



Reflections:

An anthology of poetry and
writings about life with Tourette's
Syndrome

- - *Compiled by Leslie E. Packer, PhD*

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Notes:

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Many of the children and adults are describing Tourette's Syndrome plus comorbid conditions and not just the tics of Tourette's.

To submit material for future updates of this anthology, email me at lpacker@tourettesyndrome.net.

The Animals Inside Me
- Justin Packer-Hopke, © 1991

I have a spider inside me.
It makes my lips smack.
I have a spider inside me
and it makes me feel black.
His name is Tourette's.

I have a kangaroo inside me.
It makes me jump up and down.
I have a kangaroo inside me
and it makes me feel brown.
His name is Tourette's.

I have a frog inside me.
It makes me warty and mean.
I have a frog inside me
and it turns me green.
His name is Tourette's.

I have an eel inside me
and it makes me slither.
I have an eel inside me
and it makes me shiver.
His name is Tourette's.

I have a wild horse inside me.
It makes me feel like prancing.
I have a wild horse inside me
and it's always dancing.
His name is Tourette's.

I have a tiger inside me
and it makes me growl.
I have a tiger inside me
and when I get mad, I go "r-o-w-ll!"
His name is Tourette's.

I'm going to shoot those animals.
I'm going to bring a banana.
I'm going to shoot those animals.
I'm going to wear a bandanna.

And then the puppy inside me
will make me happy and play.
And then the puppy inside me
won't ever run away.
His name is Justin.

I Wish I Had No Shadow: An Inside Look at Tourette Syndrome

-- Dylan Mackowetzky

You are just like a shadow
Hanging on to my every move
Everything I do
You're there
I score a goal
Your embarrass me
I try to sleep
But you pry my eyes open
I've tried to kill and hide you
By taking many drugs
All it did was make my wallet lose weight
I decided to go natural
And let nature take it's course
My arms shake and jump
I seem to vibrate
I wish I could catch my shadow
He hurts me
Not like Peter Pan
If I caught him
I would do much worse

Alongside my shadow
Within the depths of my body
Lives a beast
He slowly lets himself escape
Through embarrassing sounds and movements
Just when I think he's gone
He is there again
Slowly escaping
Through movements
And sounds
They are often the same
But they change
If I have a cold
My shadow catches me sniffing
He tells me to escape through my nose
If I practice jumping and twirling
My shadow is there and somehow

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My beast is told
He will escape through those movements
I love a song and I sing it
Again my shadow hears
You know the rest

If I try not to let my beast escape
He waits
But he persists until I can no longer trap him
He escapes once more
But he is cramped
He has been waiting far too long
Like a little boy who has been in a car too long
Will burst out of the car
The second it stops
So he can stretch and be free
My beast is that little boy
And I am that car
I must allow my beast to escape quite often
So he does not come out
And do all his escaping many times harder
Than if I had let him out the first time
He told me he needed to escape
My beast is not savage
Compared to others
My shadow does not see as much
As other shadows

MY beast and my shadow share a name
They like to be called
Tourette Syndrome
I call them
Hell

Wouldn't It Be Great If.....

-- *Danielle Schnittker*

-

Wouldn't it be great if people understood what Tourette Syndrome is.

Wouldn't it be great if scientists could find a cure for Tourette Syndrome.

Wouldn't it be great if people who had Tourette Syndrome weren't stared at by people who don't understand it.

Wouldn't it be great if people with Tourette Syndrome didn't have to worry about being made fun of.

Wouldn't it be great if people with Tourette Syndrome felt comfortable explaining it to their peers.

Wouldn't it be great if people with Tourette Syndrome could fall asleep without having to twitch.

Wouldn't it be great if people with Tourette Syndrome could concentrate easier.

Wouldn't it be great if people realized Tourette Syndrome is a neurological disorder, not a mental disorder.

Wouldn't it be great if every person who has Tourette Syndrome could spend a day with a successful person with Tourette Syndrome so they could know they can be successful too.

Wouldn't it be great if people with Tourette Syndrome didn't have to suppress their twitches when they are with their peers who don't know they have it.

Wouldn't it be great if people with Tourette Syndrome didn't have to worry about Tourette Syndrome!

Poems by Casey Goldstein

There's something inside me
I'm not quite sure what
Whenever it's active
I clap, blink, and strut

I just cannot help it
It sort of bursts out
Whenever it starts
It finishes out

But Tourettes is here to stay
And so I'll say with glee:
"Tics are tics forever
And I'm still just me!"

