

authors' efforts to move eating disorders from their current, overly confined niche – a confined space that only restricts the lives and opportunities of people like myself – and towards greater understanding, better treatment and lasting recovery for all.

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Declaration of interest

None.

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Reflection

Whispers and whirlwinds

Antonio Yaghy 

In the twilight of my own cognition, where thoughts once flowed like a serene river, the waters began to stir and whirl in ways unsettling and unfamiliar. It started with whispers, soft murmurs like leaves rustling in an unseen breeze. These whispers grew into voices, each carrying its own weight, its own colour and its own texture. They told stories that no one else could hear, painted worlds no one else could see.

I walked through days like through a gallery of moving pictures, where reality and imagination blurred in their frames. The familiar faces of friends and family transformed under the gaze of my altered perception, becoming at times unrecognisable, not by their looks but by the essence I felt emanating from them. Their words sometimes reached me across great chasms, distorted by the echoes of my own internal symphony. The diagnosis came like a soft but insistent rain, seeping through the cracks in my carefully constructed umbrella of denial and normality. Schizophrenia, they said, as if naming the storm could tame it. The name was new, but the experience was as old as my earliest memories of the world being too loud, too bright, too much yet never enough. In the heart of this whirlwind, I found moments of unspeakable beauty. The voices, my uninvited guests, sang in harmonies that no composer could conceive. They spoke in poetry, a language born from the deep wells of emotion and experience that I could not otherwise tap. The world, seen through the kaleidoscope of my mind, shimmered with possibilities, with connections that others could not perceive. Living with schizophrenia is like dancing on the edge of a dream. Reality is a concept as fluid as water, and just as hard to hold. I learned to embrace the fluidity, to find my footing in the slipstream. My senses, once overwhelmed, became attuned to a different frequency. I could hear the silent whisper of the trees, feel the soft sorrow of the moon and touch the joy in the rain. Medication and therapy became the lighthouses guiding me back to a shore I could share with others. Yet these tools did not erase the beauty of my experiences; they merely framed them in a context I could navigate and sometimes explain. In my journey, I discovered that my mind, though fragmented, was a mosaic of incredible depth and colour. I paint now, with colours and words, trying to capture the ethereal landscapes of my mind. Each stroke is a dialogue between the world within and the world without. People see my art and find it abstract, beautiful in its complexity. They do not always know that each line, each shade, is a piece of my soul made visible. In this journey, I have lost much but gained something precious: a vision of the world that is uniquely mine.

I stand now under the vast canvas of the sky, no longer trying to separate the voice of the wind from the murmuring of my own heart. I am a traveller in a landscape where the horizons are drawn not by sight but by perception. And in this journey, I have found not just challenges, but a profound, unexpected beauty. For even in the depths of the storm, there is light, and in the complexity of my thoughts, there is a simple, enduring truth: that all of life is a but a collection of unique experiences, and every experience has its place, its purpose and its own unique beauty.

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