

Advice, Value & Care

Winter 2017

HAEMOCLOBIN  
No. 2

KEEP ALL MEDICINES  
OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

### a special thank you

I've read many a zine in my time, but among the first was TELEGRAM by Maranda Elizabeth, along with their 24-hour zine LITTLE ACORNS. Maranda writes so compassionately and effectively about self-care under capitalism, gender, mental illness, the beauty of small moments and friendship; it was their writing that inspired me to write about my own experiences and put them out into the world.

I'd like to say thank you to Maranda as their zines have been a light for me in dark times, and a fire under my ass during the good ones.

Maranda writes a fantastic blog at [www.marandaelizabeth.com](http://www.marandaelizabeth.com), and has a couple of published books. I strongly encourage you to check them out.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY  
LEFT BLANK. BECAUSE  
FUCK YOU, THAT'S WHY.



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quinnology@protonmail.com

Please feel free to get in contact with me, I'd love to connect with more zinesters and snail mail lovers!

Rory, Dave, Sheridan, Belinda, Sim, Gemma, Holly, and Sal.

Special thanks to:

This issue of CRAYONHEAD was fuelled by Lorde, imaginary cigarettes, conversations with Dave, tears, suicidal ideation, paranoia, Fiona Apple, Placebo, veggie pizza, justified rage, blue hair dye, The Regrettes, actual regret.

## outro outro outro

I've worked on this zine for like 3 months now, and the current draft for 4 weeks. There were a few points where I didn't think I was going to be around long enough to publish it, but I surprised myself and here it is! I'm actually quite proud of myself. I survived winter and I finished a zine. Now I can enjoy the spring feeling like I've made the

best of being stuck inside in the cold.

Writing a zine is very different from writing a blog post. It's far too easy to just sit on things I've written and not do anything with them. It takes willpower to get it all down, edited and printed/photocopied. I learned an important lesson the hard way: always finish all your writing before starting on layouts.

## intro intro intro

Starting a perzine has been a challenge, and not just because I broke both of my typewriters in the process of writing this zine. Mostly it's been due to over thinking, fixating on things like layout and images to avoid writing, because when I write I have to be honest with myself, and if I'm being truly honest I'm not doing so great.

So, rather than attempting to write to a theme, and create amazing layouts like I was, I'm just going to write what comes naturally. The writing is the important part. I write every day: in my journal, on my blog, in my notebook of zine ideas. It's easy to write when I know it's going to be locked away in a notebook, or only known to anonymous strangers on the Internet, but it's so much harder to be open with people that know me. I suppose in a way this zine is an effort to change my feelings about that, to express myself and make connections in a way that I feel comfortable with.

Honestly I think part of my apprehension comes from the reactions I get when I talk about my life in person. I'm 24 years old and I've been homeless twice, moved interstate alone as a teenager, survived an abusive relationship, been a sex worker for several years, changed my name, had plastic surgery and several life-changing drug experiences, been diagnosed with several severe mental illnesses, and done a lot of other weird, random, terrifying and absurd shit that other people don't know how

to react to. But to me, this is just my life.

So here it is, on paper. I hope you find it as interesting as I do.

Love, Q <3



It's Wednesday evening and I'm sitting at my computer still reeling from the intensity of my life the past week. I thought I was getting my life on track, I thought I was doing okay, but that was kind of a lie. Yeah I'm handling uni (barely, but so what? Isn't everyone?) and able to leave the house alone but I've become so emotionally isolated that it's almost physically painful. The truth is I've stalled since I stopped seeing my psychologist last September. She retired from private psychology to work full time with refugees. I'm surprised that I don't have any hard feelings towards her for leaving. She was very good at her job and it makes me happy to think that other people will be able to flourish the way that I have with her help.

CW: doctors, medication, suicide

baby, did you forget to  
take your meds?

Anyway, it's thanks in no small part to gothladyshrink that I'm the person I am today, though I'm sure she'd disagree. "But you're the one who's done all the work," she would say. She was very good that way. She knew I had a lot of anxiety and fear around phones and interaction in general, so we'd always text about appointments so I didn't have to call. She'd sign hers with smiley faces to combat my instinctual

assumption that anyone talking to me automatically is angry.  
(#littleabusesurvivorthings)

At some point in 2015 I had to admit that I couldn't handle anything anymore. I'd been struggling with suicidal ideation for as long as I can remember, but it eased up a lot once I broke up with my ex, had a safe place to live and found some more supportive people to hang out with. I felt hope for the first time. I remember there was a period of about two, maybe three weeks in 2014 where I woke up every day and the first thought in my head *wasn't* about how I wished I didn't wake up. It was

Love - Yellow Rider Beat  
Fiona Apple - Sleep to Dream  
Halsey - Angel on Fire  
The Regretters - Seashore  
Placebo - Commercial  
for Lem  
Sioxsie & the Banshees  
- Dear Prudence

21st  
PLAYLIST

person more, make mix CDs for my friends, write letters to other zinesters, and follow my friend Holly's advice when she told me "Start your fucking band already."

