsy. My body relaxes as the chemicals  
destroy my brain and heart. I close my eyes,  
stop breathing. A small syringe falls  
from the large one. The large syringe disappears  
leaving only the small hypodermic needle lying  
next to my chair. My death resembles a suicide.

**Larry Sells**

## **Living in Darkness**

Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, Edgar Allan Poe, and I have one thing in common. I'm a poet who suffers from mental illness and depression. I am a survivor.

The darkness started when I was a teenager and living in New Hartford, IA. After an argument with some of my friends, I went home and slit my wrists. I consider myself lucky that the knife I used was dull and only made a welt on my wrists. It was only the first time that I tried to kill myself and my first experience with depression.

I spent time in Saint Francis, now Covenant, mental ward, not only fighting depression but anger. It was an anger that nearly consumed me. With help from the hospital and from God, I learned to control my anger.

People look at me everyday, but they can not see that I am suffering from the darkness of depression. They can not see what is in my soul. Depression consumes everything and turns things that I enjoy doing into burdens.

I walked around desiring death more than life. Psychologists tried anti-depressants on me, but none of them worked. During the 1970's and 1980's, the anti-depressants caused more side effects than the disease of mental illness. I felt like I was speeding, or flying on some kind of spaceship, or felt sick to my stomach. These drugs even caused my depression to get deeper.

Over the years, I tried to hang myself, overdose on prescription drugs, and drink myself to death. In July of 1998, was the last time I attempted suicide. I was sent to the State Mental Health Institute in Independence, IA. I was prescribed an anti-depressant called Zoloft along with a couple of anti-anxiety medications. I made a promise to my family, my friends, and to God that I would not attempt suicide ever again.

For a while I was doing fine, but during July of 2004, the darkness of depression pulled me under again. I was drowning in the darkness, but I kept my word and checked myself into the mental ward of Covenant. Voices of death erupted inside my head, so I gritted my teeth and wrote poems, essays, short stories, and articles. All were filled with the darkness that was in my soul.

During July of 2004, I realized that I cannot battle this disease alone, so I turned to God for help and guidance. I started attending Bible studies at Lampost and First Baptist Church on the corner of Main Street and Seventh. The pastors preach the directly from the Word of God and encourage everyone to point people to God.

I suffered from depression and admitted myself into the mental ward at Covenant in March of 2005 for eleven days, but I knew that Christ was with me. I owe the trinity of faith, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, my live for without them, I would be still lost inside the darkness or dead.

In my life, I wear three hats: one with the words "Happy Chef" written in white letters; one as a poet and a writer, with "Lulu" written in black letters; and as a Christian with a white hat that reads, "Hardcore Faith" written in black and red. I know I have a long road of healing and recovery ahead of me, but with God's help, I can see the light of the tunnel.

**Larry Sells**

**Larry Sells' bio**

Larry Sells has suffered from depression his entire life. Within the last couple of years, he has been writing not only about his struggle with his darkness, but also his faith.

His faith is deeper than just Christianity it is faith in his doctors, the mental system, mental wards, and his medication. He has published many short stories and poetry in ezines and small press.

Larry Sells is the founder and owner of Sells Publications. Under both Sells Publications and his own name he has published fifteen books.

