



RenMentality

PERFORMERS

Eric Christopher Perry, tenor and Artistic Director
Alexander Nishibun, tenor
Kilian Mooney, tenor
Garry McLinn, tenor
Will Prapestis, baritone
Brian Church, baritone
Benjamin Pfeil, bass-baritone
Anthony Burkes Garza, bass and General Manager

Act 1: Come As You Are

Come As You Are

Kurt Cobain (1967-1994)

Ti vzoydi, solntse krasnoye

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Sechs Lieder für vierstimmigen Männerchor, Op. 33

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

1. **Der träumende See**
2. **Die Minnesänger**
3. **Die Lotosblume**
4. **Der Zecher als Doctrinair**
5. **Rastlose Liebe**
6. **Frühlingsglocken**

Act II: Jesus Don't Want Me for a Sunbeam

Jesus Don't Want Me for a Sunbeam

The Vaselines

Hymne an die Nacht

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Crucifixus

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Vita

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

Kilian Mooney, tenor
Benjamin Pfeil, piano

Our Prayer

Brian Wilson (b. 1942)

Blazhen, kto ulybajetsja

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Act III: Something in the Way

Something in the Way

Kurt Cobain (1967-1994)

When I look Back: Theme and Variations (World Premiere)

Jay Mobley (b. 1988)

Epilogue: All Apologies

All Apologies

Kurt Cobain (1967-1994)



National Alliance on Mental Illness

Massachusetts

CEO's on supporting those with mental health issues, train police officers on techniques to work with people in crisis, diversity training and a resource line.

NAMI Massachusetts is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving quality of life both for people with mental health issues and for their loved ones throughout the Commonwealth, through education, support, and legislative advocacy. We have affiliates statewide, whose mission is to provide free support and education programs with the help of peer and family volunteers. Our fundraising efforts enable us to offer our programs free of charge to the community, train our volunteers, and provide materials for our classes.

Storytelling and community outreach are powerful tools for preventing stigma. We go into schools and places of employment to educate teachers and

CEO's on supporting those with mental health issues, train police officers on techniques to work with people in crisis, diversity training and a resource line.

The images projected throughout the performance were created by participants in NAMI's Peer to Peer (P2P) program. P2P focuses on the key concepts of self-directed care, recovery, resiliency, and support that are essential to wellness and quality of life; and to full and meaningful lives for all people. In Massachusetts, P2P has incorporated Expressive Digital Imagery (EDI) using an iOS app called MyMoments. We provide technology to all P2P classes, so that every participant can try this unique form of self expression.

For more information about NAMI programs or to donate please call (580) 580-8541 or visit our web site www.namimass.org.

For information on how to navigate the mental health system please reach out to our COMPASS information and resource line by phone: 800-370-9085 (toll free) or email COMPASS@namimass.org. Trained peer and family volunteers assist thousands of people to access the services they need, including housing and legal assistance, disability and benefit information, peer and family support, employment, discharge rights and substance use services.

NAMI Massachusetts thanks the Renaissance Men and Jay Mobley for shining light on mental health and expressing the lived experiences of our peers in such a beautiful way.

Featured Composer: Jay Mobley (b. 1988)

JAY MOBLEY is a Somerville, Massachusetts-based composer, music director, and performer. He previously collaborated with Renaissance Men on their 2016 program *A Very RenMen Christmas*, for which he composed a setting of "O Magnum Mysterium." His critically-acclaimed score to the new play *Who Would Be King* ("ingenious" – *The Arts Fuse, Boston*; "the perfect compliment...to this epic tale" – *NETheatreGeek*) premiered at American Repertory Theater's OBERON venue in November 2015, returned to the stage in September 2016 at the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, and played at Ars Nova's Theater 511 in New York in March and April of 2017.

This season, Jay's music has been heard in Zeitgeist Stage Company's *Desire* at the Boston Center for the Arts. In May, he conducted the premiere of his new work for guitar orchestra, *Whim*, in a multidisciplinary production, *Sinestezija* ("Synesthesia"), in Belgrade, Serbia.

In 2015, a new stage adaptation of *Beowulf* by The Poets' Theatre (IRNE Nomination: Best Music Direction, Small Stage) featured Mobley's largely improvised score. Previous music direction credits include devised work with Liars & Believers (Cambridge, MA), collaboration with director Amanda Faye Martin on new works by Ike Holter and Stacy Kray, and NYSTI's Summer Theatre Institute.