* * *

Undying itch of pain and woe
There's nothing to be done
Having Tourette Syndrome
Is not a lot of fun
There's no way to relieve you
Of all your feelings hurt
Without control over my face
I'm just a puny squirt
People laugh and call me names
There's nothing I can say
To make all of the rude remarks
Just swiftly go away
And so I live with my T.S.
I guess that's who I am
And one day soon this all will end
With one great big Kablam!
A sudden jerk of eyes and neck
The whole thing might subside
Until then all my tics will keep
On changing like the tide

* *

Poems by Casey Goldstein (continued)

Christmas comes
But I'm still a'tic - in'
Still sniffing and blinking
And jolting and kickin'

It may never end
But one thing's for sure
My eyes will still hurt
My head'll still be sore

2:06 A.M

-- *Loren Packer-Hopke, 2001.*

I sit up late at night
and wonder why.
I hug my pillow tight
as I start to cry.
Why do I always feel
that I let people down?
What I think isn't real.
I feel like I'm gonna drown.
I think in my mind
I'm not good enough.
Even though I know I'm kind--
so why can't I act tough?
People do like me
for who I am.
But what they can't see
they would never understand.

Tourette Syndrome

- Garrett Pickard, Age 7

Tourette, syndrome,

Ticing, twitching, stretching

I am not my Tourette Syndrome.

Brain fart

Note: Garrett wrote the above poem to help his classmates understand Tourette's Syndrome. Garrett can be reached via his parents at scott@pacbell.net

My Life Is Like a Roller Coaster Ride

-- by Hannah G., age 11

My life is like a roller coaster ride
When I was born my cart went up the pulley.
My parents cared, loved, and nurtured me.
But as my cart reached the top
I felt the nose of my cart drop
And it fell steeply down to the side.
My doctor told me as I fell
That my life was going very well
And turned aside to write some notes
that I had been diagnosed
With Tourettes Syndrome.

As the wind rushed through my hair
Going down that dive
I became quiet and sad.
Sad enough to scare
My mother was quite worried.
And put me on some meds
That made me very tired
and put me right to bed.

As my cart twisted and turned
And drove me fast uphill
And then my mommy found it.
She found just the pill.
As my cart went up the ride
I saw a drop a'swiftly coming.
And though I tried and tried
The cart would not turn or nothin'.
It came like a bomb
Fast and big and truly messed things up.
For when I saw my tests
The only thing I really saw
Were big red D's and F's.

And as my cart keeps going
I can't help but knowing
That things won't stop going
Down and down and down!

Note: Hannah can be reached at edin@jps.net.

Trying to Explain Tourettes Syndrome to Someone Who Doesn't Have It

- by Ty R, age 12, Dec 00

Did you ever have your leg fall asleep and it feels like it isn't part of your body, then it starts to tingle, then hurt? You move around wildly so it can get the feeling back into it and start to feel better. At the time you probably don't care what it looks like, you want the feeling back in your leg.

In a mild way that is what ticking is like. The wild moving uncontrollably to make something feel better, feel right.

Did you ever have an itch but couldn't reach it? Doesn't that drive you nuts?

Did you ever know you were going to sneeze but had to be quiet so you muffled it? Doesn't that make the inside of your head feel like it is going to explode?

Did you ever have a muscle cramp that you know that if you stretch it then it will feel better, but know that to stretch it it's going to hurt?

Did it ever feel like someone was staring at you, or maybe they really were? Doesn't that make you feel relief when they quit staring?

All of those things are what it is like, every day, living with TS.

Sometimes every hour, every minute. The relief you feel when you finally can reach that itch, finally sneeze, stretch that cramp and know you aren't being stared at is how it feels when you can finally tic after suppressing it all day long in school or church.

Did you ever get a song stuck in your head and start humming it or even singing it out loud? No matter what you do that silly song is in your mind. Sometimes you can't remember all the words but when you finally remember it you say it out loud, knowing it is right?

That saying something out loud, even mumbled, is almost what it is like when one of the tics is saying a word over and over. It gets stuck in your mind and comes out of your mouth without even thinking about it.

