

**TELL
THAT
TO YOUR
SISTER**

**Poems by
Rachel K. May**

Also by Rachel K. May

Turning Life's Pages: Nancy Durrett

TELL THAT TO YOUR SISTER

Copyright © 2020 by Rachel K. May

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the author.

Cover Photograph: Erika Goergen

Cover Model: Amanda Burton

Cover Design: Rachel K. May

Editor: Katherine Hutt Scott

ISBN 978-0-692-15186-052700

BAR CODE 0 780692 151860

Printed in USA by 48HrBooks (www.48HrBooks.com)

Dedicated to

Becca Lou,
whom I have known, loved
before she was tow-headed and two.

And still do.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to my devoted husband, my steadfast Captain, who helps me navigate the rough seas, enjoy the calm waters, and always provides a safe harbor. With all my heart, I thank him and my children for cheering me on with this endeavor.

Most appreciated are my family and soul sisters: Kayla May, Priscilla May, Cami Smith, Laurie Childers, Andrea Pollan and Izolda Trachtenberg who encouraged me to “go work on my poetry.”

I want to express my sincerest thanks to Katherine Hutt Scott, Editor Extraordinaire.

To all the various mental health professionals, I am grateful for the important, life-saving work you do.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	7
Suggested Reading.....	11

I. FAMILY NOVEL

Family Novel.....	14
Buried Secrets.....	15
Mother in the Mirror.....	19
Screaming Suppers.....	20
Retreat.....	21
Childhood Haiku.....	22
House on Elbert Street.....	23
Martha.....	24

II. THE HOME PLACE

Summertime Sleepovers.....	26
First, You Cream the Butter.....	27
Tin Tubs.....	28
Armadillo.....	29
Lay Your Head Back, Baby.....	30

III. SOFT KNOCKS

Surrender.....	32
It's Never My Birthday.....	33
Soft Knocks.....	34
Mary Magdelene.....	35
Looking for Cary.....	36

IV. NEVER IN GARDENS

Never in Gardens.....	38
Ex-Girlfriend.....	39
Lies, Lies.....	40
The Grand Dame.....	41

V. GOD'S AT GRACELAND

Me Ama Sed Me Libera.....	44
To My Son on His 20 th Birthday.....	45
Glass Dolphin.....	46
Blue Birth.....	47
Stalked an Angel.....	48
Seizures.....	49
No One.....	50
God's at Graceland.....	51

VI. TASTE MY SORROW

Taste My Sorrow.....	54
200 Miles.....	55
Where are you?.....	57
Lover's Haiku.....	58
Da Mi Basia Mille.....	59
Secretly We Ache.....	60
God Belly Smiles.....	61
About the Author.....	62

PREFACE

One of my personal goals is to erase the stigma attached to seeking help for mental health issues and concerns. Mental illness is certainly not a choice. There are often genetic/hereditary factors involved as well as life experiences, such as trauma or loss. Depression/Anxiety are part nature and part nurture, and the combination can be dramatically life altering for the individual and for their family. Depression isn't a downer, it's downright disabling. It can be progressive, and the prognosis can be fatal.

Some famous, creative, accomplished people have died by suicide, including Vincent van Gogh (artist), Virginia Woolf (author), Ernest Hemingway (author), Sylvia Plath (poet) Hunter S. Thompson, (journalist), Kurt Cobain (musician), Robin Williams (comedian, actor), and Kate Spade (fashion designer). While other successful people managed to be highly functional throughout their lives while they lived with and battled chronic major depression: Ludwig Beethoven (composer), Isaac Newton (scientist), Abraham Lincoln (16th United States president), Sir Winston Churchill (prime minister of the United Kingdom During WWII), Georgia O'Keefe (artist), Carrie Fisher (actor, author), J.K. Rowling (author), and Jane Pauley (journalist, newscaster).