Jay works collaboratively with a wide range of artists. He has created podcasts for a theater company in Austin, TX (Exchange Artists), served as a musical consultant for a Boston opera company (OperaHub), and led the arts program at an Adirondack summer camp (Fowler Camp & Retreat Center). He is highly active as a vocalist and guitarist throughout New England and New York.

Jay holds a MusB in music composition from Fredonia State University, and studied composition at New England Conservatory and conducting at Bard College Conservatory Conductors Institute.

When Eric Perry first asked me to write for this concert, the project looked very different. I had ideas for theatrical stylings, extended techniques, maybe even some staging and lighting design, and a few musical gestures, but no text. Initially, after toying around with a few truly horrible ideas (including having people write or call in anonymously to record their moments of psychological crisis – which, fortunately, I eventually realized was effectively setting up a hotline with no support system), and after some grueling talks with my mother regarding my own motivations for tackling the subject, we stumbled on the idea of crowdsourcing the texts I would use via mental health support groups. I got in touch with everyone

I could think of, including the Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association (MEDA), addiction recovery centers, and several branches and peer groups of NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness). There are histories of mental illness among my family and friends, so I turned there too. At this point I still had no idea what I was doing or why, but I was very behind schedule and badly needed texts. Source material.

My NAMI connections eventually bumped me up the line to some leading figures at NAMI Massachusetts, who ultimately partnered with us to host this event, and their help has proven invaluable in finding people with lived experience of mental illness who were willing to share their stories. I thought I wanted to be as far away from the storytellers as possible, to avoid influencing their voices. As with many other aspects of this project, I found I was wrong. I met with someone who works for NAMI Mass who had experience in telling her story, and she coached me through how I might go about interviewing – something completely foreign to me. I wanted honest stories, though, and face-to-face was the way to get them, she encouraged. Her story became one of the cornerstones of the piece.

I drove and rode the train to support centers, homes, diners, cafés, and parks to meet with people and hear their stories. I took long phone calls. My opener was always, “Do you have a story in mind you wanted to tell me?” I suppose I was expecting descriptions of darkest moments, or of what it’s like to live with mental illness, or strained relationships, or something like that. Those were not the stories I got. Sure, there were anecdotes about a rough patch here or a dark time there, a vague mention occasionally that things have always been hard – but overwhelmingly, people talked with me about just any old story that was important to them. You know, the mad dash between a summer job and college, sex, the way they named their child – the stuff of life. I found myself empathizing with all of them. This was no longer “source material.”

It was only about three interviews in that I realized what I’d been saying the whole time: I feel like people ought to be approached at face value, as humans, rather than through labels (say, “bipolar,” or “addict”) – but I hadn’t conceived the piece that way until I started really talking to people. I had been afraid people would misread my intentions as dismissive or, in fact, steeped in stigma. What I definitely did not want to do was write the classical-music stereotype of mental illness: the mad scene, the “other,” the spooky. No, I wanted human. It all became obvious – quilting, hiking, lovers: these WERE the stories. If I wanted the audience to hear these people, to humanize them, I would present them, flawed but beautiful, relatable, in exactly their own words.

So what you hear now are the words of the speakers, as they spoke them to me. I recorded and transcribed all my interviews (with the storytellers’ permission). They are edited down to usable portions, because the interviews were each about an hour and a half long, but I tried to preserve each speaker’s unique syntax, cadence, voice, and most importantly, story. There are stories about manic episodes, periods of anxiety, shock treatments, and so on – but there is also the moral ambiguity of the recovering drug addict who still prides himself on hustling but just tries to be nice; there is the story of the man who is dogged by his own self-conception; there is the redemptive message of the recovering alcoholic who has journeyed long and arrived at self-acceptance. This is the story of people who have been hurt and healed, who have lost and loved. This is the human story.

