

Reflection

Musical Odyssey: From Pain To RecoveryMarjorie Jacobs¹¹Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston, United States of America**Musical Odyssey: From Pain To Recovery**

Most days our mind wanders, races about,
but life hums along with our routines
until it doesn't. With a snap of the back
everything changes, safe ground swept away.

I am riding the roller coaster of fear and worry
anticipating the next nosedive, chest heaving,
heart pounding, breath in my throat tightening,
throbbing, searing, spasming sciatica
pain colonizing my body-mind
monopolizing days-nights.

When daily meditation isn't enough
I'm home calling doctors, writing emails,
waiting for callbacks, replies – that don't come
or arrive too late – my primary care doc *MIA*.
Calls from PA's, RN's, assistants trickle in
leaving me waiting 6 weeks until I'm seen for vertigo.

How can I help you? the Chief of Internal Medicine asks.
I can give you oxycodone, cortisone, gabapentin, meclizine, Ativan....
"So easy to get hooked," re-plays in my head.
"No... no drugs," this "noncompliant" patient responds.
After 10 minutes he's typing an email to the psychiatrist
who performs a lumbar epidural that fails to relieve.
I find a surgeon.

Another kind of doctor gives me a goal and prescription:
perform Puccini's *Messa Di Gloria*,
Bach, and Pergolesi's *The Magnificat*,
my medicine to be practiced daily alone,
weekly with others seeking spiritual and social health.
My mind now is anchored in the present with a purpose:
every day learning bar by bar line by line page by page

the Latin lyrics, notes, rests, rhythms
transformed into mighty melodies.
No time to water seeds and roots of fear, negativity,
I'm too busy focusing my brain making new
connections bringing pleasure, new
memories growing positivity.

With my surgeon's blessings 4 weeks after a micro-discectomy
I'm on stage with an orchestra and 150 fellow choristers.
Making music we transcend becoming heavenly beings
flying with faith, hearts soaring.
singing above the strings, horns, timpani –
KY-ri-e e-le-i-son, CHRI-ste, e-le-i-son...
Qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta, pec-ca-ta mun-di.

Our doctor conducting the last piece,
Bach's *Dona Nobis Pacem, Grant us peace*,
brings everyone back to earth. in community
giving us music
the best medicine for now.

Biographical Statement

Marjorie Jacobs (MA in Social Change with a CAGS in Integrative Holistic Health Studies) is a psychiatric rehabilitation clinician at the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation where she designs and teaches promising group interventions for adults diagnosed with a serious mental illness based on the applications of mindfulness practice (meditation, cognitive reframing, music listening, singing, dancing, and poetry), positive psychology, and neuroscience with the goals of developing stress resilience and facilitating mental health recovery.

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