I am totally functional on the outside, but I have spent a lifetime coping with major depressive disorder, and general anxiety disorder, which recently have included panic attacks.

Looking back, I see many signs and episodes of depression when I was a teen, and even younger. But at the time, I did not know what was going on. I was a kid consumed by daily self-preservation, because my childhood family life was chaotic and volatile.

It has only been since my 30's that I have been professionally diagnosed and my issues addressed. With psychotherapy and counseling, I have learned to recognize the triggers of oncoming depressive and anxiety episodes. I know to stop, breathe, rest, go outside/inside, phone a trusted friend, and to seek help. Then, if needed, follow through with talk therapy, etc., to get back on track again.

There are many well-known nicknames for clinical depression -- black dog, ball & chain, dark cloud, black hole, raging storm, and howling tempest. **Depression** can be a stealthy, insidious beast of grief and rage. For me, it is frighteningly familiar: consuming, suffocating, dropping me into deep dark rabbit holes and leaving me exhausted. It takes me days to regain the strength to crawl out of the den of darkness with which I have become too intimate. Depression can also feel like a hundred fire hoses spraying right at me. I try to get up, but am blown flat against the pavement. Other times, it feels like my body is caught in a rough surf, waves rolling me around like a pebble. Gasping for air, left immobile, disoriented, exhausted, it is all I can do to lift my head up, breathe and survive.

Anxiety feels like my brain has been invaded by a flock of rude, nerve-racking woodpeckers that won't stop hammering, squawking, criticizing, and judging. They will not leave, no matter how much I cry out.

Panic attacks feel like an out-of-control bullet train racing through my body like lightning, nerves on fire, worry gone wild, legs and fingers constantly twitching. I have no control over the continual overthinking which is extremely taxing, and the constant ruminating is ruinous.

Mood swings are unpredictable and fierce. They feel like southern pop-up thunderstorms -- the kind that spawns tornados and hail.

Anxiety and Depression can manifest in physical symptoms. Sometimes it is a general malaise that causes overall fatigue, or insomnia. Or, it can manifest as an irritable bowel or headaches. Once I suffered a severe panic attack that brought on Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy, better known as Broken Heart Syndrome. Fortunately, I was quickly treated in an hospital emergency room, my physical heart healed and that's a whole 'nother story.

For those of you not familiar with mental illness, clinical depression is not the same as "I feel sad, too." Clinical anxiety is not the same as "I worry, too." Instead, those of us who suffer want to hear, "I'm here for you, call me anytime, tell me more. Do you need a hug, want to go for a walk, eat some food, maybe listen to some music, or would

you rather have someone sit quietly beside you?”

Each person with mental health issues travels their own journey. Sometimes depression/anxiety can be very debilitating – even fatal. Life becomes totally overwhelming and it is nearly impossible to go through one’s daily motions. True intervention is needed to avoid progression of the disease.

If you or a friend feels “down” or depressed for more than six weeks, or a child for two weeks, please seek help or ensure that your friend gets help. The symptoms are listed in the DSM V (fifth revision of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). Mental illness is treatable, just like a broken leg. It has its own symptoms and treatment modalities. Early intervention is key to greater healing. There is NO STIGMA attached to seeking professional help. There are many resources. USE THEM. You could save a life, maybe even your own.

Right now, there is probably a human being standing in front of you who is suffering terribly and needing care. Tend to them. Tend to yourself.

SUGGESTED READING

Unholy Ghost: Writers on Depression

Nell Casey

On the Edge of Darkness

Kathy Cronkite

Postcards from the Edge and Wishful Drinking

Carrie Fisher

Touched with Fire:

Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament

Kay Redfield Jamison

An Unquiet Mind

Kay Redfield Jamison

The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression

Andrew Solomon

Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness

William Styron (author of *Confessions of Nat Turner* and *Sophie's Choice*)

The Bell Jar

Sylvia Plath

Mrs. Dalloway

Virginia Woolf

I

FAMILY NOVEL

FAMILY NOVEL

Freudian, Faulknerian, Faustian
emotional, expressive, explosive
evocative, provocative, hypnotic.