To me this is normal. My normal. Not everyone else's, but mine. They say when someone loses a hand or a foot they still feel it sometimes and wish for it back. But for the person born without a hand or foot they just learn to adapt and don't have a sense of loss. Well having TS is like being born without that hand or foot. You don't know to miss being normal, you never were that in the first place.

Note: Ty can be reached c/o jenkoehler@chartermi.net

College Application Essay

- by Carly W.

There is one thing that is a part of me that I have always thought ruined my life. I've had hard times and easy times with it. Friends, family, and acquaintances react to it in different ways. Yet Tourette's syndrome (TS) has given me an understanding of life and of other people that many teenagers do not have.

TS is often misunderstood. Movies and TV tend to dramatize it, and most people assume that all cases involve uncontrollable yelling, barking or swearing. In actuality, less than fifteen percent of TS patients have the most severe symptoms. The majority of TS cases manifest only one or two tics at a time.

I noticed I had TS when I was in second grade, but nobody knew what was wrong with me. That is how my family and I looked at it when I was young -- that something was "wrong" with me. My first tic was throat-clearing. My parents thought it was an allergy so I went to an "ear, nose, and throat" doctor and got multiple CAT scans which were negative. I then began shaking my head and sniffing, but no allergies were found. Finally, in sixth grade my pediatrician suggested that I see a neurologist and we began our journey. Everything became much clearer to us.

Doctors prescribed many medications in order to calm the tics down. Unfortunately, most of the medications that they put me on had one major side effect: They made me unbelievably tired. I would come home from school and want to sleep all the way through dinner. Despite all that, I managed to maintain my grades. Now I have been prescribed the correct dosage of the correct medication, with less severe side effects.

In high school, I decided to tell my friends why I twitched the way I did. I was so afraid that they wouldn't understand, but they accepted me and my tics. Some of my friends asked for more information while others did not even care and responded with an "oh." They have all learned to sympathize with me when they know my tics are unusually bad.

TS has made me understand and accept others for who they are. When people look at someone and think she is weird, I look at her and see her in a different light: she is just misunderstood. People

judging her do not know what she has been through or what is going on in her personal life. TS has taught me to look beyond appearances.

I have come to understand my condition. TS does not affect my schoolwork or the way I think. But occasionally, when I'm under a lot of stress, my tics get worse. I just take it day by day and see what my body gives me to deal with. At times I want to get rid of my TS, but I have learned to accept it.

Note: Carly can be reached at TillyDuck@aol.com

The Tourette Life: A Beginning

- Darin Bush

Where to start? What can be said about Tourette that has not already been said? Lots of things. How about: what the heck is Tourette, anyway? We know a lot about what it is not. But what do we really know about what it is? A lot of doctors can show you photos of brains and statistical charts collected from many research projects. But, in my experience with trying to live with Tourette, no one has ever sent me to get my brain photographed. So, have I missed out by not getting my gray matter transformed into Technicolor matter? I am not sure.

I am sure, however, of one thing. The experts on Tourette have mixed feelings and mixed opinions on which brain pictures mean what, and what statistics go with which conclusions. What do those of us in the trenches get out of reading these reports and talking to these experts? Actually, in general, we get a lot out of this kind of work on Tourette. But, I think we sometimes take this kind of work too seriously, and sometimes assign it too much value to our everyday lives.

So, let me go back to talking about living. I live with Tourette. Here, I mean the family of disorders genetically 'related' to Tourette Syndrome (TS). When I say Tourette Syndrome, I mean the tic disorder. When I say Tourette, I mean the general shared experience of not only tics, but also other neurological disorders, predominantly Attention Deficit- and Obsessive - Compulsive Disorders (ADD and OCD). You can not hold a support group meeting for TS without someone talking about ADD or OCD, and rightly so. For most people with Tourette, tics are the least of our problems. I assume I am not the first person to say this, but you never know.

So why the distinction? Let me ask a more basic question: Why do we say Tourette Syndrome has associated disorders? Why not say OCD has associated disorders, including TS? As far as I can tell, it is primarily because Tourette is the most noticeable of these disorders. ADD can often look like other disorders, and vice versa. OCD is something usually kept very private, because it is so embarrassing and carries such a powerful stigma. So maybe TS is the primary disorder because it is more socially obtrusive in general. It is also entirely possible we are looking at an arbitrary decision. Perhaps the first research connecting TS with either ADD or OCD was performed on a group of people with TS, rather than a group of people with either ADD or OCD. Perhaps the keystone of the diagram that inter-connects all of these myriad disorders is Tourette Syndrome.