-Jay Mobley

RenMen Laments Recording Project

The 2016-17 season has proven tremendously exciting for RenMen, including eleven performances at such wonderful venues as the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Assumption College, Merrimack College, Colby College, the Connecticut Early Music Festival, the Nahant Music Festival, and at our beloved main stage venues, Saint Paul's Episcopal Church (Brookline), Old South Church (Boston), and Saint Peter's Episcopal Church (Cambridge). These performances have ranged in repertoire from early music to new commissions, from English part songs to Estonian folk tunes, from männerchor to pop music of the 1960s (and much, much more). And, thanks to the generosity of our many wonderful RenFriends, we have one more project on the books for this season - our first commercial record!

In July 2017, RenMen will record **RenMen Laments**, the concert program presented as the finale to our 2015-16 season. Thomas Tallis's immortal *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, performed with our ever shifting constellation of solo and tutti voices, is paired with Daniel Gawthrop's *The Promises of Isaiah the Prophet*, written for and premiered by Renaissance Men in June 2016. Isaiah's rapturous message of hope and everlasting joy effectively elevates the listener from the abyssal depths of Jeremiah's grief, and Gawthrop's evocative harmonies and virtuoso vocal lines provide a genuine tour-de-force for the RenMen voices. Also included on the recording are works by Pablo Casals, Darius Milhaud, and Patricia Van Ness. Grammy nominated recording engineer Chris Sclafani will act as producer for this album, which we plan to release in early 2018.

RenMen would like to offer our sincere thanks to the many wonderful RenFriends whose contributions have made this record possible:

Anonymous (9)	Linda Jayne Garza	Simon Nissen
The Henry Purcell Society of Boston	Carl & Jackie Gerhardt	Clara Osowski
Doug Anderson	Timothy & Jane Gillette	Brad Peloquin
Marius Bahnean	Ruth Golden	Karen Piatt-Moffitt
Martha Bancroft	Ben Golub	Sebastian M. Pascarella
Michael Behnke	Rosemary Halloran	Eric Christopher Perry
Tom Berryman	Daniel Heyer	Martie Perry
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David Eaton & Liza Zuniga	Lucy McVeigh	John E. Whipple
Liz Eschen	James Mobley	Jeremy Wong
Tom & Mary Eschen	Ann Mooney	Jennifer Wyman
Sharon Foreman	Gabriele Nishibun	Meagan Zantingh

All monetary contributions to Renaissance Men are fully tax deductible through Fractured Atlas. We rely upon the generosity of our donors to bring you the dynamic, varied, and insightful programs our audiences have grown to expect over the past three seasons. Please visit our website at www.renaissance-men.com for details about how you can contribute to our merry band!

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Ti vzoydi, solntse krasnoye

*Ti vzoydi, solntse krasnoye, ay!
Nad goroyu ti vozoydi, nad visokoyu.*

Rise, lovely red sun, ay!
Rise above the tall mountain.

*Nad dubravoyu vzoydi nad zelionoyu, ay!
Obogrey ti nas, dobrih molodstev.*

Rise above the verdant forest green, ay!
Warm us, fine fellows.

Der träumende See

*Der See ruht tief im blauem Traum
Von Wasserblumen zugedeckt;
Ihr Vöglein hoch im Fichtenbaum,
Daß ihr mir nicht den Schläfer weckt!*

The lake is at rest deep in a blue dream
covered by water lilies;
You, little bird high in the spruce tree,
Don't wake the sleeper!

*Doch leise weht das Schilf und wiegt
Das Haupt mit leichtem Sinn;
Ein blauer Falter aber fliegt
Darüber einsam hin.*

But the reeds quietly blow and balance
Their tops with easy sense;
But a blue moth flies
Over them, alone, towards them.

Die Minnesänger

*Zu dem Wettgesange schreiten
Minnesänger jetzt herbei;
Ei, das gibt ein seltsam Streiten,
Ein gar seltsames Turnei!*

Minnesingers now step up
To take part in the contest;
Ah! What strange feuding!
What a strange tourney!

*Phantasie, die schäumend wilde,
Ist des Minnesängers Pferd,
Und die Kunst dient ihm zum Schilde,
Und das Wort, das ist sein Schwert.*

Imagination is the minnesinger's
Wild and foaming steed,
And art serves him as a shield,
And the word is his sword.

*Hübsche Damen schauen munter
Vom bet Teppichten Balkon,
Doch die rechte ist nicht drunter
Mit der rechten Lorbeerkrone.*

Pretty ladies gaze cheerfully down
From the carpet-covered balcony,
But the right one is not among them
With the laurel crown.