Somehow it is the same old story
handed down through the generations
only the skirt lengths vary.

BURIED SECRETS

The living whisper salacious secrets
and stories about the women who lie
in rural north Louisiana graveyards.
The red clay holds the stories
and the storytellers.

Sis and I walk on the parched grass
careful not to step on a grave.
We pull up faded plastic flowers
jam the new brightly colored ones right into
the hard clay dirt.

Sis says,
“Here lies Mary, our great grandma,
widowed with three young children.”

I whisper, “Her husband
died in a hotel fire in Monroe
4th of July 1906. His charred remains
were delivered home by wagon.”

“Her mother took Mary and her children in.”

“Then, I heard Mary’s
mother took to bed herself.”

BURIED SECRETS continued

“Mary never married again.”

We whisper
the pine trees listen.
We know
the dead hear everything.

Sis reads from a single granite grave marker
“Here lies Lou Allie, we called her Aunt Luke.
You know she never married.”

“Ohh, she was a magnificent
seamstress. She could smock,
tat, crotchet, knit and
sew like a tailor.”

“For a while she
worked at Esso in Baton Rouge.”

“Did you know she was
manic depressive and got
shock treatments in Texas?”

“There were rumors of suicide.”

BURIED SECRETS continued

We whisper
the pine trees listen.
We know
the dead hear everything.

Sis wanders and calls out
“Here’s Grandma.
Lela Mae was quite a lady.
Always wore stockings.”

“For years, she took care of
her sister, Lou Allie.
Then her own mother, Mary,
in a hospital bed at home.
Never complained.”

When her daughter was a
young girl, she locked her
in a dark closet for hours.”

“I hear there were years of no Christmas.”

We whisper
the pine trees listen.
We know
the dead hear everything.

BURIED SECRETS continued

“Oh, look, Sis here lies Mom.”

“Remember all those years
she served on the
Town Council.
You campaigned on roller
skates when she ran for Mayor.”

“She always said, don’t worry
I’m just fine.”

“While Dad
abused and beat her all
those years.”

We whisper
the pine trees listen.
We know
the dead hear everything.

MOTHER IN THE MIRROR

I hold up a mirror and see you, Mom.
Depression suffocates your soul
Anxiety rips through your body
aching from deprivation
the consequence of
your life as a wife of rage.

You won't consent to healing
are rarely coerced into accepting help
never acknowledge the nightmares
or the need for your own therapy.

You do it your way, you stagger
down the wrong road, get kicked
down the stairs, seek only numbness.
Why won't you let me help you back to
your lucid days, rather than
stumble after you as you walk in
stupored circles,
destined to follow some
inner labyrinth of depression and dementia.

I witness your slow suicide.

SCREAMING SUPPERS

Cheese bubbly atop the
canned hot tamale casserole
homemade lemon chess pie
waited on the stove.
Rage and Bitterness
joined us at the table
arguments poisoned the taste.
Yelling began, fighting erupted.
Before the cheese congealed,
one of us was sent to our room
starved for affection.

There were no piano lessons
no dance lessons, no art lessons.
There were spankings, whippings
fist fights, emergency calls to police.
Forever anxious, hypervigilant
we waited for it all to come
crashing down and explode,
just like Dad.

I dreamed about running away
with fast boys driving fast cars.
And I did.

RETREAT

Retreat, they said
rest.

Repent, they said
restore

Rewrite, they said
reconsider.

Reconnect, they said
relate.

Run away, I did.

CHILDHOOD

an American Haiku

An angry
ogre lived in my
sacred space

HOUSE ON ELBERT STREET

I walk around an empty house.
Do you hear the walls talk?
Children laugh? Neighbors gather?