I feel like I'm in that leading-up-to-30 phase that's so often undervalued by people who aren't right in the middle of it. I'm figuring out what my priorities are in life, how I want to spend my time,

the most fulfilling ways to interact with people. I don't see living online factoring into my life the way it has into my past. Honestly, it's a bit sad because I'm a transhumanist at heart, and I had great hopes for the Internet, but we have a lot of work to do in the real world before that dream can become a reality.



J E T R S

ARE

people

MAYBE  
O TMAYBE  
the  
INTERNEJ

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She was intelligent, compassionate, gentle, and goth as fuck. She walked into the waiting room before our first appointment, and I knew as soon as I saw her long black hair that was shaved on one side, red lipstick and cat-eye liner, tall boots and long flowing skirts that we'd get along great. Over the years we've both gone through several strange hairstyles and fashion choices, and it was always amusing to me that we had that

the same clinic a few days a week. He was a very good GP, the first I'd ever spoke to about my gender issues and who told me there were options for non-binary trans people seeking physical transition in Australia, but that's another story. He hooked me up with the psych, saying that she had done her dissertation on Borderline Personality Disorder (which I was kind of diagnosed with at 18, also another story) and that he thought I'd get on well. He was right.

My old psychologist was a young woman my GP recommended to me who worked in

in common. I saw her for around four years, beginning when I was still with my abusive ex-fiancé, through the break up with him, discovering doof culture, making a whole bunch of new friends, beginning to explore

polyamory, moving, plastic surgery, a bunch of shit. I had no idea that having the same psych for so long would have so many benefits.

Before I found her, I bounced around between shrinks here in Melbourne. I did precisely one module of a Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) course where my individual counsellor was an obnoxious cuntbag who told me scare stories about another sex worker client of his getting aids to scare me into quitting Working. He was a real fucking piece of work, but at the time I didn't have the backbone to question anyone who acted like they had authority. I really wish I'd reported him.



stable emotional state only to have it blown to smithereens when Aunt Flo decided to visit again. Being hungry or tired made me non-functional, and my constant state of exhaustion and frustration induced a self-destructive frenzy in me that made me sure death was the only answer. What was the point of trying to make a life if my emotional state could be thrown into such extreme chaos by daily events? What the fuck was wrong with me that I couldn't handle these tiny obstacles?

incredible. But somewhere along the line things started to crumble again. I couldn't keep up with uni, socialising was agonising, I was constantly exhausted and thought about suicide all the time. I didn't understand why, I was doing everything I was supposed to: eating regularly, trying to socialise, could maybe exercise more but it was so hard to leave bed. Every time I got my period the hormone shenanigans would make life unbearable. I'd spend weeks getting myself back into a

At some point in the middle of that course of meds, the fabulous GP suddenly moved back to England, with no warning. That combined with my shrink moving on left me dealing with my shit alone. Granted, my psych had given me several months heads up and recommended a new psych for me, but I guess I froze up. The first step was seeing a GP and getting a referral and a new mental health care plan. Given my previous experiences with GPs I didn't have it in me to go shopping for one. So, it ended up going the way most things do when I don't know who to ask for help: it drifted to the background of my mind while I coped with everyday life.

Now it's been a year since I last saw a psychologist, and I've been on 50mg of Zoloft daily for a year and a half. Well... mostly. A few weeks ago, I decided to come off the medication, for several reasons. Not having a GP I trusted to advise me, I relied on my own research for guidance. I dropped down to half a dose for a week, then intended to take 25mg on alternating days for at least a week. As is my way, I kind of just forgot and then said, "Well, let's see how

For now I'm going to focus on adjusting to this strange new world I've discovered. I fear I may be verging into Neo-Luddite territory but whatever. In the spirit of self-acceptance I'm rolling with it. I'm going to hang out with people in

Don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those people who get mad about people posting photos of their lunch or make up selfies every day. I love that shit. The problem is I only have the energy to care about the tiny details of a few peoples' lives, and I prefer for that to be a select few people, rather than a few hundred.

