



Charles  
Michael  
Craven

The pill  
is a man's  
best friend

scarsuo!e!gnd  
education

# The Event

Like a foggy dream  
I watch myself grab for the pill bottle –  
at first, just a few each time.

I dial some numbers,  
but all I get on the other end is answering machines.

My hand moves back to the bottles,  
but this time a handful of green and blue pills  
emerge as if a whale had decided to capsized a boat off the Pacific.

I ease them down with a gallon of water.

Then I repeat.

Blackness.

Then there are faces –  
a love in Japan  
the lady who bore me  
my own,  
and as if cold water slapped me with a backhand  
I awake.

chest still pounding,  
breath still labored,  
mind now spinning.

Blackness.

New faces appear –  
this time with scrubs on.

I look down on a person with EKG pads on,  
drinking charcoal liquid  
and receiving a shot of adrenaline.

The person signs a death certificate.

Blackness.

Then light.

A whole bunch of light.

An overdose

## The Move

When I finally came out of the fog  
a man in a uniform was there to pick me up.

“You have two choices,” the policeman said. “Come with me to the station  
or go to the mental health unit at a hospital in Austin.”

I was puzzled.  
He noticed.

“You drove your car here son,” he said flatly. “It is a crime or you can get  
help. I get paid either way.”

I didn’t remember driving, but I had been to jail.

“A new experience wouldn’t hurt,” I answered after what seemed like a day.

We got into his car and headed downtown.

I wasn’t all there yet in my head,  
still ringing from the night before with enough Xanax and Kolonopin to kill  
a small horse.

“You’re lucky to be alive,” he said from the front seat.

“I’ve never been in the back of one of these things without handcuffs,” I replied.

We laughed  
and he even let me pick the radio station.

I just noticed the trees in the distance,  
the other motorists who had succeeded in moving forward in the day  
and the brightness of a sun I had forgotten existed.

It was the best road trip I've ever taken.

Once I was there  
I wrote  
got blood taken a couple of times a day  
ate  
wrote  
got my vitals checked  
and took medicine –  
not that different from any other day.

## Relapse

this is the type  
of situation  
I used to murder with a pen.

an accidental overdose,  
a trip to the emergency room,  
a cop ride to a rehab center,  
a room full of subjects with disorders to dissect  
with a pen and paper

yet,  
I am blank –  
no emotions  
no rant  
no stand on either side of the fence.

just one thing on my mind,  
and to admit who or what that is  
would be worse than the chicken scratch  
I just used to murder  
this dead tree.

but losing the way that I lose  
I get grey hair,  
so taking a bruising the way I've been bruised  
you'll see why I don't care,  
but respect my mind  
because with this pen and pad  
I can stab sharper than  
the big guy behind you  
with a shank at your local state pen.

## A Bright Side

never thought jail was that bad during my stays,  
but after some time in rehab  
I don't think I could ever go back.

in jail, I had waited my whole life to be somebody  
until you wake up and realized you needed a visit note just to see somebody  
up all night, in all whites wondering where it went so wrong,  
hoping you could sneak an extra roll of toilet paper to use as a pillow  
surrounded by animals and dirty ass cops.

rehab is like a hotel with nurses,  
reclining chairs,  
a day room,  
co-ed  
and better food.

the nurses are even hot  
and no one carries a gun.

how did it take me this long to get here?

## Good Times

I'd still smoke a pack  
even with a patch on  
if they'd just let me outdoors  
for two hours.

to feel the cold.  
to feel the wind.  
to see the fields.  
to see the cars.

those things you never stop to appreciate  
a man locked on the inside of a mental hospital  
wants the most.



## Detox

feed an alligator tail  
to the circus elephant.

plant the clouds  
in your backyard garden.

listen to the sound  
of a gummy drop bear.

drive the highway  
straight to the center of the universe.

this whole thing is backwards,  
just an argument of semantics  
but if you can understand one thing –  
just get these spiders out of my skin  
and let me out of this ward.

## Picture Perfect

no cigarettes  
a room full of cast members from a Jack Nicholson movie  
and haven't had an anxiety pill  
since I took about 50  
the night before  
before I blacked out  
somewhere between my house and the emergency room.

the spiders are crawling in my skin  
my ears are ringing  
my heart rate is at the level of a marathon runner  
and my brain moves faster than the pen will allow.

I just need one –  
but hey –  
maybe I'll catch my second pill.

## Truth

the tears in my little brother's voice  
said it all –  
I had messed up.

still not sure why I did it.  
still not sure how many pills I took.  
still not sure how my throat choked them all down.

but a day removed  
and 24 hours of emergency rooms  
a room at the mental institution  
and countless visits from doctors  
has proven once again  
that I am Craven –  
Lord of the Idiots.

## Wrong side of the Moon

doomed to solitude  
on a boat en route to the middle of a triangle,  
I can meet girls even in rehab  
but they're always just passing images  
on a Polaroid train  
set to another location.

all I want is conversation  
honesty  
and someone to hold that is mine  
at the end of the day.

the ironic thing is  
they have put me on more medicine in here  
than what it took to be committed.

once upon a time,  
there was a man who died  
and lived happily ever after.

soon they can include my chapter.