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While this distinction may seem trivial, it is not. How you approach the discussion of Tourette as a spectrum of disorders reflects how you will accommodate and treat the symptoms of Tourette. Medicating someone for tics can be a good idea, given other symptoms are not more intrusive. I myself have rarely been medicated for tics. This is simply not my primary Tourette symptom. I am more interested in medicating for OCD or ADD. Fortunately for me, my tics do not often impair my functioning. While I am aware there are some people with Tourette who have serious problems with tics, it seems to me the majority of us have more problems with ADD or OCD. For myself, my OCD does impair my functioning, even though I believe I have a mild to moderate case. However, I strongly believe I have a severe case of ADHD, with symptoms occurring almost consistently. I would be very willing to have more tics in exchange for less intrusive thoughts or more brain control. I am sure there are some people out there who would make the exchange in the other direction.

Given the exchange can not be made, how do we respond? Generally, people with Tourette respond just like normal people. They deny it, they get upset about it, they hurt, and they move on, slowly and consistently adjusting their lives so as not to be dominated by these disorders. I would like to make an unconventional point. These Tourette disorders are different enough from each other as to create what I consider to be a unique situation for the person who lives with them. The process of denial and acceptance is well documented and understood. Also, it is considered normal for a person who is afflicted with the same disease or trauma twice or more to be emotionally more prepared. Some would claim the same as true for Tourette. I got over having ADHD, so why can I not get over finding out I also have OCD? First of all, OCD is not a recurrence of ADHD. This is not a repetition of a previous trauma. It is a new event, which brings different problems to light and predicts different results, both in symptoms and treatment. Furthermore, the treatments of one Tourette disorder may interfere with the treatment of another, e.g.: stimulant medications for ADD may exacerbate tics.

In this kind of scenario, the process of denial and acceptance must be repeated, sometimes three or more times, depending on the individual in question. In my experience, someone who has accepted the presence of ADD in themselves or a family member is in no way guaranteed to be able to emotionally handle a new diagnosis. There is one saving grace in all of this. The professionals, doctors, teachers, etc., who are trained to deal with one of these disorders are most likely knowledgeable about multiple disorders, and how they interact with each other. Once again, it is very difficult to find a textbook thoroughly discussing ADD without mentioning OCD, or tics without mentioning sensory input issues or compulsions.

Which brings us back to the beginning; what can be said about Tourette which does not appear in one of these textbooks? What are the experts missing? For what is the Tourette audience looking? I have my opinion, of course. The key to living with Tourette, once the diagnosis has been accepted, is to make TS and the other disorders part of the background noise of your life, to integrate it into your total existence. No one prints books educating people on the trials and tribulations of living with curly hair or being short or wearing glasses any more. Or, if they do, they do not sell many of them at the bookstores I frequent. This is because we have almost fully integrated these concepts into our view of a normal existence. Some people have curly hair, and that is normal. Some people are shorter than others, and that is fine. Some people wear glasses, and that is, once again, just a typical aspect of being alive.

Tourette is no different, or at least it should not be. My head moves on a regular basis. Big deal, get over it. I twitch and pop and sniffle and I can still get my washing done. I know full well that society must be involved in the process of making these things normal. But, we Touretters have to go first. I can not force society to accept something that I myself do not accept. For example, if I act cross at people who notice my noises, I bring a negative attention to those noises. It grates on people now in two ways, the second being my bad attitude. Perhaps a better way to respond would be to down play their existence or impact. I could say, "Oh, that? It is just one of my tics. There is no problem. This is nothing abnormal." And if I respond to them as normal, most people will acclimate to them, accepting them as normal. They will integrate these symptoms into the picture of Darin they possess. "Can Darin sit still? Not really. Do I care? No, not really. Does Darin have curly hair? Yes. Do I care? Not really."

So if someone asked me to say something unconventional about Tourette, I suppose I could say, "Tourette? So what?" And maybe some people would get the point. Maybe some people would understand that no matter how much we study Tourette, no matter how often we discuss it, the most satisfying moments of living with Tourette are the ones where it does not even come up. We may acknowledge that it might come up, that it might become a dominant part of a social or professional situation. We may be able to discuss our symptoms and our struggles with them. In the end, though, the best thing you can say about your own Tourette is, "I had not even noticed it today."