Little details of their lives when I saw them, and I didn't need the people that lived far away on Facebook because I didn't interact with them often enough to have the motivation to care about the tiny details of their lives.

Recently though, I've noticed the Internet (mostly social media, but other parts too) doesn't feel so homey anymore. It's become far too close to real life, too commercialised, too consumerist. I'm learning more about the awful things that Facebook has done, and continues to do, and I'm stunned. It's horrifying to understand as an adult that the platforms that facilitated most of my development as a social creature for the past decade of my life basically exist to exploit me as a product.

Lately I've been learning how to exist offline. I'm not as alone anymore, and my world is less dangerous than it used to be, so I have less need to immediately escape. I will always treasure the memories of sneaking onto the family computer after my mum had gone to bed and trawling through old Marilyn Manson Geocities fan sites (during the mid-2000s! I was a late bloomer) and obsessing over YouTube videos of weird cabaret bands. Ah, the Good Olde Days™.



Deactivating Facebook has been scary. I did so earlier this year before a minor surgery, and it was the loneliest week of my life. None of the people who promised to visit me did so in the week I was bedridden, and even though I'd given out my phone number no one texted or called me. I took this as a sign that a lot less people cared about me than the number of people who claimed to. When I made a new Facebook, I only added a smaller number of people I either saw almost daily, or people who lived far away I wanted to keep in contact with. After a while I realised I didn't need the people I saw super regularly on Facebook, because I could just talk to them about the

friends of mine already wrote letters to each other regularly and appreciated pens and stationary as much as I do. Connecting over disconnection.

For now though, the 'Net and I are on a break. Now that I've started to disengage from living life completely online I see how thoroughly it affects my life and it scares me. Not so much the online part, but the fact that so much of what we do online has become centralized and restricted in the interests of for-profit companies. I don't understand how other people don't see how dangerous that is, even when it's right in front of their faces.

I think the final straw was learning how companies like Facebook and Google use addiction psychology to make their products as addictive as possible. That explains why I've had such a hard time getting away from it. But it's been one week (since you

looked at me) and I'm very, very slowly starting to find ways to connect with people IRL. I suppose my love of zines and snail mail has helped because it shows there was connection before we were all connected. It helped to discover some

Effexor was the worst for side effects. I couldn't taste or smell anything, colours disappeared and

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Saturday 9am-2pm  
Sunday 10am-2pm  
Public holidays Closed

Eventually I realised it wasn't my fault. It made me feel awful to admit how powerless I was in the face of my depression and anxiety, my flashbacks, my mood swings. Emotion took a few more months for me to actually be able to ask for help, but I did. I saw my GP and he put me on Zoloft. I was optimistic. I had been on a couple of SSRI meds before, Lexapro, Effexor, Mirtazapine, since I was about 16.

couldn't have orgasms, let alone a libido. I was only on it because my shitty ex was taking it and didn't want to be on it alone, so he told me to go to the doctor and ask them to put me on it. Of course, being the apathetic super clinic doctors they were, they did.

This guy though, he was much better. He listened. I've never had a GP that made me feel so listened to. They always talk over me or try to get me out of the room more quickly so they can see other patients, but not this guy.

He suggested a course of Zoloft, for between 6 and 12 months, just to give my brain a bit of a hand figuring out how to deal with all the serotonin I suddenly had floating around. Like I said, I was optimistic. He made me feel like I could get better. Between him and gothladyshrink I felt like I if couldn't conquer my demons entirely, then I could at least do battle with them. Now I can safely say that going on this course of medication has been one of the best decisions of my life.



that more in line with my values, like reading a book, writing in my journal, or contacting a friend directly. Going cold turkey has been difficult, especially since a huge amount of people I know use Facebook for organizing and advertising gigs, creative collaboration, finding places to live, selling and buying things. Granted, I'm missing out on a lot, but at the same time, I feel like it's better for my mental health to

I spent this past weekend out at a friend's place, out past the suburban sprawl where there are cows and rabbits and rolling green hills. I liked the slower-paced feeling, the lack of external stimulation. Now that I'm back home, my usual routine muscle memory kicks in, and I keep reaching for my phone even though it's off. I keep opening my browser and typing "fac..." even though I don't have a Facebook account to open. I'm running out of websites to type into the URL bar when I feel bored or lonely or anxious. My goal is to replace those habits with ones

