

# BJP The British Journal of Psychiatry Psych



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## Cover picture

Strawberries or Pills by Alison Dawn West  
© Alison Dawn West

Alison Dawn West was born in Stoke Newington in 1966. She writes: 'Through fantastic and horrible days, poetry exists for me. Although labelled with Manic Depression, I question labels as I question life. I feel like an artist, not a mad woman – although I'm happy to be both'. She has produced a volume of poetry, entitled 'Strawberries or Pills' and has created a picture to accompany each poem. The initial, eponymous poem is accompanied by this picture. The opening lines of the poem read:

Strawberry or pills  
Money not bills,  
  
Ice cream not fags  
Autobiographies not mags,  
  
Laughter not tears,  
Comfort not fears.  
  
Relaxation, medication  
Tonic and dedication  
  
Poetry and rhyme  
Not clocking the time.

Alison is an artist from Core Arts ([www.corearts.co.uk](http://www.corearts.co.uk)), an organisation which was set up in 1992 by an artist using a vacant space in the old Hackney Hospital, London. His studio attracted the interest of the patients who began to create their own work. As a result of this, and with only limited funding, an open studio was built. Following several successful exhibitions, Core Arts was officially founded and gained charitable status in 1994. After using temporary accommodation, it obtained a lease for a vacant building, where it continues to this day. It is run by professional artists, writers and musicians, some of whom have experienced mental illness, and attracts a wide and diverse group of people.

We are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the Journal and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 21 Prescot Street, London, E1 8BB, UK or [bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk).