I hear my father yell
his footsteps pound
I hear my mother cry
belts snap, fiendish threats
I hear children scream
hands strike bare skin.

I run out the front door
I hear rocks pelt the ground
my own gasps and cries
my whispered prayers
that no one answers.
I hear the door slam and lock.

MARTHA

Martha, oh, Martha
did you know you saved my life?
Age 12, living in a tyrannic anarchy
abused, hurt, confused,
merely surviving.

My home was burning from rage
the backdraft sent me running
to you, you always
listened, accepted, understood.

II

THE HOME PLACE

SUMMERTIME SLEEPOVERS

Us kids stayed in the back room
where Grandma and Papa slept
two iron double beds, two wingback chairs,
two parakeets.

I always slept with Papa
my brothers with Grandma.
When there were too many
the loser slept in the rollaway bed.

Every night, Grandma pulled the chain
to turn on the bare bulb
in the walk-in closet
her old bureau drawers squeaked.

She changed into her bed clothes
snuck a thimble shot of sherry.
Every night, she knelt by her bedside and said prayers.
We did as she did.

Papa didn't. He was busy taking his teeth out
putting them in a jelly jar.
As he and I lay in bed, he traced
letters on my back with his finger.
I guessed the words.

FIRST, YOU CREAM THE BUTTER

In a world going vegan

I dream about Grandma making cakes
fresh carrot cakes with thick
cream cheese frosting
smooth, dense butter pound cakes
with lemon tart drizzle
moist red velvet cakes
with ermine icing.

“First you cream the butter and the sugar,”
Grandma always said.

She never let me
work the Mixmaster in
her small farmhouse kitchen
but I could watch nose close.
Always got to lick the beaters.

TIN TUBS

On sweltering summer days
Grandma filled up the big tin tub with
freezing well water and dragged it to
the bottom of the back-porch steps.
She never put soap in the water,
no bubbles, no toys,
just cold hard well water.
We were always naked
played and splashed for hours
until there was no water left in the tub.

ARMADILLO

Wearing an apron over her
crisply pressed cotton dress
my tiny Grandma cornered
the armadillo in the shed
whacked it with a hoe
heaved it into a tin bucket
and left to go kill the chickens.

We waited.

The heap didn't move.
Squealing, we dared each other
to touch the leathery scales.
My cousin swaggered in
dug out the eyeballs
with his pen knife.

LAY YOUR HEAD BACK

In that small farmhouse kitchen,
I lay on my back on the rippling stainless
steel counter, let my head hang down into
the sink. Grandma prepared a place for me,
clean hand towels folded and stacked under my neck.

“Lay your head back, baby.”

She washed my hair with a warm
soft washrag, careful to protect suds
from weeping into my eyes.

The older I got, the longer my legs grew,
soon my behind hit the wall
my legs went straight up.

I was always careful
not to knock the black cat clock,
the one with the blinking eyes
and swishing tail
ticking away the seconds.

Years later I found myself back at the Home Place
in Grandma’s old farmhouse kitchen.
The rippled stainless steel counter was still there,
the section where I would lay looked tiny and tight.
I gazed at the dusty cat clock looking worn, broken.
The cat’s tail was still.

III
SOFT KNOCKS

SURRENDER

Weary, lonely, I surrender.
No one to talk to, save you.
I pray you'd listen, you
fool yourself into thinking you do.
I remain quiet.
Icicles hang from the trees
up a creek, we're too tired to paddle.

I'm a winter bride
lovely, desired,
frozen in capture
like Ophelia I gasp and sputter for air.

IT'S NEVER MY BIRTHDAY

It's never really my birthday

except when I was 5
Mom baked 3 cakes for me
her theme for my party
"3 ring circus."
It was perfect.

It's never really my birthday

except when I was 49
we all gathered on a
foggy night at a long table in a
Mexican restaurant that stood
like a warm beacon in the dark.
It was perfect.