*Andre Leute, wenn sie springen
In die Schranken, sind gesund;
Doch wir Minnesänger bringen
Dort schon mit die Todeswund.*

Other people, when they enter
The lists, are sound in body;
But we minnesingers already bring
With us our mortal wounds.

Die Lotosblume

*Die Lotosblume ängstigt
Sich vor der Sonne Pracht
Und mit gesenktem Haupte
Erwartet sie träumend die Nacht.*

The lotus flower is anxious
In the Sun's radiance,
And with hanging head
Waits, dreaming, for Night.

*Der Mond, der ist ihr Buhle
Er weckt sie mit seinem Licht,
Und ihm entschleierte sie freundlich
Ihr frommes Blumengesicht,*

The moon, who is her lover,
Awakens her with his light,
And for him she smilingly unveils
Her innocent flower-face.

*Sie blüht und glüht und leuchtet
Und starret stumm in die Höh';
Sie duftet und weinet und zittert
Vor Liebe und Liebesweh.*

She blooms and glows and gleams
And gazes silently upwards;
She sends forth fragrance, and weeps and trembles,
With love and love's torment.

Der Zecher als Doctrinair

Was quälte dir dein banges Herz?

What was plaguing your anxious heart?

"Liebesschmerz!" "The pangs of love!"
Was machte dir dein Augen roth? What was making your eyes red?
"Liebesnoth!" "The misery of love!"
Was gab dir Sorgen ohne Zahl? What was causing you sorrows without number?
"Liebesqual!" "The agony of love!"

Ei, das hast du schlimm bedacht; Ah, you didn't think that over carefully;
Denn schon manchesmal For many a time already
Hat die Menschen umgebracht The pangs and agony of love
Liebesschmerz und Qual! Have brutally finished people off!

Was heilte dich von deiner Pein? What healed you from your pain?
"Alter Wein!" "Old wine!"
Was gab dir dann den besten Trost? What gave you the best comfort?
"Frischer Most!" "Fresh grape must!"
Was stärkte wieder deinen Muth? What strengthened your courage again?
"Traubenblut!" "The blood of the grape!"

Ei, bringet uns schnell herbei Well, then bring to us quickly
Dieses edle Gut! This noble treasure!
Denn es bleibt einmal dabei: For now it remains a fact:
Wein erfrischt das Blut! Wine refreshes the blood!

Rastlose Liebe

Dem Schnee, dem Regen, To the snow, to the rain
Dem Wind entgegen, To the wind opposed,
Im Dampf der Klüfte, In the mist of the ravines
Durch Nebeldüfte, Through the scent of fog,
Immer zu! Immer zu! Always on! Always on!
Ohne Rast und Ruh! Without rest and peace!

Lieber durch Leiden I would rather through suffering
Möcht' ich mich schlagen, Fight myself,
Als so viel Freuden Than so many joys
Des Lebens ertragen. Of life endure.

Alle das Neigen All the inclining
Von Herzen zu Herzen, Of heart to heart,
Ach wie so eigen Ah, how curiously
Schaffet das Schmerzen! that creates pain!

Wie soll ich fliehen? Where shall I flee?
Wälderwärts ziehen? To the forest move?
Alles vergebens! All in vain!
Krone des Lebens, Crown of life,
Glück ohne Ruh, Happiness without peace,
Liebe, bist du! Love, are you!

Frühlingsglocken

Schneeglöckchen tut läuten: Little snow bells are ringing!
Was hat das zu bedeuten? -- What does that mean?
Ei, gar ein lustig Ding! Oh, such a merry thing!

Der Frühling heut' geboren ward, Spring was born today,
Ein Kind der allerschönsten Art; a child of the most beautiful kind;
Zwar liegt es noch im weißen Bett, to be sure it still lies in the white bed,
Doch spielt es schon so wundernetz, but it already plays so wonderfully nicely.
Drum kommt, ihr Vögel, aus dem Süd' Then come you birds from the south
Und bringet neue Lieder mit! and bring new songs with you!
Ihr Quellen all, All you springs,

*Erwacht im Tal!
Was soll das lange Zaudern?
Sollt mit dem Kinde plaudern!*

awake in the valley!
Why the long hesitation?
You should chat with the child!

