



Hope

IS FOR THE INSANE

by Jazzmin Lewis

I started a new journal recently. One to add to the six notebooks that have chronicled my life and the struggles that have come and gone. In the cover, I wrote one sentence:

“You of all people deserve to be delusional.”

I can’t remember if I’ve ever given myself permission to believe in myself. I suppose I was too busy waiting for permission from people who relied on me not knowing myself to do so. However, there was one thing I never needed permission for...Hope.

Small, but far from weak, it stayed with me in my darkest hours. Even as I forgot too much of myself, it lingered. A warm coal in the furnace. I’m glad I’m alive to see it spark to life.

If spending my 20s in and out of therapy has given me anything, it has given me the insight to understand that a lot of the time, it’s not you. If it is, it is both not your fault and your sole responsibility to take care of it. When you understand the call is coming from inside the house, you are presented with a choice.

I could have ignored the feelings and thoughts that something was wrong. I could have ignored the fact that I didn’t know who I was. I could have ignored the feelings that I was being abused and manipulated by selfish and miserable people.

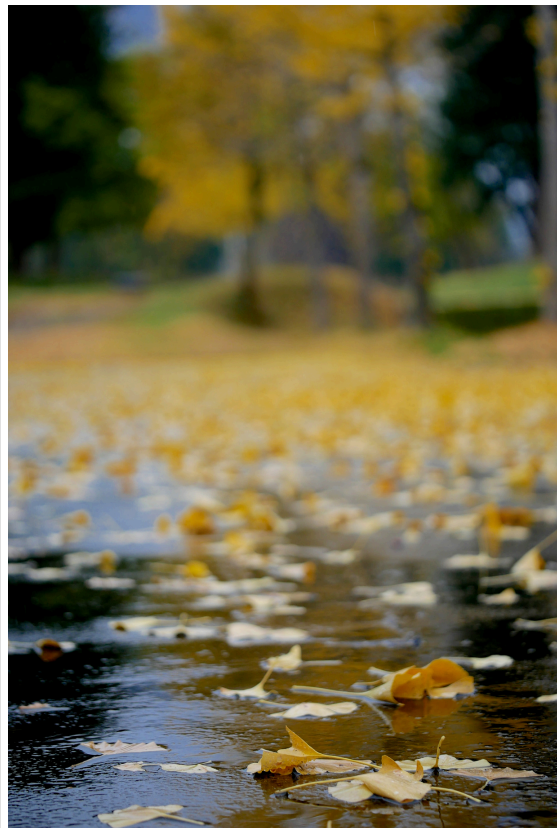
I could have let myself and my child be swept away in that. Starting therapy branded me as “over sensitive”, “difficult”, and “crazy”.

I found this as new found freedom. I had lost enough of myself to have found hope.

There was so much to make sense of at the start. I experienced layers of isolation and grief that I couldn't even label, however, loneliness began to have value once I understood the origins of my mental illness.

I learned to listen for my inner voice and heed it. I gained insight that burned away years of doubt and conditioning that came from years of abuse and trauma. More importantly, I gained my sense of self through questioning the world around me. Why did I expect anything different from people who were criticizing my changes?

Why do I expect so much from myself when I experience my own struggles in real time? Why do these memories make me feel dirty? How long am I going to feel like this? Is this worth it?



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The answers to these questions came in waves of excitement, depression, triumph, loss, happiness, and grief. Throughout it all, hope tempered the sadness. I managed to get back up after every pitfall because I hoped for something better. I hoped for better people and I found supportive, validating people who joined those who were already in my corner.

I hoped to remove hurtful people from my life and I learned how to stand up for myself. Becoming yourself is an experience that begs you to focus all of your energy on what you want. There will be people who see your change and think you've lost it. This is okay. Being hopeful looks a bit like going insane.



My name is **Jazzmin Lewis**. I'm a jack of all trades (master of none). When I'm not honing my writing talents, I keep my hands busy with fiber crafts, typewriter repair, and herbalism. My heart is warm as my mind is sharp, sharing my life with my daughter, stepdaughter, and partner.