## Conviction

the only ally is the pen –  
always too late  
too soon  
or too blind.

sometimes I feel I need the train wreck,  
as if I'm slowing down to watch my own accident  
on the side of the road  
like this whole globe is just spinning for me to  
make my own movie.

the boredom in life is too much for one brain to handle,  
so I reach out to the beautiful hands  
but they never seem to keep the same time.

baby, I know you're out there waiting on the same thing,  
so just jump in the water  
and help me get rid of the waves.

just remember what the corner man says  
in a heavyweight boxing match,  
“you have to swim  
without getting wet.”

but instead of on your couch  
or in your bed  
at least I'm still in your head  
counting down the hours until they let me out,  
but the clocks in the asylum  
run slower than a fat man to a diet coke.

## The cliff

life on the edge is crowded,  
as the flock veers towards the middle  
the best of us stick to our own patch of green  
next to the fence.

all outcasts in our own way.

either to drugs  
to alcohol  
to family abuse  
neglect  
broken hearts  
or sanity.

I've suffered them all,  
seen them all,  
but I've never seen you,  
and until we meet on that ledge  
I can't promise  
I'll stop making the same mistakes  
on the edge we all call  
society.

## Reflection

I'm not good at much –  
always had a way with words,  
always been good at finishing second in a race  
for a girl's heart,  
always could drink,  
snort,  
smoke  
and flirt with the best of them.

in the end though,  
I wind up face down in the muck.

only I to blame,  
the mirror becomes the enemy for the moment,  
as I hope for what I see inside  
to change what the mirror reflects  
the next morning.

## Like a Snuggie

in a room full of crazies,  
suicide cases,  
drug addicts  
and lost souls

I feel right at home.

not because I want to follow in the footsteps  
of the homeless around me,  
but because these people are more real  
than the suits on Wall Street,  
the lawyers in the court house  
and the happy wanderers whistling down the street.

the concrete jungle is where I thrive  
because I've always loved a good circus.

If only it didn't smell so bad.



## Shelter

the hardest person to forgive  
is the one who stares right back in the mirror,  
but at some point,  
the reflection just has to let go.

my hands have had gun residue,  
coke residue  
weed residue  
and that of pain.

I can still smell the metallic of the first pool of blood  
I ever came across.  
I can still see the first set of eyes  
that rolled back in their head.  
I can still feel the first snort, hit, injection  
that was ever put in my body.

a decade of abuse has put me in here  
and I wish I could say I wanted to stop,  
but I still have more fun to have,  
more hangovers to overcome  
more people to lose.

the lone thing I am ready for  
is a girl to call my own.

we can always wish.

# Maybe

Am I crazy?

I believe in love.  
I believe in words.  
I believe in peace,  
attraction,  
a good kiss,  
a world without gun shots  
and a nice glass of wine  
with good friends.

Am I crazy?

I'm a writer,  
an odd thinker,  
a flirt,  
a seeker,  
a person who believes every  
                  molecule on this earth  
                  has something to offer.

Am I crazy?

Maybe.

Are you?

## Object of Doubt

so far,  
I've had two cups of charcoal to flush my system,  
four pills at three times a day,  
two shots in my hip,  
my blood and vitals recorded too many times to count,  
four interviews with four doctors.

all centered around my mental state.

I'm fine,  
but the amount of pills I took  
to arrive at this facility  
makes any response  
less than believable.

## Stick Figures

I just need to see a face –  
any face –  
that doesn't have a wrist band indicating craziness  
or a person in scrubs  
indicating they passed a few  
medical classes.

just a face –  
any face –  
that can turn my frown  
upside down  
and my dick  
right side up.

## Too Late

on a 48-hour county lock  
at a local mental institution  
because of the fact no one would answer the phone  
caused me to inhale enough pills  
to kill a small horse.

I guess the three days of cocaine induced insomnia  
or the fact I violated my breathalyzer  
and am currently awaiting the judgment on if I go to jail  
or the fact I move to fast and take things to personally  
didn't help.

I just needed a voice –  
someone to talk to.  
someone to tell me it was going to be okay.  
someone to tell me tomorrow could be better.  
someone to not judge.

but no one picked up,  
and now I wait.

# Elevator

got put on the mental health ward,  
but I think they took me to the wrong floor.

if anything, I should be  
with all the addicts.

addiction has always been the drug of choice –  
marijuana,  
cocaine,  
purple drink,  
pills,  
sex,  
turmoil,  
happiness.

it all turns me on.

yet, the fact is  
they look at me like I was trying to end my life  
instead of chasing that next high,  
but one look at my Facebook page  
and you'd know  
I just wanted the pain to go away.

I just got the calls too late.

## A note is Needed

never thought about suicide much  
until they checked me into the psych ward  
at Shoal Creek in Austin, Texas.

now, I want to blow my brains out.

if the windows weren't locked  
I'd take my final jump  
in my favorite city.

everyone has their stories.  
everyone has their past.

all I care about is the future,  
and I promise whoever reads this  
that as soon as they let me out this door  
I'll light up a cigarette,  
stroll down the street  
and work on never coming back  
to this place

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## Warning Signs

the heart races,  
goose bumps appear,  
breath gets real deep,  
then real short  
and my mind goes blank.

SEX?

Nope.

a fucking panic attack –  
which are very similar in terms of stimulation of the mind  
when one stops to really think about it  
except I'm really good at one,  
and since I'm sitting in a hospital for mental breakdowns,  
not so much at the other.



# The pill is a man's best friend

Charles Michael Craven

## Author and Purpose

Charles Michael Craven is a 25-year old warrior against the inhumane crackdown on sobriety. He lives around Austin, jumping from couches of friends to beds of family members. This chapbook was written within 24 hours of a severe overdose while in a mental hospital. It was copied straight from pad.

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