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## The Bipolar World Within Us

Jenny Wells

Love and hate, generous and greedy  
 Kind and cruel, independent and needy  
 Lead and follow, good and bad  
 Release and hold, happy and sad  
 Optimist and pessimist, high and low  
 Child and adult, yes and no  
 Honest and dishonest, weak and strong  
 Content and jealous, right and wrong  
 Help and hinder, shallow and deep  
 Silent and loud, sow and reap  
 Healthy and ill, busy and lazy  
 Certain and doubt, sane and crazy  
 Laugh and cry, fall and rise  
 Sweet and bitter, ignorant and wise  
 Passive and aggressive, cool and warm  
 Give and take, calm and storm  
 Feminine and masculine, joy and pain  
 Saint and sinner, modest and vain  
 Clever and foolish, slow and fast  
 Change and stagnate, fail and pass  
 Teacher and student, young and old  
 Courage and fear, shy and bold.

Born in Kent, I spent most of my early life in Aberystwyth and now live in Cornwall with my husband and our son. I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 1994 at the age of 33. It was very confusing, especially for my family, as I was manic and oblivious. I was heavily medicated for nearly 2 years, which made me emotionally numb, and I had been admitted to psychiatric hospitals three times, last time in 1997. I have had many episodes since, though I learnt to control the illness to some extent and I rarely have lows, mostly highs. Many positive things have happened since my diagnosis – I now work for a local mental health charity, helping to eradicate the stigma associated with mental ill health; I hope that my poems are a way of doing this also.

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