## too many friends

I finally deactivated all of my Facebook profiles. It's been 7 days since I've ventured into the dreaded blue-and-white hellscape. I'm slowly trimming down my interaction with feed-based social networks. Earlier this year I deleted my Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram, keeping only my art IG (which has, admittedly gathered a few slightly personal

posts like selfies but whatever) and deactivated my 10-year-old Facebook account, as well as the younger one with a fake name I tried using to clear out all the crap and regain some anonymity on the net. It didn't work. I ended up making yet another one, and admittedly it was easier to use because it didn't have 10 years worth of likes clogging up the algorithm, but my feed was still mis-ordered and full of advertising, so I avoided it apart from those moments where my anxiety demands that I distract myself.

I went to see her that day because of the throat thing, and because I needed her to sign a medical certificate for a Centrelink exemption so that I didn't have to add compulsory job-hunting and fortnightly Job Service Provider appointments on top of the mountain of shit I was already dealing with. She asked what the problem was, and I started rattling off the standard list of symptoms and acronyms, but she stopped me and asked more specific questions like, "How does it affect your everyday life?" and started to get me to elaborate.

I'm going to call this new GP Dr Phil for anonymity reasons. I've seen her a few times over the last few months, but the last time I saw her was what made me want to see her as my regular GP. I'd bounced between her and another doctor at that clinic, but I liked her the best.

## Dr Phil

Before long I was crying in her office. It had been a very long time since a GP has been so earnest with me. It's very easy to get stuck in the medical model when dealing with bureaucracy, especially Centrelink, and I had forgotten what it was like

to have a GP that cares about me. She asked about my PTSD diagnosis, and I ended up giving her a brief overview of my entire fucking life. We talked a little bit about how I'd already gotten a referral to the new psych several months ago and hadn't followed it up yet.

your favourite pub. The inside of your car, petting down the freeway,

"Right, well that's the place to start. I want you to come back and see me in two weeks, because if I left it up to you I'd probably only see you once a year," she said with a gentle smile. "Then we can start working on a plan to help you get better."



The funny bit is I finally did get around to seeing a good GP like the day before that as I had this awful throat thing I figured I needed antibiotics for.

The next couple of days consisted of horrendous mood swings, lots of crying, dissociating, and a meltdown that resulted in me breaking my typewriter, trashing my room and setting fire to the paper bag that my medication came in. (I'd just like to take a minute here and say that my house mates were surprisingly cool about it once we got the smoke alarms to shut up and they made sure everything was okay in that regard.)

! it goes." It did not go well. I did have the first non-nightmare dream I've had in about a year (I was feeding a Labrador puppy!) but after I dropped off the meds when I should have gone to alternating days, I received some awful news that my best friend had been viciously attacked, and my world spun into chaos again.

Better? I had forgotten that was even a thing. I've kind of just come to accept that this is what my life is like now. Like, it's the best it's ever been, how much better can it get? Apparently, at least a little bit.

For now, I've gone back on 25mg Zoloft daily, and I'm going to talk to Dr Phil about it the next time I see her. I think I can trust this, and it's time to get to work.

**Take medicine only as directed.  
If in doubt ask your pharmacist.**

Over the past year or so I've become increasingly skeptical about the role and the lives of those around me. I grew up knowing the Internet as a safe place away from the "real world" where I could meet people who shared the same interests as me, where I could be myself and communicate in a way that made sense to my confused, autistic ass.

I'm thinking of getting some business cards to hand out when people ask "Do you have Facebook?" so I can slide it across the table to them and say "No, but you can contact me literally ANYWHERE ELSE (besides Twitter) because I don't have Twitter."

Besides, it's retro. Like living in the 90s.

I learn how to live without that stuff on me more than I need to. And I don't need to, at all. It's one website out of millions, and there are dozens of other ways to contact people.

I can't change my name again, I've found the right one for me, but now everyone knows it and it's not secret any more.

(Anymore is not a word. It should be. How come I'm not allowed to make up words?)

No words, only passwords. Everything is a code. Everything has a secret meaning, or is the key to something.

Everyone knows something I don't. That's why they're so happy connecting, that's why it's not hell for them. They're happy in the blue and white sea of ads because they don't see the danger. They feel safe, and I can't convince them it's a lie.

The sky is blue and white and far-reaching, inescapable and it is falling. Everyone is trapped and there's nothing I could do about it anyway, but I at least want to try.