Note and Biography:

Darin would like to respond to questions about living with Tourette, either as a child, adult, or parent. He would also like to receive suggestions for future Tourette topics, especially if they lead to new or unconventional discussions about Tourette. Please send such questions or suggestions directly to Darin at darin_bush@juno.com.

If you would like to reprint any of Darin's writings in your organization's newsletter, do contact him to let him know and get his OK, as he is willing to have some of his work reproduced.

Darin M. Bush would be more than willing to be less qualified to discuss living with Tourette Spectrum Disorders. He (currently) has Tourette Syndrome, Attention Deficit- Hyperactivity Disorder, and, Obsessive- Compulsive Disorder, along with Sensory Integration and Executive Function problems, and an unusual olfactory learning disability. He has worked with the Tourette Syndrome organizations of both the United States and Canada in various roles, primarily lecturing on the experience of Tourette and leading improvisational theatre workshops. He was a contributor to "Teaching the Tiger". He has facilitated several Tourette support groups, including one on the Internet. Finally, he has recently become a parent of neurologically impaired children. While he will not admit to being born in the sixties, he will admit to living in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

A Mother's Thoughts

- B. D. Warner

There is a child in him, an innocent boy ~
& when that sweet boy peeks through his eyes,
It melts my heart - and I cry.

It's hard to remember how young, how sweet he is ~
During a tantrum, yelling the ugly words he says.

When every day is exhausting - there isn't a moment to spare,
But I remind myself, that is exactly why I am there.

To cherish my baby, like no one else ever could,
To build a foundation at home where he is understood.

Giving him the confidence that he is beautiful and unique,
Letting him know it doesn't always matter what other people may think.

His 'word' we say is just a silly thing his mind does,
To him it's like our punishments - he says he does it out of love ~

He doesn't like to be reprimanded but he knows it's because we care,
His word we don't like - but when it must come out, he tells us love is there.

So bright for five - to see beyond a word,
To know there is something more than what may be heard.

Isn't it funny that I learned that from him
to ignore the words, and really 'listen'.

To see beyond the tantrums, the rages of just being mad ~
To remember - he's just our 'baby', needing love from Mom & Dad.

Parents as Secret Philosophers

- by Sheri Anderson

Maybe all parents are secret philosophers. But have a child who is "different" and philosophy will be forced upon you. It is one thing to sit in a college classroom pondering the paradoxes of determinism and free will. It is a real philosophical showdown when you are debating the meaning of punishment for a child whose neurological or psychological disorder prods him to kick a hole in the wall.

You dive deep into the paradox, orchestrating the cacophony of other voices: the voices of friends, strangers, family, and paid advisors, not to mention the admonishments of a hundred-or a thousand-articles, books, and television programs offering to dispense wisdom to a mother. He's just trying to get a reaction.

He controls his parents.

It's biological.

Don't make excuses.

I can see the misery in his face.

Logical consequences.

He came home crying, saying "I'm a retard!"

He manipulates you.

I have a child like that, and nobody understands what it's like.

He may have a disorder, but you need to set limits.

I put him in time out, and his eyes are like those of a terrified animal.

We've handled many kids like this.

"If she continues to be uncooperative with providers, this child will be at very high risk."

He's 8, and he says he might as well be dead!

He has to learn to deal with this.

My son is screaming, kicking a bucket in the kitchen, needing to see something buckle and break. A kick causes the bucket to spin, a whispering white blur. He stops and stares. "Sweet", he breathes. When it wobbles, then clatters and stops, he tries again. Another spin, shorter, less astonishing. He breaks in, grabs it, uses his hands to spin the bucket. Wobbling, the spin collapses quickly. He curses, tries again. A triumphant spin; the bucket languidly skates across the floor, veers away from the refrigerator, a funnel of white out for a waltz.

For fifteen minutes he experiments with this new pursuit. Sometimes failures mount up and he reaches the very brink of fury. Each time the magic of the bucket stops him; he snatches it from a faulty spin to whirl it again. Triumph returns often enough to give him satisfaction as its master, after all.

It's no use to make a list of diversions, beginning with "spinning a bucket". It just happens: the physics of the universe reaches across the chasm of fear and anger, offering my son a gift he cannot obtain through the strictures of responsibility, awareness of self and others, rewards and punishment. The universe briefly offers to understand him and allows him to step within its own being and power.

