

Book Reviews

Miracles, Moons, and Madness

by S. C. Ryder; Bloomington, Indiana, Archway Publishing, 2014, 105 pages

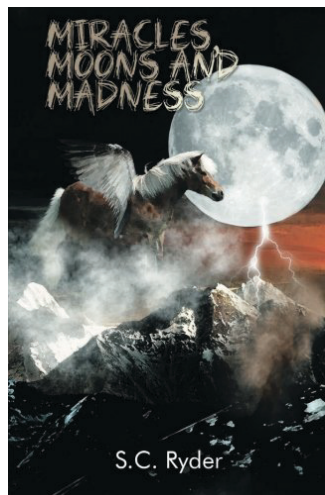
Miracles, Moons, and Madness is a narrative account of the debilitating impact of mental illness on one's daily functioning, especially if it goes either unrecognized or poorly treated. S. C. Ryder recounted her firsthand experience from living with the love of her life, who initially did not recognize he had bipolar disorder. When he eventually recognized that he had a problem, getting treatment proved to be quite a challenge, given that he had to also battle his family's denial of the illness. According to the World Health Organization Global Observatory data, in 2014, 45% of the world's population lived in a country where there was less than one psychiatrist to serve 100,000 people, as is reflected in this story. Reading through the book, I found myself using my mind's eye to visualize my patients in their day-to-day lives. S. C. Ryder provides an insider perspective that we as mental health providers do not see, given the brevity of our patient's clinic or home visits and follow-up visits that are spaced far apart. The 105-page story starts out rather slow but becomes a quick read, and I recommend it to all mental health providers.

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He Wanted the Moon: The Madness and Medical Genius of Dr. Perry Baird, and His Daughter's Quest to Know Him

by Mimi Baird, with Eve Claxton; New York, Crown Publishing, 2015, 250 pages

In *He Wanted the Moon*, Mimi Baird sets out to tell the story of her father. In 1944, when Mimi Baird was six years old, her father, Perry, stopped coming home, for reasons never explained to her as a child. Perry Baird had been admitted that year to Westborough State Hospital (WSH) in Massachusetts, the fourth hospital to which he had been admitted for manic episodes. He was 41 years old, stayed in the hospital 95 days, and never rejoined the family. Her father was always a mystery to Mimi, until she inherited the manuscript for a book he never finished that recounts his experiences with bipolar disorder.

Ms. Baird has created a first-person account that speaks from three perspectives: her father's, that of the psychiatric hospital medical records, and her own. One unfortunate shortcoming of the book is that Ms. Baird writes well (with the assistance of Eve Claxton) and has interesting observations to share, whereas her father's writing makes a lot of detours before getting to cogent or engaging points.

The medical records are quite interesting, providing the reader glimpses of psychiatric treatment in the 1930s–1940s. Interventions tried with Perry Baird included, for example, an 11-day narcosis treatment using sodium amobarbital. He provides views of other treatments of that era, for example, “constant restraint,” which was the maintenance of restraint