*Maiglöckchen tut läuten!
Was hat das zu bedeuten?
Frühling ist Bräutigam:*

Little May bells are ringing!
What does that mean?
Spring is bridegroom!

*Macht Hochzeit mit der Erde heut'
Mit großer Pracht und Festlichkeit.
Wohlauf denn, Nelk' und Tulipan,
Und schwenkt die bunte Hochzeitfahn!
Du Ros' und Lilie, schmücket euch,
Brautjungfern sollt ihr werden gleich!
Ihr Schmetterling'
Sollt bunt und flink
Den Hochzeitreigen führen,
Die Vögel musiciren!*

He weds the Earth today
with great pomp and festivity.
Come on then, carnation and tulip,
and wave the multi-colored wedding banner!
you rose and lily, adorn yourselves finely!
Bridesmaids you shall be today!
You butterflies
should colorfully and nimbly
lead the wedding dance,
the birds will make the music!

*Blauglöckchen tut läuten!
Was hat das zu bedeuten? --
Ach, das ist gar zu schlimm!*

Little blue bells are ringing!
What does that mean?
Ah, it is just too bad!

*Heut' nacht der Frühling scheiden muß,
Drum bringt man ihm den Abschiedsgruß:
Glühwürmchen ziehn mit Lichtern hell,
Es rauscht der Wald, es klagt der Quell,
Dazwischen singt mit süßem Schall
Aus jedem Busch die Nachtigall,
Und wird ihr Lied
So bald nicht müd',
Ist auch der Frühling schon ferne -
Sie hatten ihn alle so gerne!*

Tonight Spring must depart,
thus all come to bid farewell,
glowworms come with bright lights,
the forest rustles, the spring laments,
in between sings with sweet sound
from every bush the nightingale
and her song
will not so soon become weary,
even if the Spring is already so distant -
they all liked him so well!

Hymne an die Nacht

*Heil'ge Nacht, o gieße du
Himmelsfrieden in dies Herz,
Bring' dem armen Pilger Ruh',
holde Labung seinem Schmerz!*

O holy night, into this heart
O pour your heavenly peace.
Bring rest to the weary pilgrim,
Gentle comfort for his pain.

*Hell schon erglüh'n die Sterne,
grüßen aus blauer Ferne:
Möchte zu euch so gerne
flieh'n himmelwärts.*

How brightly the stars are shining
Their greeting from afar.
Gladly would I
Flee heavenward to you!

*Harfentöne, lind und süß,
weh'n mir zarte Lüfte her,
aus des Himmels Paradies,
aus der Liebe Wonnemeer.*

Sounds of the harp, mild and sweet,
Drift to me like a tender breeze
Flowing from heavenly Paradise,
From the boundless firmament.

*Glüht nur, ihr gold'nen Sterne,
winkend aus blauer Ferne:
Möchte zu euch so gerne
flieh'n himmelwärts.*

How brightly the stars are shining
And beckoning from afar.
Gladly would I
Flee heavenward to you!

Vita

*Nascentes morimur finisque,
finisque, ab origine pendet*

As we are born we die,
and the end commences with the beginning.

Crucifixus

*Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato,
passus et sepultus est.*

He was crucified also for us,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
and was buried.

Blazhen, kto ulybajetsja

*Blazhen, kto ulybajetsja,
Kto s radostnym licom
Nesjot svoj krest bezropotno
Pod ternovym vencom;
Blazhen, blazhen!*

Blessed is he who smiles
and who with a happy face
bears without a murmur
his cross beneath
his crown of thorns.

*Blazhen, kto
Ne unyvajet v goresti,
V pechali terpeliv
I sljozy kopit berezhno,
Ikh v serdce zataiv.*

Blessed is he
who will not be cast down by misfortune,
who is long-suffering in affliction
and sparing with his tears
which he keeps stored up in his heart.

*Blazhen, kto skup na zhaloby,
Kto svet loju dushoj
Blagoslovljajet s krotost'ju
Surovyj zhrebij svoj;*

Blessed is he
who rarely complains
and who, with an untroubled soul
humbly blesses his cruel fate.