Not having control of the universe, I cannot myself summon the bucket. Yet the pure vortex of its spin reaches into his tumultuous brain, and his brain is able to resonate with it, imparting and receiving order. Then it ends, he glances around, decides to read his book, take a bath, visit his friend down the street. It's that simple.

These whirlwinds pose the riddle. I imagine telling the social workers and therapists, "He's like the weather in North Dakota. If you don't like it, wait awhile and it will change." But he is. I have no idea when the pounding of butterfly wings in a tiny province of his brain will churn up a hurricane. You can, after all, manage the weather: you prepare for it, you cope with it, you dress for it; you even welcome it. But the forces that determine it are themselves indeterminable. You can bank against the wind and the flood, but there will be a time when only the forces of nature conquer their own. The advice, the prescriptions, the treatment plans, the recommendations sound like feeble effort to dance up sunshine in the utter absence of faith in the sky.

December 23, 2000

[Sheri](#)

Thank You, Mr. Dawley

- by Heather

Heather's Preface: I returned to school four years ago at the age of 42, to become a teacher. Tonight I am presenting information on the subject of Tourette's in my special education class. I would like to thank you for your enlightening website. The following will also be included in my discourse. It is the first time that I have publicly discussed what has all my life been a very personal matter (save for my poor husband who has put up with me for 30 years).

Mr. Dawley was my fifth grade teacher. There is only one thing that I have ever associated to that year in my life, and that is the humiliation I suffered so that I might cease to display those annoying eye tics that Mr. Dawley found so offensive.

This time next year, as I receive my diploma, I will remember him differently, for he became one of the determining factors in my decision to become a teacher.

So thank you, Mr. Dawley, for the insecurity that you imbedded within me that remains a hindrance to this day. Thank you for making me feel that while standing in front of a group of people I must be constantly aware that I just might slip up and have my friends see an eye twitch, or hear the clicking sound that may escape if I am not extremely careful; but most of all, thank you for giving me a reason to pursue a career in education so that I might be able to keep other children from having to endure the treatment that I received through your guiding hands.

We all have our private idiosyncrasies. Unfortunately with Tourette's syndrome, the sufferer's little (and sometimes not so little) behavioral peculiarities are at times witnessed very publicly.

Are these actions controllable? I think those of us who realize it is imperative from a public relations standpoint do very well at repressing ourselves, but a child's heart has not yet been hardened against public ridicule. Hopefully with ongoing discovery and research (along with compassionate, understanding teachers) they will fare better without embarrassment and fear of being ostracized by a society which is encumbered with far greater problems than whether a person shakes his foot, or clicks his tongue.

Heather may be reached at loch_lass@yahoo.com.

My 3 Alley Cats

- Carol Erlendson

They are a hoppin' and a boppin' on down the lane
Looking like an alley cat running in the rain
Wailing and screaming, tantrums galore
When there is homework to be done, they are out the front door
The school is fed up, they don't know if these kids they can bear
The teachers think it's a nightmare and wish they weren't there
But if only they could see these little boys asleep
I know they'd say my Alley Cats are worth the effort to keep

The stitches and the bruises, and a broken bone or two
As they scrap their way through life as an alley cat would do
They bounce off the walls and climb the jungle gym
And set the littlest one in the deep water, oops, they hope that he can swim
Will brother fit in the laundry chute? Let's climb in the sink
Then they play in the dryer, don't they ever stop to think?

A common word some people use about my boys is impulsive
Though you might find others say naughty, hyper, and intrusive
But I see them as God must see them, loving, kind, and busy
With a dash of curiosity and maybe just a little fussy
They are brighter than most, as most mothers would say
And with patience and love, I know they'll find their way

Oh the things I must hear from well meaning friends
Like: Why do you let them do that? Look at the rules that they bend
Or: You are not a good parent. Your children are rude
They can't control their temper, their manners are crude
And when my children hear this, in church, stores and school
They wonder what is wrong them and why they act the fool

So I tell them God understands them and loves them oh so much
He doesn't care that they have a disorder that causes behaviors as such
He has great plans for them and perhaps what He would say
Is: It's not always clear to you, but teaching may be My way

You may teach your teachers that no two kids are the same
And that your awesome energy may one day bring you great fame
You may teach adults to be patient, and kind, and to endure
It strengthens their faith and uses their love as the cure
It helps grownups see the beauty of a child
That has enough energy to drive most people wild

You don't need much sleep, you never wear down
You like to be silly and always the clown
But no one knows the pain you hide from the words people say
Then bless them at night as you kneel down to pray

Each day is a new day, you try with all your heart
To be all that you can be and start the fresh start
And though life is a burden that you can hardly bear
You were blessed with a smile that you just love to wear

As I gaze upon my children, you can see into my soul
That I feel I have been the most blessed and God must love me so
For He gave me three Alley Cats and where ever they may be
I will love and comfort them for all the world to see.

