



(Lithograph by Thomas Hart Benton titled, 'Goin' Home', 1937 from Lapham's Quarterley Magazine Winter 2012.)

OFF MY WAVE .

There is nothing to warrant celebration within the realm of the pain and suffering of others.

No badge to be worn by those who, with all good intention, fly the flag for those of us who suffer conditions of mind and circumstances of life that test our will to live.

Look to those of us who've been turned away for solutions to prevent our end, for only we know what helps to soothe the hurting and raise the eyelids to hope.

I lie with many, unnoticed in the shadows of those with the loud voices, the big campaigns, the success driven solutions to resolve our painful existence – offer us light.

Those who live in brightness do not see, feel and understand the beauty and sense of consolation the darkness offers those who ride its wave.

Talk you may, but in a whisper that is sensitive to the shame we feel, the secrets we carry, and the space within which our hurting souls cling.

Where we swing between the end and being offered some surprising, warm, kind thing upon which to be gently lifted from our descent, and openly embraced in all our sorrow and sadness.



Human beings ache
for understanding—
they should never
be regarded as mere
containers of their
symptoms.’
Cathryn J Zerbe

Footnote: I wrote the above piece after receiving an email from an organisation that raises awareness about depression and suicide in the community – and funds towards research. The title read, ‘Exciting News!!!’ and the news was dotted with excited exclamation marks. There was also talk about heroes, but not those who endure conditions of mind and hard life experiences, the organisation that was excited about their achievement. While the message was well meaning, (they’re doing some great and necessary work and I’m sure it was not their intention to offend), as ‘one of those’ they’re excited about helping, I found it grossly insensitive. Never should the word ‘excitement’ be used in the context of those struggling in the community. Hence... ‘Off My Wave’ – a reminder of the individual struggle many face, the respect and sensitivity it deserves – and how the warmth and validation that comes from sharing our stories with each other can sometimes be our best medicine.

SEARCH Blog for [‘The Black Dog Story’](#) and [‘Comfort in Virginia’](#), where Ms Woolf places what many see as ‘madness’ in a strong and intelligent space. And a powerful clip about not labelling people (particularly kids) with conditions of mind, [‘Coming Unstuck’](#).

Posted: 21 November, 2013

