



# The Blessing of Dark Water

*Elizabeth Lyons*

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“These poems are infused with contradiction: discovery and pain, blood and healing. Ultimately, *The Blessing of Dark Water* is wrenching in its investigation of the artistic urge as tempered by the transformative power of suffering.” —Amy Quan Barry

Lyons’s debut, *The Blessing of Dark Water*, highlights the exquisite pain and terrible happiness of mental illness by invoking the voice and perspective of American artist, Walter Inglis Anderson, who struggled with bipolar depression and psychotic episodes. These poems grapple with the suffering and secrecy of “invisible” illness, and the aching struggle for a simple human connection within the complexities.

### “How All Things are Managed”

They call it a *falling into death*.

Two dogs are shot into my vein.  
Three-second breath then  
the shake and jerk.  
One dog starves and the other  
feeds on its body.

Remember: *thou art dust*.

If I am lucky, there is only the darkness,  
an explosion.

Perhaps a fracture,  
a concussion,  
a dislocation.  
Flecks of blood.

If the illness in your brain is brutal,  
be brutal back.

**Elizabeth Lyons** holds an MFA from Purdue University and is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Houston. Her poems have appeared in *Tin House*, *Indiana Review*, *New South*, and *Salt Hill*. A recipient of fellowships and prizes from the Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference, Vermont Studio Center, the I-Park Foundation, and the Academy of American Poets, she lives in Houston, TX.

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