



Ophelia in London

You drift in white along the Embankment
with restless hands and voice.

Whispering.

Footfall scrapes and echoes in the night silence,
a shadow leaps to touch yours before passing.

Another tortured soul mutters and slinks in the yellow lampflare.

Your thoughts bend and race and
slide in chaos, never meeting in coherence and full-stops,
cruel voices, laughing, teasing, mocking in your mind.

Will it be the river My Lady?

The oily, silent Thames
or the thundering rusty train wheels?

The hospitals are full.

Ophelia, Ophelia walking in the back streets
with weary, wide unfocused eyes.

Singing and sad.

The drugs don't work,
there are no beds.

So in the end there only is the grass-green turf and stone.

Janey Antoniou (1957-2010)

This poem took first prize in the Perceptions Forum poetry competition 2006. Janey Antoniou lived with Schizophrenia. Reprinted by permission.

Poems for... Self at Sea

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