

If Only...

If only you knew how it feels...
To go in as a voluntary admission
Because you knew all you needed was sleep
And then, as if in your worst nightmare,
Find out that you can't get out.
To be imprisoned, confined and incarcerated.
To be pinned to the bed by medication.
To ingest so much quetiapine, haloperidol,
Risperadol, lorazepam, diazepam, seroquel
That you begin to lose yourself.
If only you knew how that felt.

If only you knew how it feels...
To be labelled "presenting as dishevelled"
When your hair is the maddest thing about you.
To be threatened by other patients
When you won't drink their stolen vodka.
To take the hairdryer cord from your friend's
Neck and be sent to your room for interfering.
To be given all the drugs the pharmaceuticals
Can offer (provided you queue like a good girl)
But be deprived of the one thing you need -
Someone to listen.
If only you knew how that felt.

If only you knew how it feels...
To be robbed of your liberty, your family,
Your dignity and your very identity.
When you point out the system's absurdities
When you dare to quote the Mental Health Act
And question the written and unwritten rules
And you are patronised and drugged
To shut you up so you don't upset anyone.
Dictated to by doctors with a DSM dependency
And no idea of your humanity.
If only you knew how that felt.

If only you knew how it feels...
When your five year old daughter visits
Clinging and crying because she thinks it's her
Chicken-pox that made Mummy go away.
When a well-meaning nurse marches you
Along the corridor to ECT and announces
"If you don't behave, you will end up here."
So you learn how to act, be seen to behave
Present yourself less colourfully.
Say the things the doctor wants to hear.
Take the lithium you have never wanted
Keep to yourself, speak less, smoke more.
If only you knew how that felt.

If only you knew how it feels...
To be let out into the glaring sunlight and told
"These people are not your friends
Go back to your old life."
But your old life doesn't want you anymore
Your friends cross the road to avoid you
Because they know where you've been
And it sure weren't no holiday!
When after departure you find your only
Travelling companions are a 40 a day habit
And enough medication to take your own life
Several times over.
If only you knew how that felt.

If only you knew how it feels...
When thanks to your "treatment"
You now fit the DSM bill for
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
In every diagnostic criteria from A to F!
You trust no-one - especially doctors.
You talk to no-one. You cease to exist.
When you lie in bed with handfuls of pills
Wishing to deprive your daughter of her mother.
If only you knew how that felt.

If only...
If only...

Because only if you know how that felt
And you knew how it haunts me today
You could prescribe what I needed the most...
Sleep and someone to listen.