June 3, 2000

A Tourettes Lament

- by Ken

As oceans waters sound on lands hard shore,
The noise is recognized but is it heard?
A sentence that I say or just a word,
It sounds like oceans noise and nothing more,
the words I write they give great peace to me,
when others read they say that they aren't bad,
but something's missing that I wish I had,
a sliver tongued, alas I'll never be.

I know I still am twitching and do noise,
I tried to stop this thing, it never would,
a change was made and finally there's some peace,
Tourettes repeats, I used this as I could,
and so it's like I found the golden fleece,
I talk with God and pray and never cease.

Ken may be reached at Tonyzboy@yahoo.com

Discovery with Dogs on a Wednesday Afternoon
(poem for Tourette's Disorder)

– by Dan Brezenoff

You are already famous!
Furious with vision,
nerves crashed upon
hot, sharp wordlanes -
reach!

Reach with your bones, your breath, your blood.
Open and explode...

This is ancient.

Honesty is the answer you seek;
you are here to tell the truth –
as best you can.

Moan, mourn, cry the walls away.
Shout glee, dance to keep from
notdancing.
Run in fields, sing the world's glory, behold
all mystery. Stretch, feel knots unravel, bless
your pain. Chant freedom, god.
You are not alone. Love,
love,
love to keep warm.

Medicine
is a gag for this stuff, and
a damp, dirty blanket, and
sometimes - for better or
worse - a minderaser.
If you want to escape your straightjacket,
follow your voice into the world. It is
your blessing, no matter
how many teachers
and doctors
tell you
it's a curse.

Dan Brezenoff is a clinical social worker who has Tourette's. Dan kindly gives you his permission to reprint his poem on the condition that you acknowledge his authorship. He can be reached at dbrezeno@email.unc.edu.

Present-Tensity

– by Logan M. Bloom, © 2005

Shell of encased function falsity. Seek faded footing in grey-space;
Knee-deep-waves, tearing life of disbelief;
[years lost.]
Gone.

Violence in raging release. Hate reveals truth; replace ruthless injustice.
Passion knows pain in righteousness-breeding sin;
Skies burnt beyond brightest star. Uncover love's fall. Shine on eyes closed so tight;
Contortion of fair-weathered-faith-everlasting;
Thoughts never-lasting.
Failing recurrent.
Held.
Gone.

Sun rises toward light; disregard black while hands immerse in thickness;
[Lost remorse. Trust. Speak.]
Recede within; glass stare at memories past. See through brick and bone;
fooling analysis; degree of fools judging blind.
Solidify denial in time. Awake to beginning of newest end.
Empty Space.Nothing. Emotion retreating. Regard-standing; Venture involuntary dance of uncomfort.
Starlit glare blinding encased rage. Obsess to fulfill racing storm. Foundation of laughing cries;
Return.
[So young.]
Gone.

Vivid vulnerability. Scream silence at present-tensity suffering indifference;
indifference in paralysis.
Tear from dark to light; light becomes dark. Fear sunset to fire of Heaven earth-bound.
Desire new. Breathe ending. Covered.
[SURGE. COLD. WHITE.]
Gone.

:--:
Trials base lies. Walking rope so fine. Torn. Unravel insecurity.
Outside lost. Shadows; ghosts in awe of chaos. Driven over - down to darkest mirrored calm.
Love knows no time.
Exist in chronic negation.
Upset in thought never-lasting.
[Out.]
Gone.

Back. Straight-forward. Riddled in clarity. . Held drowning over-head.
Reach out to breathless wonder. Blues, Reds, Greens. Feel so real. Shades drawn long to short.
Curious; Careful; Concealed.
Surrender to live life's punishment.
Moments harbor days;
Seconds for feeling greatness.
Glory. Lost.
--Gone.--

Logan can be reached at neuhuskies20@yahoo.com