If I were a weighted blanket

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Abstract
This is a poem written in the first person, "by" a weighted blanket. It addresses the person who is using the blanket from two perspectives: firstly, a natural one and secondly, a commercialized one. This evokes the divide between the inherent purpose that a weighted blanket can serve as an assistive device for an Autistic person (a liberating potential) vs. its use and commodification in a medical system built around structures of profit and control. This tension is widely present in the Autistic community as well as among individuals who interact with those of us in the community. Confronting this tension helps with building an equitable world where Autistic people can be thriving members of our communities, rather than institutionalized or hidden away.

Keywords
medicalization, insurance, marketing, commercialization, institutionalization, nurses, assistive devices, autism, stigma, poetry, dichotomy, weighted blankets, community living, home, integration, acceptance, self-directed, sensory, stimulation, meltdowns, calm, liberation

1 Independent Author
If I were a weighted blanket
   I’d lie on top
   Of you and your limbs.
Help you keep hold of the ground,
   Your breath,
   Your flirtation with sleep,
   Your repose.
I wouldn’t alter your dreams.
I’d help you remember them, if you liked.
   Make them sharper,
   Or help you forget.
You’d feel this assurance as you drifted off.
   Remembering I was there,
   And recalling before
   When I wasn’t.
When you made your own weighted blanket
   Or not.
   And felt your limbs as part of you,
   Or part of something else.
When your mind floated off the ground,
   Not as in sleep -
   But agitation!
   Maybe sweat,
   Mixed with angry fatigue.
This memory would burn
   But fade.
Not like the sharper dreams.
Just the memory of exhaustion,
   Of frustration,
   In your bones,
   And your mind.
The bones of your mind,
   These I would touch,
   Even as you counted
   How I felt -
   The full weight of it -
   On your pelvic area,
   Your breast,
Your rising and falling chest,
   Your heaving shoulders,
   Your tired limbs,
   Your fingers and toes.
If I were a weighted blanket,
   I’d sooner or later be
An insurable expense.
   I’d be prescribed,
   And covered,
   Paid for
By people far from you,
   Far from your limbs.
Still I’d want to cover you,
   With my full weight.
I’d be grateful for this
That brought you to me.
   Even if my expense
   Will have grown
As more of me are bought,
   For cots,
In offices and centres,
   Places of treatment and escape.
   Frantic escape!
From the weight of the world,
   The comfort of one’s own bed.
Instead the orderliness of the cots
   Will see more of you
   Meet more of me,
   One after another,
Average stay a week, perhaps, or ten days.
   You will not claim me then.
   Just meet me,
Catch your breath slightly,
   Quickly,
Next to others who do the same.
   After lights out,
   Under watchful eyes
Of the nurses of the ward,
   The cots orderly and sharp
   In a long sad line.

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