

Coming of Age poems

Poem 1: Bad feeling- don't know what it is
at age 8

Poem 2: Finally getting help at age 8

Poem 3: Getting a little better

Poem 4: Throwing up- age 11

Poem 5: Separation, not going to school-
age 14

Poem 6; Neal leaving

Poem 7: Someone hurting mom: age 18

The Beginning

My chest feels tight.

My throat feels like it's going to close up,
and my face feels hot.

The tears threaten to flow onto my cheeks
as I grip to my mom's arm.

Walking slowly up to the casket with my
great grandmother sleeping inside.

I have to stand on my tip toes in order to
peer inside at a woman I once knew very
well.

I look up at my mom who has allowed her
tears to flow onto her cheeks.

My 8-year-old mind then clicks.

Never leave your mom.

I'm startled.

*Never leave your mom, otherwise you'll be
looking at her in a casket instead.*

I've never had these urgent thoughts,
pounding inside my head before.

That's when it started, after the funeral I
would get those thoughts every day.

Especially when I had to be away from my
mom.

I thought I was going to lose her.

An example of the 'thoughts'

My chest feels tight. Oh no, not this again.

Alex do not go to bed.

I feel so uncomfortable, my breathing is
staggered.

*If you go to bed, then mom is going to be
downstairs by herself.*

My eyes fight off the tears.

*If someone comes in and kills her, it's your
fault.*

My fists ball up and my nails dig into my
palms as I try to get the thoughts to stop.

Don't go to bed.

I curl up into a ball in the floor and I think of
the only way to get the thoughts to stop.

My fingers grip around my hair and I pull as
hard as I can, while my other hand hits and
scratches my leg.

It will be your fault.

My mom finally gets me to stop and just
holds me as I sob into her light brown hair.

I can't lose her.

Meet Dr. Cole

My chest feels tight as I pick at the seam of my shirt.

My legs dangle in the big chair in the waiting room.

I don't really know where I am, I think it is a doctor's office of some kind.

My mom is sitting next to me holding my hand, she promises she will be with me the whole time.

A man with snow white hair comes out and shakes my hand.

We follow him down a long hallway to his office.

I notice he has board games and a rug with moons on it.

He asks me questions, but I was too shy to answer.

After watching the tears roll down my mom's cheeks, I realize maybe there is something wrong with me.

The man with snow white hair told me I have "severe anxiety", I didn't know what that meant.

He told me I have worry, and the thoughts in my head is worry talking to me.

He said he was going to help me get rid of worry.

I want to lose my worry.

Tools for Worry

My chest feels tight.

My mom is leaving for work, and I am trying to listen to what the snow-white haired man told me when this happens.

Do the opposite of what worry tells me.

She is going to get in a car accident and die.

I try to take deep breaths.

She will never come back to you.

I sit on the couch watching my mom walk back and forth getting ready to leave me.

Forever?

Will she leave me forever?

Yes.

My mind is fighting worry really hard.

Make her stay home.

Do the opposite.

She leaves but returns an hour later just as she promised.

Relief washes over my body and mind as I run and hug her.

Maybe I can do this.

Maybe I can lose worry.

Different Forms

My chest feels tight as I try to rub my tummy.

I am now 11 years old.

I haven't had this feeling in a few months, and the usual trigger didn't bring it on.

I ate too much and now I feel nauseous.

You are going to throw up.

I am scared of throwing up.

It will be the worst thing in the world, and you won't be able to recover.

I try to hold in my tears and think of what else the white-haired man told me to do.

This went on for a couple of months.

I lost 12 pounds.

If you don't eat, then you won't throw up.

That was the logic worry was giving me.

I don't recognize myself when I look in the mirror.

I don't want to lose myself.

Separation

My chest feels tight as I sit in the waiting room.

I am now 14 years old, and I haven't the snow-white haired man in over a year.

He can always help me, and I need it right now.

I haven't gone to school in days, my anxiety won't let me.

I have been hitting myself and pulling my hair a lot more.

I am just not happy with myself.

I sit in his office and stare at the moon rug.

He brings up the words 'separation anxiety' and links them to my biological dad.

I haven't thought about him in a long time.

Since I grew up without a dad and I have trauma from losing my great grandmother, he explains I worry about people leaving and never coming back.

I never thought of it that way.

My mom has been dating a man named Neal for about 6 years and I consider him a father figure.

It is nice having a father figure I can look up to.

I also like seeing my mom so happy.

I don't want us to lose Neal.

Ran Away

My chest feels tight, I feel like I just got kicked in the stomach.

I cry scream into my pillow.

Why.

My mom tells me how sorry she is.

I thought he loved me.

Neal broke up with my mom, and he broke my heart.

I must not be the daughter he wanted.

The thoughts that have been absent flood my mind as if they have been waiting urgently.

He didn't even say goodbye to me.

I scratch the nearest skin showing to try to relieve some of the pain that is over taking my heart.

Abandoned. Again.

It feels like the world is crashing around me.

I wanted him to be my dad.

He didn't want me.

We lost Neal.

Goodbye

My chest feels tight.

It is finally hitting me that I am going to college in a week.

Everything I have worked towards, with controlling my anxiety is paying off.

My mind feels strong.

I get a call from the white-haired man.

He tells me how proud he is of me, and that he is very thankful to have known me for 10 years.

I wish I could tell him how grateful I am for him and everything that he has done for me.

He says goodbye and to call him if I ever need anything.

I am okay.

My chest finally feels loose.

I think of how far I have come, and I feel proud.

There will be times when my chest will feel tight again, but I will know what to do to help myself.

I finally feel okay.

I am not afraid to lose myself anymore.

I have found myself.