*Blazhen, Kto sred' nevzgod, unynija,
Trevogi i skorbej
Ne dokuchajet blizhnemu
Krushinoju svoje;*

Blessed is he
who in tribulation
does not importune
his neighbour with his anguish,

*Kto, pomnja cel' zavetnuju,
Bestrepetnoj stopoju
I veselo, i radostno
Idjot svoje; stezjoj*

and who,
never forgetting the goal that he pursues,
goes forward on his way
with a joyous and sure step.

When I Look Back: Theme and Variations

I. Energy

SPEAKER 1: It was just something I had to do.

INTERVIEWER: With all that time?

SPEAKER 1: Two days. So I made a quilt.

I think this is important: the mania hit me all of a sudden. I had been teaching in China, then to camp...there were only two days before I went back to college.

(I also really hate sleep. I feel that it's a waste of time.) But camp was regimented, which is important for me to staying well. One transition to another — this was two days between working, and...

I was like, "What am I gonna do with all this time but make a quilt?" I drew out this elaborate plan. There was fabric everywhere, and steam coming out of my ears. [A friend:] "Only you would make a quilt in these two days, instead of like, take a nap."

It was just something I had to do.

...when I look back, I was prescribed a lot of medication — so much there are years I don't remember. I have such extreme emotions, and I would really rather feel and confront them. And now, I can see the page they gave me — the screening — and I thought, "If I'm honest, I'm not going home." So I kind of just decided to lie...about everything.

Take each moment of happiness and savor it. Never think anything is too small to be overjoyed about. Mania has never been unkind to me. Depression is what hits me hard and takes me out. I wish I could live every day on that hypomania-mania high, but that's just not sustainable.

It was just something I had to do.

II. Self-Doubt

SPEAKER 2: I can't be happy on a day like today.

(And am I who...)

I'm so affected by the weather. I'm so affected by the weather...

(And am I who...)

...it's just so gloomy and gray.

I'm not the kind of person who delights in the discomfort of others. I mean, I don't go around looking for trouble. I'm not that kind of person, am I? Am I? ...am I?

I can't be happy on a day like today.

(And am I who...)

I'm so affected by the weather — I don't know what to think of this.

III. Ambiguity

SPEAKER 3: Yeah, and uh... [laughs] yeah, and uh...when I used to wake up in the morning, I would wake up with a fuckin' headache — every morning, I would wake up with a fuckin' headache and shit. I used to think about how long fifteen years was, and I would get a fuckin' headache.

I probably started using drugs, like, 14, 15, smokin' weed, skipping school. [laughs] Yeah, and uh...

I told you I always got some scheme going, and shit. I always have a fuckin', some kind of scheme. Yeah, and uh...

Somewhere in there, I started snorting Heroin. Yeah, and uh...

...smuggling the rest of my drugs into Walpole, I still had about ten bags of dope left. Kept it right in my hand. I made like almost about ten grand.

...off the fat of the land: I want Social Security, Food Stamps.

Yeah, and uh...when I used to wake up in the morning...

I had my daughter when I was like 20. Her mother had some kind of kidney disease, and passed away. My mother end up taking my daughter away.

Yeah, and uh...when we first started, like we used to do eight-track tapes: mark all the cars that had tapes in 'em, and we'd come back and break 'em in.

I said, "If I stop getting high, I won't come to jail as much." Yeah, and uh...still wanted to steal, still wanted to hustle and shit.

I just try to be nice, be humble, don't do mean shit to people, and God'll bless you.

Yeah, and uh...

Reading I

“The message that I want to share with people with this story is that my life is so beautiful because of my experiences I’ve had and the people that I’ve met.

The friends that I’ve made are fast and long-lasting friends. There’s an instant connection and a depth that we experience with people when we share something so vulnerable, and you can tell that they’re— people are resilient, and they’re invested in the same— they have the same investment in life that you do to just keep going, because it’s hard.

It’s hard to keep going every day when you’re fighting something. And you know, it could be fighting yourself, or fighting the stigma that society gives to you on a silver platter.”

IV. Identity

SPEAKER 4: I would say I suffer from crippling self-doubt. Sometimes I don’t know who I am. I want to be starry-eyed again. Sometimes, I think I wanna be another person entirely.

It terrifies me that I might not have the guts anymore to be me.

