

*Alison Dawn West*



*Strawberries or Pills*



# *Strawberries or Pills*

Strawberries or pills  
Money not bills,

Icecream not fags  
Autobiographies not mags,

Laughter not tears  
Comfort not fears.

Relaxation, meditation  
Tonic and dedication

Poetry and rhyme  
Not clocking the time,

Listening not talking  
Seeing and walking.

Love not hate  
This is all a debate,

Flowers and trees  
Not counting fees.

Games not computers,  
No cars, just bicycles and scooters

Philosophy not psychology  
Of course we need biology,  
Hopefully thoughts of these  
Will get me an ology





Some people talk of the weather  
while I look out the heather.

Some people have tea in the morning  
while I just sit there yawning.

Some people clean their bathroom floor  
but me I'd rather look - and ignore.

Some people read The Times  
and some people look at their lists of wines.

Some go to the gym, twice a week  
every single week, without fail  
I think about swimming  
but going is just a tale.

Some talk of politics and the royals  
while some talk of their boils.

Some people walk about with a briefcase, and I love being  
a bit of a headcase.



*Ordinary People*





The consultant sits me down, says,  
“There’s a cure for your manic depression,  
There’s something to balance your brain  
But I’m telling you now -  
You’ll be FAT, but not INSANE.  
Lithium will balance your mood -  
But you’ll look like you’ve had tons and tons of food.”

My BRAIN will indeed be more stable,  
Although of course I’ll have a ‘label’,  
And although I will feel better in some way,  
Just don’t dare ask what I weigh.

*Fat or Mad*



# *Perplexed*

Government taxes computer faxes  
PERPLEXED

War in Kosovo war in Israel  
PERPLEXED

Superstars and all their uptodate cars  
PERPLEXED

Tobacco wars mobile bores  
PERPLEXED

Foot and mouth disease lists of herbal teas  
PERPLEXED

Heroin addiction TV f(r)iction  
PERPLEXED

Dyson hoover suction and alien abduction  
PERPLEXED

Homeopathic and organic stuff - will it make me feel rough?  
PERPLEXED

Genetically modified food a prime minister who thinks he's a cool dude  
PERPLEXED

Antique tables designer labels  
PERPLEXED

When was the millennium time?  
How much for a bottle of wine?

PERPLEXED





## *On the Edge*



On the edge of life,  
on the edge of death,  
on the edge of grasping for one last breath -

On the edge of fame,  
on the edge of pain,  
on the edge of fears,  
on the edge of tears.

On the edge of falling deeply in love,  
on the edge of believing in God above.

On the edge of having a massive panic attack,  
on the edge of developing the artist's knack.

On the edge of talking of stocks and shares,  
on the edge of wearing rainbow flares.

On the edge of being tied up with some astrology shit,  
on the edge of turning into some snobby git.

On the edge of smoking no cigarettes at all,  
on the edge of smoking fifty at the ball.

On the edge of smoking one huge joint that smells just fine,  
on the edge of downing 8 glasses of wine.

On the edge of being taken up by some serious superstition,  
on the edge of sending this off for a competition.



The sea such a wonderful colour blue  
If only I could see it too  
The sand so soft and pale  
I cannot feel it amongst my towel.

Although such a beautiful place  
It didn't bring a smile to my face.

To me it was just another place to see  
To really escape from me.

Somewhere else where people worked hard for their money  
Where some of the bosses were ever so funny.

Somewhere else where couples held hands  
Where they would slow dance to their up to date bands.

Another place where people cried  
Where some laughed and some died.

Where some people lay down  
Real low in the streets  
And some sat real high in their seats.





# Plastic Securities



When we met at the bus stop -  
time and stress had distanced you from me.

Whatever the problem, it wasn't important,  
cos we spoke of things to come...

And it was said that  
we'll both try to climb up high,  
climb to the highest mountain,  
but burdened by our thoughts,  
our lives, our plastic securities.

And deep down we both long to climb mountains.

The expectations look great and beautiful.

Perhaps too beautiful and too much of a struggle to  
finally reach up and get there.

Your eyes sparkle and you say,  
"I wanna live until I'm 120."

I'm a bit behind you there,  
but if you take me to the mountain  
I will try and live till 100.





## *Swirling in my mind*

Conversations, Situations  
Peoples' faces, peoples' smiles  
Certain expressions  
Certain styles  
Linger and swirling in my mind.

Worries and fret  
People that I've met  
Linger and swirling in my mind.

Genuine gestures, anger and jealousy  
Swirling in my mind.

Loud voices and saddened eyes  
The sound of excitement  
And of peoples' sighs.


Objects I've past, buildings that I've seen  
Linger and swirling in my mind.

Things that I've lost and things to find  
Swirling in my mind  
My mothers love  
My little brov  
Linger in my mind.

The day of thoughts, visions and emotions  
Escape into a big hot bubbly bath and they  
Slowly fade away.



# *Victoria Park*

A vibrant, abstract painting of a pond. The background is a light, textured blue. In the foreground, several koi fish are depicted with bold, expressive brushstrokes in shades of yellow, orange, red, and blue. Above the fish, there are pink flowers with green leaves, also rendered with thick, painterly strokes. The overall style is impressionistic and colorful.

Looking out my window;  
Footballers in the park,  
Lovers in the dark.  
Horses wisping past,  
Icecream van at long last.  
Cut grass and overlapping trees,  
The Falcon and Firkin with their expensive fees.

Birds and sparrows, ducks and swans,  
Living and loving on water and on foot,  
Treading on grass that looks like it's just been put.  
Joggers doing their healthy sprint,  
The smell of roses and the smell of mint,  
People walking dogs,  
People doing a tai chi class,  
people down slides going everso fast.

Old people resting on a park bench,  
Children playing and laughing  
Amongst the green,  
Picnics and weddings - oh - to be seen.  
Towels and a master blaster,  
People walking faster and faster,  
Oh yes it's Vicky Park  
Just don't go there alone in the dark.



I'm Alison Dawn West, I was born in Stoke Newington in April 1966. Through fantastic and horrible days, poetry exists for me. Although labelled with Manic Depression- I question labels as I question life.

I want to thank my mum for showing me honesty and good spirit and for always encouraging me. To also thank my partner Martin for being able to find a good pen when I need it, to listen to poetry at all times and being honest enough to tell me if it's complete rubbish or not/or just to shut up.

Core Arts has allowed me to just be and be me and given me confidence and friendship plus the help to allow me to rise from the depths of depression.

And of course not to forget Jan for his love of good and not so good poetry, for his flexibility, for his enthusiasm within the Wednesday Poetry Group, and having always made me feel like an artist not a mad woman- although I'm happy to be both.