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## poem

## Coming to Terms with Schizophrenia

Barry Tebb

Why *our* son, why?

Every morning the same dark chorus wakes me  
And I wonder how I am still alive.

'Balance the forces of life and death'  
Is the Kleinian recipe for survival.

'It is God's will, life is meant to test us'  
My Christian heritage tells me.

'Life is a vale of soul making'  
Keats reminds us.

Insistently the morning traffic hums  
As I sip my tea, list calls to make,  
Sigh in frustration at unread books.

For solace I look at cards of Haworth  
Moorland vistas of unending paths  
Cloudscapes only a Constable could paint  
High Withens in a gale, the sloping village street.

How? When? Why?  
'The truth' – if such an entity exists –  
Is that I want to run away

Barry Tebb was born in Leeds in 1942. He is a carer and a prolific poet, Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust governor and campaigner for better mental health. This poem is from *Tranquillity Street: New & Selected Poems*, published by Sixties Press in 2004 and reprinted with permission.

Chosen by Femi Oyeboode.

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