



*“i was just guessing / at numbers and figures / pulling the puzzles apart
questions of science / science and progress / do not speak as loud as my heart.”*

(“the scientist,” coldplay)

pressed between yellowed pages like
a ripped leaf discovering me, downward to death,
a rorschach divides my realism into
sub-sections of

 two halves of the same whole,
 two halves of the same mind,
dual meanings of the same psychotic break

i can read a brain scan, but
i've never quantified how to
inject warmth without liquor
because my mother wasn't hugged
and so, neither was i.

 meanwhile, her mind wanders, out loud,
 whether or not to kill me tonight-

she's been my patient all my life
and i learned my clean patience
from her, sweeping the cobwebs under the stove, gently-
like the sweeping of shattered glass under my bed,
or the crying at the end of an evening of
dissonant distance between myself and the next person in line,
and i didn't know how to stop it or measure my psychology, cold, because
children aren't meant to mother their mothers
who hear voices or crack plates against filthy counter tops.

2 / *case study #1*

mist over silky skies finally exhales
against the right-rust of crumbling leaves;
an aroma of a dull-dank earth stuck to the roof
of my mouth

wood splinters under my weight and into my palms while
i listen to the bed cry out with the sound
of his guilty conscience-
his slow breath.

a collection of dirt and dust kisses a swollen cheek,
a bloated maxilla under blankets of cold, burning purple and blue

wrap my body under yellowed blankets, dirt stains between a crease
remind me of a moth,
remind me of a spider, of symmetries,
remind me of the candlelit cobwebs
my neuropathways travel by-
but i attempt not to make
a sound.



dual dwellings,
you distance her from
duels for fuel and the
fire against unholy
destinies-

fault lines carved in mind
carved in skin, in thighs;
scars where i get to feel like mine

dyed my hair to match the
eye of a storm collecting
behind his eye
while i/she pays some mind
to the cacophony of his design

4 / *case study* # 2

the sun elongates limbs like
stilt-walking against the light,
i bottle the heat, dress it up between two lips,
attempt to swallow the smoke, thinking
it will make my heart harden as wax-

balancing a double-exposure between
flowered rust and hidden irises,
branches reaching out and hands still grabbing me,
or reaching deep into matryoshka dolls of wood-

tell me, where do you live in your body?
which memories still make your floorboards creak,
even after you've marked where to step?

i invite the light between teeth,
devouring it whole to tearing,
as children's eyes widen with
the joy of halloween, but i
am not dressed up. i am not
in this body. this is not
a drill.

Complex PTSD

- **Interpersonal problems** and interpersonal avoidance (avoiding relationships with others, and never being close to anyone).
- **Negative emotions** such as guilt. When survivors feel guilty, they are more likely to feel isolated and cut off from others, and never being close to anyone.

in some people. [1]:386

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- Complex
- anger
- Prolonged
- by both man and God"
- referred to as "difficult
- self-hatred
- criteria for
- which may be
- being
- can only be
- Affect dysregulation

Complex

can only be

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A fragmented

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by both man and God",

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Prolonged

referred to as "difficult"

self-hatred,

feeling of

"contaminated, guilty, and evil"

6 / *case study* # 3

whispered water, in my left ear, over the sounds of a ghost-glass,
rinsing hands of blood, before the gossamer glistening ground

a drip slips,
wanders about it, wonders about it
enough to kiss-cling downward drips like mist;
enough to fling to a splattering spark of insanity,
a small piece of humanity.

contrived to collecting, cobwebs catching on the
smoke stained silence, the pines
pine for a more brilliant pseudonym.

the pines remember your screaming,
your tearing open with blood mixing with
dirt, earth, hurt.

the soil beneath you will mourn, will vibrate with anger,
will open up to swallow him whole,
as your family releases flowers six feet down
on the target,
where you imagine your spit should scorch
the lacquered coffin,
where your hands should rip the petals.

7 / *happy birthday*



(double-click me)

text:

abuse breathes across from me
at a dining room table,
singing happy birthday to my cousin

abuse still hangs my childhood
around his rear-view mirror:
a 50-cent vending machine necklace,
rocking side-to-side

abuse excuses himself as a victim
tells me he had a weird dream last night
so he isn't the one to blame for
pulling past tweety bird pyjamas

abuse gets away with it,
because he taught me to set fire to myself
to keep other people warm.

8 / *case study* # 4

smoke-stained furniture remembering a careless fire

the smell of coal and burning hair

tired television not permitted to create quiet

daggers hanging above us in the air

broken toothpicks running across the coffee table

little trees

bruised rug that ruins hope for the colour blue

skinned knees

mother with a mug of budweiser in the morning

frontal lobe towing rope

pictures of family restricted from her daily dusting

visual choke

scratchy, sepia curtains draped with cobwebs

a late evening in fall

injured horse figurines that recall their creation as unicorns

no one ever calls

child determined to memorise the dictionary

misplaced

glossy stain, like a bleeding strawberry, behind her on the wall

9 / *reply hazy, try again*

you shake me, violently, as i
silently judge the dirt under your fingers

you haven't showered in a week

given the choice between then and now,
i know the answer, but you're still questioning
while you run your finger along a
shiny, black seam and think of
breaking it open, liquid memory pouring from a
small glitch in the sylvian fissure highway

reply hazy, try again

reply hazy, try again

reply hazy, your amygdala is the enemy

reply hazy, you lost hearing in your right ear

reply hazy, you don't really want to know the answer, now,

do you?

- 1.) have you been exposed to a traumatic event?
 - 2.) do you try to avoid people, places, thoughts, and feelings?
 - 3.) are you unable to remember what is important?
 - 4.) do you feel that you're not normal?
 - 5.) have you had outbursts of anger?
 - 6.) do you startle easily?
 - 7.) do you feel like you re-live the trauma?
 - 8.) are you happy?
 - 9.) do your symptoms interfere with your life?
 - 10.) where is the trauma located?
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footnote:

- (1) if no, you are here and nowhere else.
- (2) if no, you are normal.
- (3) if no, your mind loves you back.
- (4) if no, you may leave the room / if yes, please chain your wrist to the trauma. we'll wait.
- (5) if yes, please undress and circle your scars.
- (6) if yes, please ask the proctor to slam the door.
- (7) if yes, please draw a picture of a tree hit by lightning.
- (8) if yes, please leave.
- (9) if yes, please ask the proctor to call you a failure.
- (10) ask for a knife. cut it out of you. put the specimen in the jar on the table.