It's never really my birthday

so, in my next life, I want
to come back as a newborn babe.
I'd die by evening, be reborn the
next morning and my life would
be celebrated every day.
That would be perfect.

SOFT KNOCKS

On the bus
sometimes
a fat woman
knocks me with her
soft boobs.
I don't mind.

I want to lay
my head
on her ample bosom
have her stroke my hair
and murmur
“Baby, it's ok.”

The driver's loud
voice snaps me
awake, I get off
hurry home
to return
to my dream.

**MARY MAGDALENE
WASHES MY FEET**

She squats at my feet, I sit high
above her in a naugahyde chair.

Women around me too
comfortable on their thrones
self-absorbed, addicted to their singing
cell phones and glossy magazines.

She and I lock eyes. Her strong
hands massage my tired feet
she soothes my legs with spikenard oil.
Precisely she paints my toes.

She glances out the window
at the bus stop, then the clock
the darkening skies and
imminent rain, preparing for
her long ride home.

LOOKING FOR CARY

Five months earlier, cousin Cary
had suffocated himself – age 27.
His soul released, his body blue.

I looked for signs of Cary.
Every day I searched for him.
Sometimes, I felt his presence
but I never saw him.

One July evening
family walking home from the
beach, laughing. It was then that
Cary appeared to my son.

I saw my 5-year-old boy
walking ahead of me, alone,
with his left arm comfortably raised.

He looks back and smiles.
“Don’t worry Mom,
I’m walking with Cary.”
They led the way, guided us home.

IV

NEVER IN GARDENS

NEVER IN GARDENS

Sisters talk

in attics

in cars

in garages

occasionally in kitchens.

Once in a great while they whisper
in their resplendent living rooms

but somehow, never in gardens
redolent of honeysuckle.

EX-GIRLFRIEND

Saw your wedding photos online
saw your face familiar
in the group shot
happy in your white dress, at last
standing by the wedding cake
smiling with husband #3.

You eloped with #1
the architect student
he beat you.
Next the affairs: the professor
whose marriage you broke up
then, the muscled superman
who was handy but not so smart.

With husband #2, the lawyer,
you went to the courthouse in Hawaiian shirts.
He neglected you.
Now he stands with your daughters
online and forefront in the
wedding shot of you and #3.

How modern.

LIES, LIES

Lies, lies, and more lies,
woven so tightly
you hide them in your
chaotic crazy quilt.

In unison, we nod our heads, but
no one buys your story.
Did you learn this from Mom?

You are not a tortured soul.
I see self-absorption
smell a master manipulator
feel narcissisism and
hear grandiose thoughts,
while watching reality slip,

Sabotage is your game
libido is your currency
greed is your price
dust is your change.

THE GRANDE DAME

(grän-‘däm)

The red satin dress exposed
one white shoulder framing dark hair.
Her tourmaline eyes lit up
as she stood heads above
gray-haired guests at the party
formal dinner dance
white-gloved waiters
five-piece band in the garden room.

The 80-year-old birthday boy
in black tie, gold and ruby cuff links
welcomed the guests with his wife, the Grande Dame,
in a royal blue velvet
ball gown with matching bolero,
diamond bracelets, platinum ring
gemstone as big as a fig.
She danced with all
the men during dessert.
but never mentioned the girl.

Whispers, chatter about the girl
developed into a tempest of curiosity
Someone asked the elegant gentleman
“Who is that young woman?”
He beamed, “that’s my granddaughter.”

THE GRANDE DAME continued

Fifteen Decembers earlier
I gave birth to that girl.
The Grande Dame sashayed
into the hospital room
in her full length, sable coat.

She set a gift on my bed tray --
a pot of dirt with a bulb stuck in it.

We hardly saw her in the years that followed.

Instead, the Grande Dame gave her love to
Louis XIV furniture upholstered in white raw silk,
Chinese porcelain figurines, Italian ceramics,
Persian rugs and gold faucets
shaped like fish in the powder room.

