

White Plains, NY  
Asylum 3-South

30 August 1975  
Evening quiet  
The Blue Diary

I'm stuck inside these four walls wondering what's happening to me. I am kept alive by a few letters and phone calls. I feel the distortion this place has brought to my sanity. Torn away from lover's lips and all that made me free. I have come here for help but have lost so much to gain so little.

Many people coming and going on the ward, picking up the vibes of madness. They try to guess what our problems are but they never really know. Sure, for now these people are my superiors with authority over everything I do. What makes them superior is that they don't live here. We do and broke-castle is my home now.

They work from 7-to-3 or 3-to-11 and night-shift. They have a #9 key. All they see is a little bit of our hell. They unlock a door and step into the heavenly world we here dream of. Some people here are insane. There are murderers and the suicidals. Most of the teens are suicidal. There is one teenager being evaluated for homicidal/suicidal tendencies. Schizophrenic they say, an obsessive scribbler.

Others are here for emotional trauma and pain. Then there are a few who sit all day drooling and talking into the air. Like a Bergen County Sheriff who's here. Well he's not a cop anymore. Every day for years he came home at lunch to eat a *Snickers*'s bar from the freezer. He came home last May. His wife had eaten his candy bar. He emptied six rounds in her head. He lives two doors to the right of me. He sits on a couch outside my door, all day long he says, "Ate my *Snickers*'s bar bitch." All damned day. Of all the murderers here, I think he is the saddest.

When I look in his dark, empty eyes, I feel fear I've never known; like how easy it is to lose your mind. There's another guy here, Mr. Happy, he's been here over forty years. That scares me very much. They call him that because he is

always smiling. Never speaks. Rumor is that he was a hitman out of Chicago in the '30s and he's in hiding here. I sit out on the ward and study everyone, trying to understand what I am doing here. I've been thinking, the orphanage I was branded in is nearby. Orphanage-to-nuthouse: it took me 13-years to travel nine miles

My shrink told me that if I don't start telling them what they want to know, a State Hospital is in my future. He says I'm resistant. I'm not. I'm just afraid to say what I shouldn't. They've already made up their minds about me because my brother's in Creedmoor. He's schizophrenic, guess what's decided about me? They figure I'm a nutcake too. They don't know what put my brother there. They will never ask. It's easier for these mofos to label-etch and lock a kid away for life.

I met a girl here. She's seventeen. Something very bad happened to her on a bus. Later, she took pills and sliced her wrists. I've decided not to write about the bad things we teens tell each other because I've never written about my own bad things. I guess that's why I'm here, not facing up. The girl, Lisa, she's got fine brownish hair and freckles and really nice boobs and she's also a Libra. We snuck a kiss near the pool table. It was real nice except I could taste all her meds.

One kiss made up for a lot of doubt, even if it don't mean anything. I felt alive. Haldol makes me feel like I live under *Saran* wrap. I just can't get at life enough. Can't touch or feel it. That's the best way I can say it. If I can get one kiss a day inside these four walls, I could make it. Anything to feel alive.

I won't lie and say I don't have dark thoughts. I do but when they come I read or write poetry. I like John Keats most, *The Nightingale*. It's hard to get but it's just like in this place, like here nothing is moving but everything is so real.

My doc said if I want to keep a diary, staff need to have access to it. I'm to leave it in this desk drawer. What more of me do they need to know? I've decided

to keep three diaries, one for them. Two for me in the bathroom ceiling. Then I can at least be honest in one of them and they won't know about it.

It's the worst feeling in the world, people going in your private thoughts and poetry. It's very wrong. I have no rights. No teens do. But orphans have it even worse because no one will speak up for us. So they experiment. All the other teens have families that visit them. They don't get experimented on. My life, it's just me fighting the system and losing ground each day. Losing ground.

I started a new poem, *Eulogy Free of Pauses for a Teen*. I have a few drafts hidden in different places on the ward, or they'll get it wrong again. Okay, going down to sit near the clock-tower and study some *Lao-Tsu*. It's where I end every day in here because I can see the pretty white stars high above the big black hand and the little black hand. Good night world, please don't forget me. I'm coming back some rainy day.