

“Daily Runs Alongside Depression Pain Anxiety” by C.L. Mirabel (Norfolk State U)

I use to fight you a lot. I'd look you in the eyes and say *come on, come with me, let's go on a walk,*” and you'd cry and beg but I'd still drag you, arms being tugged, feet scraping against the concrete. Can't leave you here alone; we always stick together.

I might comment on the sun, beaming pleasantly on the backs of our backs. I might comment on the wind, blowing the fresh smell of wet grass and blooming life. But you never cared, your arms pumping, you'd say *let's just get this over with; go faster.*

Air rushing too fast from my lungs, feet moving too fast, I can't slow down. Pain is running behind us; she's waiting to trip me. Anxiety runs up beside us, trying to whisper. *I can't hear you.* She's yelling, *something anything, can happen.* I slow down, but Depression is now trying to drag me, saying *move faster, move faster,* but I can't breathe, can't see, I'm stuck.

Face on the ground, I've given up, given in. I can't win, loser. I'm a loser. Anxiety lies down on the cool ground beside me, wraps her arms around me, *you can't stay here too long, people can see you, how will you survive, get up and smile, act normal, is this normal, what is normal?* It's all too much.

Maybe I'll start seeing other people, therapist type people, trying new things, saying new things, understanding when I'm running with you this is my normal. Occasionally, I'll run alone. I'll feel the sun, smell the grass. Depression, Pain, or Anxiety might decide to run up beside me, and I'll greet them. I'll say *You've been gone awhile, I didn't miss you, but knew you would catch up.*

I use to fight you a lot; now I run beside you stronger, because I know you'll always come back and with my shoes on, laces tied, I'm ready.