

Touching Darkness

The air was violent
On that evening day
As I watched forty blue pills
Staring back at me.
Trying not to turn away,
I took their bitterness
Into my bitterness
And washed them down
With a carbonated drink.

I then went to bed,
To lay me down to sleep.
As I closed my eyes
To the imposing world,
I prayed that I would not pray,
And hoped that I would not wake.

My thoughts were shadows,
My feelings were dust,
But something inside of me
Waiting for the sound
Of my door being opened,
And my rescuers charging in.

When I could wait no longer,
When I knew that I must not die,
I sat upright
And felt the pounding of my heart.

Taking hope with every breath,
I telephoned for help.
The embarrassment was almost worse
Than the chemical numbness
That was holding my hands.
The waiting was long,
Because my minutes were few.

When they arrived, there were questions.
How could I answer for my actions
When the reasons were no longer there?

Over the course of a timeless hour,
I waited for them to save me.

There are fools who follow shadows,
And dream of the romance of dying,
But I have learned the way of wisdom:
It was earned with the swallowing
Of a rubber stomach pump.

With charcoal stained lips,
I was wheeled away
To a place where they promised to help me.
Three days, I stayed there,
Finding a different way
To undo the tangles of my life.

Sometimes I fear;
There are many more days ahead,
But whatever difficulties unfold,
I will never walk that way again.

With my own hands,
I have touched the darkness.
I ask you to learn my lesson,
I ask you to trust my words:
Darkness is cold;
Hold onto the light.

-Andrew Lias

Lias is a 'survivor of suicide' who chose to use poetry to help himself. He has written a collection called "Songs of Phoenix." To read more go to <http://myweb.wco.com>.

Prevent the pain: know the signs, stop suicide

Lives are lost to us every day because we know not how to stop the onslaught of suicides among our friends and loved ones—today I give you some ways.

The suicide rate among people

to recognize the danger signals of someone who may attempt suicide.

Danger Signals:

Previous suicide attempts: between 20-50 percent of people who kill themselves previously attempted suicide.

Talking about death or suicide: directly or indirectly.

Planning for suicide: getting affairs in order, giving away articles of value or paying off debts.

Depression: often expressed as loss of pleasure, or withdrawal from activities that had been enjoyable.

Are you concerned yet? Have you stopped to think that this could be you or someone you know?

Another way to help is to take these signs seriously and know how to respond to them. According to the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, depression and emotional outcries that precede suicide are—in most cases—both recognizable and treatable.

Some ways to help people considering suicide include willingness to listen; being actively involved in their seeking professional help; in an acute crisis, taking the person to the emergency room or walk-in-clinic at a psychiatric hospital and follow-up on your loved one's treatment.

In reading this, I hope you are more aware and more knowledge-

able in what you can do to help someone you know or even don't know. After all, just listening could save a life. But I think there is so much more to be done. I think we should have a national suicide awareness day where everyone could be educated about possible signs of suicide and treatments for people: finally, you could wear a little blue tear drop or ribbon as a reminder of those we've lost to suicide. We all need to do our part.

So, if you or someone you know is experiencing any of these signs or moods—get help.

We could be the catalyst to life or death; we can help wipe away the tears and replace them with a smile.

Questions or comments e-mail cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us

Make a statement, be heard...



Salena De La Cruz
Opinion Editor

ages 18-24 has steadily been on the rise. Suicide is the number two killer among college age students—people like you; people like me.

So what can we do to answer the cry for help? First we need

Suicide

Who weeps for those who chose to weep no more

Suicide steals
Suicide steals

Who hears the cries when there are no more tries left

Who will understand gone too soon to a distant land
Who will understand

Suicide steals
Suicide steals

Gone too soon the loss of one diminishes us all
Gone too soon

Pain calls to some to quit life beckons most to carry on
Agony opens up and some fall into that pit
life beckons most to mourn and meet each new dawn

Suicide steals
Suicide steals
To live or to die choice
who really knows why choice
sees some live and others die

Who weeps for those who chose to weep no more

I do.

A.J. Mahari (soul)
In memory of Anne W.

Who can help?

Clackamas County Crisis Hotline- (503) 655-8724

Multnomah County Hotline- (503) 238-7555

Survivors of Loss through Suicide-(503) 226-7620

Suicide Bereavement Support-(503) 657-1181

Suicide questions answered

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention created questions and answers from actual letters they received from people wanting to understand suicide better.

Information obtained from <http://www.afsp.org>.

Q. What percentage of college students who kill themselves are male? Why do you think more boys than girls kill themselves?

A. 75-80 percent are boys although more girls attempt suicide. Boys are more involved than girls in all forms of aggressive and violent behavior.

Q. I've heard that suicides are more frequent around the holidays? Is this true, and if so, how much do they increase at that time?

A. Suicides are not more frequent during the holidays. The highest rate is in April and the summer months, June and July.

Q. What is the biggest cause of suicide among college students?

A. 95 percent are suffering from mental illness, usually depression. If depressed, substance abuse, anxiety, impulsiveness, rage, hopelessness, and desperation increase the risk.

Q. Apart from talking to a suicidal person and encouraging him/her to go for counseling, what else can we do to prevent this?

A. Going with someone to the counselor often helps. If the person won't listen to you, you may need to talk to someone who might influence him or her. Saving a life is more important than violating a confidence.

Speak Out Where it Matters!

Write to *The Clackamas Print*. 500 words or less on disk and bring it to B104 or e-mail it to cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us

MAY DAY— AS A CHILD...

...AND THEN A COUPLE YEARS LATER...

...hmmm.