# DOLL HOSPITAL ISSUE THREE: EDITOR'S LETTER EXTRACT

A common dismissal of mental health narratives is that they are overly self-centred but, despite all my unapologetic essays on my experiences on actual freaking narcissism, I 100% disagree. It is only through engaging with mental health narratives and connecting with others experiencing mental health struggles similar to my own that I've been able to look beyond myself, my own illness, my delusions and flaws and egotism, to see something bigger, an interconnected galaxy of mental health stories that I am (thankfully) only a tiny part of.

I didn't used to think like this. My delusions, psychosis and generally obnoxious nature, paired with our capitalist culture of individualism made me insufferable for so long! Because, even as mentally ill people ourselves, it's easy to buy into dodgy narratives if they can make us look 'good,' or throw other mentally ill people under the bus if they're making us look 'bad.' I've been thinking about this a lot actually, as the stigma for mental illness is so great that it's easy to avoid accountability for hurtful behaviour in order to prove all those guilt-tripping 'mentally ill people are bad people' nonsense statements wrong. But accountability is not ableism and I'm not interested in reducing myself to some corny able-minded ideal.

Mental illness has, to put it mildly, not been, y'kno, **great** for me. And I don't think it's made me that fun to be around either. Complex PTSD results in some not good stuff y'kno? And I keep thinking about those amongst us who are seen as too 'scary' to be mentally ill, whose trauma and mental illness has resulted in negative, even violent behaviour to those around them, so they are reduced to phrases like 'evil,' 'monster,' and 'psychopath,' and as result are seen as lost causes, incurable, 'born bad.'

It is perhaps more comforting to isolate these incidents, to separate them from cozy Etsy-store-style mental health brands, so we in turn can deflect accountability from ourselves and forget we exist in conversation with the communities around us, and as a result of fucked up coping mechanisms and internalised bullshit from a hostile world, hold that same capacity for hurtful behaviour. These conversations are difficult, uncomfortable even, but they're the ones we need to be exploring if we are to move beyond troubling 'good' vs. 'bad' binaries (a subject so brilliantly explored in Loletta's 'Good Depression/Bad Depression' essay in this issue) and towards a mental health conversation that is truly reflective of the pressing realities of trauma and mental illness.