

# DYING TO DIE

*A zine about depression & suicide*



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My first suicide attempt was when I tried to jump off a building at university. Some people don't consider it a "real" or "serious" attempt though. I didn't end up jumping and it left no scars, only shook up the teachers on that level and made them apprehensive about coming to work again. Shortly after my attempt, the uni barred up the circular gaps in the building I climbed through. The whole uni were whispering, wondering who did it, whether they're still alive. I watched them gossip in the uni Facebook group. Swooping in like vultures, like journalists... picking apart the debris desperate for answers. Some people think suicide is a senseless act committed by people who don't know what they're doing. If only they saw the fire that makes us jump.

"The person in whom Its invisible agony reaches a certain unendurable level will kill her-

"Suicidal people are just angels who want to go home."

self the same way a trapped person will eventually jump from the window of a burning high-rise,” writes David Foster Wallace. “Make no mistake about people who leap from burning windows. Their terror of falling from a great height is still just as great as it would be for you or me standing speculatively at the same window just checking out the view; i.e. the fear of falling remains a constant. The variable here is the other terror, the fire’s flames: when the flames get close enough, falling to death becomes the slightly less terrible of two terrors. It’s not desiring the fall; it’s terror of the flames. And yet nobody down on the sidewalk, looking up and yelling ‘Don’t!’ and ‘Hang on!’, can understand the jump. Not really. You’d have to have personally been trapped and felt flames to really understand a terror way beyond falling.”

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I guess I had reservations about being in this world before I was even here. I was pulled out of the womb with forceps. Finally a blotchy, crumpled head emerged which resembled the hybrid of a prune and an alien. Hello world! My mother went home with a walking frame, gratitude for being alive, and her prized possession, who had to be brought to her since she couldn’t walk. Was it all worth it, is the question I ask to this day.

I look at the photo of us when we were four. I have not been able to connect with friends in the same way. It’s like the way our childhood toys lose their magic, but it’s like that with everything.

I ran into an old teacher from school in a café once. I had stopped there on my way back from the doctor’s.

“What are you doing now?” came the dreaded question.

“I’m seeing doctors because I’m depressed and I want to die.” Would have been the honest answer. But I couldn’t say that.

Despite everything, I graduated high school as dux. I was told with grades like mine I could do anything and be anyone I wanted. I’m not so sure about that. What would my old collage think of me if they found out I was now unemployed, on social security, a mental patient, and that the only thing I wanted was to die?



For the last eight years I have not wanted to see anyone from my past. Anyone who knew who I was before depression took over my life. One day I heard from an old, childhood friend I knew when my family and I lived in Tasmania. She was in Melbourne and wanted to see me again. I made sure that didn't happen. I heard she now had a daughter, as people do. What could I say for myself? I wasn't a mother, I wasn't a student anymore, I didn't have a job, I didn't care about anything and I was a shell of my former self.

### When death became my only hope

I was in my final years of school when I first wanted to die. I sat alone down the back of the oval and watched the trains go by on the other side of the fence. I fantasised about jumping the fence and getting on the tracks. Often, the only thing I'd say all day was "here" when the role was called in class. But I wasn't really "here"; my spirit had left and I wished my body would follow.



I am not sure, when, exactly, I became depressed. As Elizabeth Wurtzel, author of "Prozac Nation", writes, depression is not something that happens overnight. It is more like cancer, its tumorous mass not noticeable at first, then one day --- wham! --- this thing that your own body has produced has taken over and is trying to kill you. It is like a computer program for total negativity building in your system, making life feel more and more unbearable.

"... then one day you realize that your entire life is just awful, not worth living, a horror and a black blot on the white terrain of human existence. One morning you wake up afraid you are going to live."

In the end, loneliness became my only friend. My only company. The only thing solid in my world.

It was school that sowed the seeds of my depression.

I never had a core group of friends as I moved schools seven times.

Wherever I went, I was told how much I was hated.

Being included became a privilege rather than something I deserved and should expect.

My psychology teacher was the only person who took an interest in me it seemed. She often asked if I was ok, and while I longed to tell her everything, I held back. The day I found out she was going to leave the school was the day I collapsed into full blown, suicidal despair.

Little did I know this was only a taste of what was coming. After graduating I continued to get attached to people who were destined to leave me. Candles briefly lit then extinguished. Roses which came at the price of thorns.

