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Cover picture

McDonna by Steph Bates, Watercolour, c.2010
© Bethlem Museum of the Mind.

The artist says that this painting was “originally based around the period of post-natal depression I suffered and for all those woman who feel lost in that vacuum, and with a nod to the seductive nature of fast food on children and parental struggles around this hypnotism. Hence the rather enormous, plump burger-devouring, Rubenesque cherub in the foreground, and the slight hopeless expression on the Madonna’s face, while Jesus reaches for a chip.” Despite living with the dominating effects of obsessive compulsive disorder, Steph Bates attended both Chelsea College of Art and Bristol Polytechnic, to study Graphic Design and Illustration. Her painting of the MacDonna playfully blends art historical references with her personal experience of becoming a mother. Bates cleverly elevates the mother above potential parental guilt and external judgement surrounding fast food; her self sacrifice and the need to feed her children are instead exemplified by painting her as the Madonna.

Thank you to Rebecca Raybone for providing the text about this image.

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.

