

THE CANADIAN JOURNAL OF AUTISM EQUITY
LA REVUE CANADIENNE DE L'ÉQUITÉ EN MATIÈRE D'AUTISME

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 1 | APRIL 2022

If I were a weighted blanket

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RECOMMENDED CITATION: Owocki, S. (2022). If I were a weighted blanket. *The Canadian Journal of Autism Equity*, 2(1), 18–20.



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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.

Resumé

Ce poème est écrit à la première personne, du point de vue d'une couverture lestée. Il s'adresse à la personne qui utilise la couverture de deux points de vue : d'abord, un point de vue naturel et ensuite, un point de vue commercial. Il évoque le clivage entre l'objectif inhérent d'une couverture lestée en tant que dispositif d'assistance pour une personne autiste (un potentiel libérateur) et son utilisation et sa marchandisation dans un système médical construit autour de structures de profit et de contrôle. Cette tension est largement présente dans la communauté autiste ainsi que chez les personnes qui interagissent avec les membres de cette communauté. Faire face à cette tension aide à bâtir un monde équitable où les personnes autistes peuvent être des membres prospères de nos communautés, plutôt qu'institutionnalisées ou cachées.

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

Mots Clés

médicalisation, assurance, commercialisation, commercialisation, institutionnalisation, infirmières, aides techniques, autisme, stigmatisation, poésie, dichotomie, couvertures lestées, vie communautaire, maison, intégration, acceptation, autodirigé, sensoriel, stimulation, effondrements, calme, libération

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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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