When she died, her
legacy was the same as her life
an antique velvet-lined
box filled with cold stones:
diamonds, rubies, emeralds.

V

GOD'S AT GRACELAND

ME AMA SED ME LIBERA

Heaving sobs
body shaking
baby crying
I held tight
your newborn body.

Years later, wailing
rivers of tears
your beard scratches my face
I hold tight your manly body
knowing it is time to let you go.

As a mother, my time is up. I chant
give thanks, ask for blessings, call
upon angels and ancestors.

I know, I know, as I read your tattoo

“Me ama
Sed me
Libera”

If you love me, let me go.

TO MY SON ON HIS 20th BIRTHDAY

I started out writing a birthday poem
for my son, magnificent and divine
to wax existential and talk of love so sublime.

Instead, I sang out his name as my personal Om.

I wanted to give him balloons and parrot piñatas
Batman cake and bowls of ice cream with no spoons.
I wanted to let him dance shirtless and
sweaty in the living room.

Instead, by phone, I told him
stories about home.
He told stories that made me proud
stories that made me howl,
tales of summitting fourteeners* and
living with river rats**

It was wonderful to talk all afternoon
me in Virginia; he in Colorado
land of the Four Corners Moon.

*Fourteeners: Mountains higher than 14,000 feet

**River Rats: people whose passion is white water rafting.

GLASS DOLPHIN

I was a souvenir glass dolphin
hand-blown blue swirls, fins and tail.
The American girl swaddled me,
carried me home from Italy to
give to her mother, a precious reminder of
seeing dolphins in the surf.

On the girl's dresser, I became lost
crowded by romance novels
photographs, dusty snow globes.
The summer she started her period
the girl packed up her dolls,
announced she was all grown-up.
Her mother helped her box up
her childhood things, carelessly

Hearts shattered as I sailed off the
top of the dresser, and my tail broke.

BLUE BIRTH

I gasped, couldn't breathe, waited
for you to take your first breath
desperately prayed to hear you cry
it was a frantic eternity.

Baby, you were blue
not as blue as death
but plum blue.

I let out a silent scream to all
guardian angels, pleaded
with ancestors and whimpered,
“Baby, oh baby, just breathe.”

STALKED AN ANGEL

I birthed a damaged baby.
We searched for help
to care for our fragile boy.
and learned about Nina, in town
to interview for a job to nanny
two boys and drive their green Ferrari.

I wanted her to be the one for us.

We drove to the airport, circled round
looking for the green Ferrari.
Spotted it, and
pulled up behind.
Like a Hollywood movie
I jumped out with baby in my arms
tracked Nina into the airport
followed her all the way to her gate.

There I threw my baby into Nina's arms.
I stalked an angel
pleaded for mercy
she blessed us with her grace.

SEIZURES

Seizures nonstop
my own mental paroxysm nonstop
my whimpering cries nonstop
hold my breath nonstop
hospital activity nonstop.

A tiny newborn boy
convulsing nonstop
blue lips gasping nonstop
merciless fever nonstop
all that's left is prayer nonstop.

NO ONE

No one wants to hear or see us.
Most people freeze with fear, some
are politely compassionate, a few
babble nervously to brush us off
others just act as if we are invisible.

My companion is my disabled son
a boyish man, with an angelic face,
dark curly hair, Coke-bottle glasses, hands twirling,
arms flailing; held up crookedly by leg braces,
often in a wheelchair, yelling and laughing
like a toddler, only much louder.

Occasionally strangers
will ask if they can pray for us
in hotel lobbies, on airplanes,
in meeting rooms. I always say yes
to sacred prayers, mystical incantations
blessings with holy water.

GOD'S AT GRACELAND

Lisa Marie Presley, did you know
your daddy talked to my kid?
The boy in the wheelchair
the boy who can't talk,
but who is vocal and loud.

