

## “Stone”

**By Anonymous**

Since my early upbringing, I was a hardheaded child. I hated listening to my parents, and when they split, I still hated listening to one of them. I was an angry and stubborn child. Anyone in close relation to my family and I could quickly perceive there were some screws loose in my head, and they were not incorrect. At the age of eight or nine I threatened to stab my own grandmother. I didn't even think about it, nor did I comprehend the power or meaning to my words. I just said fucked up threats to other people, and I thought I was entitled to. Middle school is when I decided to turn the flame on myself. I was self-harming and having week-long sleepovers in the mental hospital. By this time, I was diagnosed with depression, anxiety, ODD, and bipolar disorder. I was even misdiagnosed with ADHD and would spend days on end tweaking off Adderall. A thirteen-year-old on accidental benders...crazy. I never knew how to cope, nor did I take the initiative to learn how to cope with my problems, until I was sixteen.

I thought I had found the solution when I dove headfirst into the void. The void was dark and perceived as scary, but I was calm there. I would swallow the long white pill, or crush the white crystals, inhale, and within minutes I was embraced in its loving arms. I felt a sense of security, like my childhood blanket is fresh out the dryer. The void cloaked my problems, because when I was high my problems still existed, they were just hidden. When the drugs wore off, the void slowly released its grip and the gushing wind of reality hit me like a freight train. I dove into that void any chance I could get. I didn't care if I had to steal from my coworkers, take money out of my work's registers, or lie to my mom to hang out with dealers. I did what I needed to do, because as soon as I left that void, my brain was on autopilot, and I had one duty. Go back.

I woke up in a hospital bed with the face of a doctor speaking to me through a computer.

“Do you know why you're here?” Computer Doctor asked.

“No, I actually don't,” I responded. I have just been involuntarily hospitalized but quite literally have no idea why.

“You told your mother you were going to kill yourself,” Computer Doctor said in such a monotone way. He has been on this ride before.

*Well fuck, that's what Xanax does,* I thought to myself. There was no point in explaining myself, I would rather be perceived as suicidal than admitting to Computer Doctor that I was “just high and said the wrong thing.” That's asking for my usual week-long trips to become a couple-month vacation.

The couple-month vacation happened anyway at the mystical island of rehab. I was six hours away from home and lined up right near the Alleghenies, so if I ran away, I'd have a better chance of being eaten alive than finding drugs. My experience could very easily be compared to a cat being dissected. My internals were completely pried open, visible for all to see. I was a specimen to everyone, including myself. Every bad thought, bad experience, and bad memory. Words that still sting like they did when you first heard them, where you went wrong and what you could have done differently. Plucked and placed on a cold table for myself and those helping to analyze. It was bittersweet. I had to dig deep to understand why I was the way I am, but I was also stripped of my freedom. My shoes were locked up, we walked single file to dinner, and sometimes we even had to ask to step to the bathroom, step in and out. The realizations I came to crashed down on me, shit that I shoved so deep inside my brain were plucked out with multiple counseling sessions, individual and group. Rehab was not my coming-of-age story. I came out of rehab and dove back into the void. My family despised me. I despised myself. I still

cannot pinpoint why I decided to sober up. Nothing drastic changed, I was still five foot two with brown hair, but there was one thing that I have come to terms with.

Again, I am still unsure as to why I decided to sober up, but that decision granted me one piece of wisdom that I cannot release. Remember how I mentioned being hard-headed? Well, the day I decided to sober up, June thirteenth, my head turned to stone bolted in with thick titanium bolts. After coming to terms with living a drug-free life, my head had to stay in place. I had to face everything—every problem, every mistake—head on. Those words I should've said, that insult I wish I could take back, the trauma I tried so hard to forget, I soaked it all up like a sponge. Face first and with complete consciousness. I cannot let it go into dangerous places, physically and mentally. For if my head falls off, I will run after it helplessly, falling back into the void and being consumed in the process. There will be no more conversations with therapists, psychiatrists, or doctors about why I landed myself into these positions. There will be no more name-calling to my mom, who I relentlessly blamed for putting me into hospitals and treatments. The only name after stumbling back into the void would be my first and last name, followed by my birth and death year, for if I fall back into the void, I will or might as well be dead.