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The first time I had it, it changed my life. A close friend had told me that there were trials going on in the US, using MDMA to treat PTSD. Apparently, it calms down the anxiety centers in the brain, allowing you to access the memories without fear and instinctual avoidance, which means that you can talk about them, write about them, draw your memories, moving them around the brain and rewriting them until your brain understands the difference between past and present. That was then, this is now.

Apart from the nightmares, the complete lack of libido, the constant sweating, and the dry mouth, the biggest reason I want to get off Zoloft is so that I can do drugs again, mostly MDMA.

Psycho-unt  
CW: drugs

about the trials I had heard about, treating PTSD in the same way I had been. I figured I would make even more progress in I had someone trained to guide me through exploring and processing my trauma.

He had never heard of such a thing. He emailed a handful of his colleagues who also kept up with the most recent medical advances. Only one of them had heard of anything like that, and that was because he'd seen it on *60 Minutes*.

So, that was that. This life-changing treatment I'd found, and that was being trialled in several other countries including our neighbours in New Zealand, was just flat-out unknown and unavailable to me.

I'm furious that this treatment is unavailable here, and that I, as well as so many others, instead have to contend with medications that only

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But school, but the Brink, but every venue that hosts classes and gigs you want to go to uses Facebook. Facebook is a mirror of the real world and you can't escape either.

I was going to log in to Facebook and change my name. Maybe it's better if I don't. I haven't been online since my breakdown on Monday and I feel much better for it.

There are children making loud noises at the library, I can't tell if they're laughing or crying, and I can't get the wifi to work even though the password is my own birth date.

Can feelings be hacked? Is that what trauma is? Are triggers just DDoS attacks?

treat the symptoms of PTSD, like anxiety and depression, that have severe side-effects that can be downright dangerous, let alone affect our quality of life.

Who decided this? Who saw this being trialled elsewhere and instead of thinking, "Maybe we should look into this more, it could really help some people who are struggling," just said, "No. Drugs are bad." Who took this decision from us?

I'm so tired of my life being in the hands of strangers who don't give a shit.

"Pharmacy caring about your health"

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We don't have the infrastructure to be connected constantly. Things drop out, limits are hit, suddenly you can't use your IoT fridge anymore because it's been hacked

they want us to always be connected, making it impossible not to be, but don't stop to question whether the connection is real.

They always want us to be connected, always. Take your phone, tiny computer everywhere with you, don't turn your data off because all your apps are internet based. Trying to avoid Facebook messages? Just turn your data off! But wait, then you lose your biggest coping tool. You don't have the internet connection for that anyway, you live in Australia dumbass.

## paranoia

how little impact that would truly have.

## hell on earth

CW: suicide

I was in Centrelink for maybe 10 minutes yesterday to hand in my medical certificate, and I still saw some awful shit there. Every time I'm there I see someone crying and losing their shit. Last time it was a middle-aged woman crying on the phone about how the police didn't believe her. This time it was a young woman crying on the phone, and when the security guard came over to her, she stormed out, hysterical, saying that no one cared about Aboriginal people, and she was going to kill herself when she got home.

How many times have I been in that situation? I used to fantasize about getting my hands on a shotgun and blowing my brains out in a Centrelink office as weird statement of revenge against the system that has made me suffer so much. The more I thought about it though, the more I realized

For a whole night, I actually enjoyed the act of existing. And most importantly, I could talk about the things I was thinking. Everything I'd been holding in since my break up with my abusive ex suddenly didn't hurt to think about anymore. I could actually talk about it. I could make someone else understand the violence, the fear, the self-hatred and feelings of dread. The feeling of

that the concept of Happiness was just some imaginary thing everyone had to keep working towards, a mirage to conjure up when everything got too much and I couldn't handle the thought of living another day, let alone another several decades. I had no idea it was real. I felt safe. I felt calm. I felt close to the people around me, instead of paranoid and hyper vigilant.

So I tried it, and I felt what it was like to be happy for the first time ever. Up until then I always thought

hopelessness, feeling like I wasted my first years in Melbourne, and as an adult, in an even more abusive situation than the one I ran away from.

The talking was the most important part.

Being able to access those memories without fear and instinctively trying to suppress them and avoid the feelings attached meant that I could re-write them. Talking about them in past-tense helped my brain to file them away into the past so that I wasn't constantly re-experiencing all those horrible experiences every time I was triggered by someone yelling or the sound of a door slamming.

By taking MDMA and talking about my trauma with people I trusted I started to gain control over my life again. After I'd tried it a few times, I decided to ask my doctor