While the visitors and disciples
were reverent in the museum space
the spirit of your daddy made my boy
cackle laugh and belly giggle.
In the Trophy Room's
calm velvet hallway,
my boy was wildly exuberant
his limbs went spastic, his body danced
like Stevie Wonder when he saw
the wall of your daddy's gold records.

VI

TASTE MY SORROW

TASTE MY SORROW

Taste my sorrow

eat me up.

Gnaw my tired marrow

chew me to a pulp.

Let me relax into you tomorrow

whipped, like a pup.

200 MILES

I didn't think about you
for the first 200 miles.
Crossed the state line into NJ
and my mind drifted.

Ahead – miles to go

Faded green Ford truck
young buck driver, unruly hair, tan,
white bandana tied around his neck
his arm draped across the seat
he raced off an exit marked 25 mph.

Ahead – miles to go

Black Suburban, darkened windows
sitting high in the front seats
two guys with Marine haircuts
speeding along oblivious
behind their reflective Ray Bans.

Ahead – miles to go

200 MILES continued

Brushed gold minivan
two blonde Moms
with two blonde college girls,
hair in four identical ponytails
toting new aluminum beach chairs
and old beach bikes.

Ahead – miles to go

Robin's egg blue motorcycle
immaculately restored
one dude with a long braid
a black leather jacket
riding west.

Another 200 miles

And I still don't think about you.

WHERE ARE YOU?

Husband out of town
kids off on the school bus
#1 son on a road trip
and, where are you?

Woke up in a fever
dreaming of you and me
naked, sweaty in a hot
cabin on the deck of the
tall ship in Mystic Seaport

In my wildest thoughts
on a long morning
I relax into myself
lying on this old velvet chaise.

LOVER'S HAIKU

Sitting on the edge
darkness, look for falling light.
Together, we do.

DA MI BASIA MILLE

“Da mi basia mille” *

Give me a thousand kisses
with your perfect angel lips

**Da Mi Basia Mille*

from the poem, Catullus 5 by Latin Poet Catullus

SECRETLY WE ACHE

Secretly, we ache.

He hungers

she sucks

ripple woman explodes.

In my dreams

girl, I, bring kisses to

boy, he listens.

Under the ocean warm

pale pink night sky

honey-flower moon rising

we embrace, drink life

eat dreams, taste sorrow

know dark, trust lust

explore touch, live fresh

laugh hard, love soft.

GOD BELLY SMILES

Celebrate heart dance,
we surround ourselves
with heavenly champagne

God belly smiles
his universe is full.

Naked angels blush, crying
they remember the glistening
nectar of hot red sex
slow burning of tantalizing
perfume of hair familiar.

I will caress him with my
sultry French evening voice
he lingers and feels pleasure drunk.

I ask him to hold up the silver
goblet of pure sugar dew
with both hands, all day as we
float in suspended time.

About the Author

Rachel K. May

M.A. in Psychology-School Counseling

Poet/Creative/Mama Bear/Wife/Oma

Mental illness does not define me, although it is a very important part of my life story. With therapy and reflection, I have evolved, gained fresh perspectives, and written myself a new script. Has my mental illness been a gift, even though there were so many turbulent, hellish time? Indeed, it is a rare gift that is to be honored and respected. A gift that comes with many facets of compassion, caring and creativity. I find fulfillment and grace in writing poetry, and for this I am grateful.

Sometimes when I cannot summon a cry loud enough for anyone to hear, I have learned to embrace strangers who help me, whom, I believe are unknowing angels. I am so thankful to all the kind people who have crossed my path.

I also realized that I have distinct character traits that have been evident since childhood and honed through adulthood. My super powers are maturity, empathy, understanding, a keen sense of alertness and a wild sense of humor. I am a strong advocate for children and not afraid to speak out against injustices. Like my mother, I can make any situation fun and find any reason for a celebration (ask me about "leftovers night").

This is my debut volume of poems.