

SANITY MOUNTAIN

Words by Tan Shi Yee Amanda

PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME: why did I decide to take my ass to therapy?

It's simple really. Just explore the depths of your soul crushing under the immense pressure of life and watch your sanity slip through your fingers slowly like Michael Jackson's baby and you'll be left with one of two choices: continue watching yourself dilute into a Jackson Pollock (second Jackson in one sentence!) version of yourself or pull your [redacted] together.

So I did. I pulled my [redacted] together.

How did my brain manage to bounce its way down the rabbit hole like a lost baseball, you may ask? Honestly, I'm not sure. I remember watching an Alanis concert when I was 12 and peeing 21 times during the whole thing. I basically spent more time in the squatter than I did with pre-India angry Alanis (the best kind of Alanis). Before I go any further, I didn't actually have to pee. I was acting on the fear of maybe needing to pee in the next 15 minutes, so I peed every 10 minutes instead. It made, and still makes, perfect sense to me.

Most people with OCD diagnose themselves before taking their ass to mental camp and getting the help they actually need. And yes, I was ultimately diagnosed with it, along with generalised anxiety disorder. I had the "what if" disease. And if you think about it, even if you're not sick, the plague of "what ifs" exists for everybody. Its disgusting, skinny demon arms grab you from behind, and suddenly, you're its [redacted]. You're no longer present, you're no longer there, you're the face of your own fears.

So, sometimes, I wonder, what if I really lost my mind?

What if I continued to cockblock myself from sexy sanity?

Climbing a mountain (literal mountain!) last year, during my trip to Kyrgyzstan, I compulsively thought about a spec of dirt that I'd encountered on the toilet floor of our hotel room that morning. I continued thinking about that spec for a month after that. I contemplated taking a plane back to Almaty, where I'd transfer to Bishkek, cross the border and find a shared taxi to the hotel that we'd stayed in. I'd request for the same room, tip the doorman, then haul out my giant paint scraper and scrape that [redacted] off that floor. I lived in similar thought cycles like this one for months, torturously relinquishing specs of dirt and bits of my soul.

Thankfully, my ex-boyfriend decided to unabatedly dump me after our trip together. Thanks bro, your dad died and I was there for you, but I lose some marbles and you bolted because it's not sexy for you anymore. For the first time, I actually had the urge to kill myself. How very Plath of me, right? I felt extra *bell-jarry* after that. So thank you, because your selfishness made me realise I've got to be selfish about myself for a second. And to stop listening to people telling me I'm fine when I know I'm not. Why do I know this? Because I'm stumbling down crazy mountain *yo*.

And how does one go from indulging in floor dirt and strange idiosyncrasies to climbing the mountain of sanity (figurative mountain!)? Well, it's either you work for it, or lose yourself in the mosh pit of your brain. And so I hauled my ass to crazy camp. I used the tip of my toes to kick at the rim of the bell jar. I looked at sanity for the first time, winked at it and said, "Hey *thurrr*... How you *doin*?" 🍌