I might live a life full of regret and un-fulfillment. Sometimes I hurt others with my words. I open up, and they always run away. Sometimes I wish I hadn’t said anything at all.

It terrifies me that I might not have the guts anymore to be who I feel I’m supposed to be...

...and I’m sorry...I’m sorry, but I can’t trust you.

I would say I suffer from crippling self-doubt. Sometimes I don’t know who I am. I open up, and they always run away. Sometimes, I think I wanna be another person entirely.

I can’t believe that I might have to be less of who I’m supposed to be — who I feel I’m supposed to be, who I feel I was: I had it all.

“You’re better than you think you are”: this has gotta be the mantra that saves me, at least for a little while.

V. Worry

SPEAKER 5: That kind of country, folksy American sound is very nostalgic for me — something I listen to a lot.

I went from years of being a breadwinner, to being a homebody now. I’m in what’s probably best described as a quasi-platonic open triad... yeah... it’s complicated.

...but that’s something that I listen to a lot: (I’m saying) that kind of country, folksy American sound, is very nostalgic for me.

When I get really, really anxious, I don’t eat a lot. Like, I’m kind of in that state right now. I didn’t eat this morning, ’cause...we’re gonna be moving, we’re trying to get a car, about six months ago, I left my partner...twenty-nine years old, and I’ve never really dated...moved from Florida...I’m unmedicated — wanna learn to live with the brain I’ve got.

...there’s a lot going on right now.

...but, that kind of country, folksy American sound is very nostalgic for me. It makes me think of my mom, ’cause she was a homemaker, most of the time. Had a big kitchen, all the fixings for the kitchen — baked cookies, that sort of thing. I’m still not crazy about it, but you know, it’s homey, comforting and sweet. That’s why I listen to that.

That kind of country, folksy American sound is very nostalgic for me.

My mental illness of choice, here, my diagnosis: Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Worry all the time, racing thoughts, kind of sleepless nights sort of thing. I’ve got a lot going on right now!

Reading II

"I'm the type of person who can make you laugh. Always laughing and having fun, joking around, being sarcastic. But people who know me will tell you they know when I'm having an off day, because I'm not like that."

"It makes you a shell of your former self, all your forms of identity end up in a jar, in a corner, on a shelf. It makes you forget all of the people you love, and those who love you, leaving you to ask yourself, what should I do?"

"I know it will be hard, but I can make it through, because I can see a light in the tunnel, and it leads to you. You show me light, when all I see is dark, when it seems no one can make a difference. I love to watch you grow, and wouldn't miss it for the world, like when you got your first tooth, or when your hair curled."

"I've had some bumps in the road along the way, but I am strong. I have so much in life to be thankful for."

VI. Freedom

SPEAKER 6: A peacock, a bird: like, free...

My best friend's been my best friend since we were six months old. Just by looking at me, she'll know if something's up.

I've always struggled. I had childhood abuse, and also as an adult.

In Scouts together, we went to Europe: Paris, England, Switzerland, Germany. I remember walking up a mountain. London was my favorite by far.

From the age of sixteen, and my early thirties, I was going to the hospital every other week. It's not really scary. I haven't been in three years. I would not want to go back. I had twenty-plus treatments — ECT — for me it didn't work. I have severe memory loss.

I remember walking up a mountain. All of a sudden, all these peacocks came running at us, like, free.

I've been doing well for once in my life. It's really kind of surreal. It's different to be surviving, doing good for once in my life.

...sometimes it's bad to look back.

VII. When I Look Back (Self-Acceptance)

SPEAKER 7: There's a something that turns on, and it's not in everyone...

SPEAKER 5: There's a lot going on right now!

SPEAKER 6: ...like, free...

SPEAKER 3: ...used to think about how long fifteen years was...

SPEAKER 4: ...who I am...

SPEAKER 2: I'm not the kind of person who delights in the discomfort of others...

SPEAKER 1: Take each moment of happiness and savor it...

SPEAKER 7: ...and I just feel that it's something that I got, and uh— am I sorry now when I look back? No. I was sorry early on, but I'm not now. I know so much about who I am, and I think I would have missed that. I wouldn't know the things about me that I know, I would not be the person that I am today. The journey was hard, but no, I wouldn't want it any other way. So I'm not sorry. I don't know where I'd be, who I would be, but who I am, for today, is okay.