



Running From Crazy

Chrissie Anderson Peters

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A collection of stories/essays/poems centered around the general theme of "crazy," which may range from the clinical definition to various social contexts. Crazy is so many different things to so many different people. Say the word crazy to one person and you may see a smile pass her lips; say it to someone else and you may see him cry. It's a tough subject to address. Yet I've tackled it here, in several guises and graces. From a child who screams all the way to the operating room because she has changed her mind to a town made famous because it murdered innocent people; from an old man haunted by his life's bad deeds as he nears his end to a young mom pushed too far in defending her only child from another bullying child; from one who realizes she has to learn to forgive or be driven to a dark place to a delusional homeless man who may be more together than anyone realizes; from a high school girl determined to stick out a miserable basketball season to a college freshman who must decide whether she will remain the victim of date rape or become a survivor or maybe even something else by the time all is said and done. Other characters and their maladies to watch for include a 16-year-old girl who issues a warning because she feels like she's losing her grip and isn't sure what to do; someone who cries for something she can't name; a child who hates coloring; a 95-year-old woman on her birthday; a man apparently unsatisfied enough with his family life that he pulls up stakes and starts a second family in another state; a woodpecker that annoys a writer to no end (not exactly); a doe and buck singled out "in season;" an immobile would-be swimmer who cannot make it out of the murky waters. Some "characters" in these pages are inanimate objects – mountaintops explored and exploited; back roads that seem to come to life; a house folding under foreclosure; the feeling of shutting down annually when summer has gone. There is life; there is death. There is hatred and love. One love poem speaks of the shyness of feelings, that exuberance of love but being afraid to tell, being afraid of knowing, yet wanting fulfillment thereof. Three sets of song lyrics proclaim the beautiful insanity of a lifetime together in love, the pathways we may take in this world, and the lonely crowd (those who stand by and remember what happens in life, the storytellers and carriers, if you will). In the end, though, there is always hope. If there wasn't hope, I wouldn't be here to write these pieces; I wouldn't be here to tell these stories. I am living proof of other people's hope, as well as of my own. Running From Crazy. Mental illness. It's a concept that I spent a great portion of my life denying and pretending did not exist. Until I saw the incredibly real damage that such actions could cause to the person suffering from the "craziness," as well as those around him/her. I still run on occasion. But eventually, I stop, turn myself around, close my eyes, and embrace it. After all, we have to love ourselves before we can love anyone else.

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