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poem

Keeping the Woolf from the Door

Jo McFarlane

Are you afraid of Virginia Woolf?
her crazy ramblings in the moonlit hours,
the tidal toss of mania and darkness looming like a shroud

Who's afraid of going mad?
Suicidal paranoia in a job rejection,
being sectioned for a first blow to your shadow,
coming 'home' to hospital, a four year stretch
of queuing up for liquid cosh, slippers tattered
from the endless pacing in your cubicle,
electrodes wired into your thoughts

Who's afraid?
Are you afraid of stripping like an onion,
weeping with the sting of dread
each time your name is called?

When I'm afraid
I write letters to Virginia Woolf
'What's the cleanest way to kill yourself?'
'Is it still crazy on the other side?'
She told me once there's no God in heaven,
now it's easier to pray

I wonder when my time will come
to tie a stone around my waist,
sink my sins into the river like Virginia

I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid.

Selected by Femi Oyeboode. From *Stigma & Stones: Living with a Diagnosis of BPD*, poems by Sally Fox & Jo McFarlane.

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Through their collection *Stigma & Stones*, writers/performers/partners Sally Fox and Jo McFarlane seek to promote understanding, improve treatment and reduce the stigma of living with a diagnosis of BPD.

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