THAT ONE TIME, WHEN MY LIFE FELL APART
An Illustrated Memoir by Annabeth Tucker
Sometimes life gets a little strange.

Sometimes it could be a little out there.

And other times it eats you ALIVE!!

HELLO, my name is Life

The time I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder...

... was one of those times.
You might be wondering: What does that mean?

First off, bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood.

This was true for me. A stress-induced mania struck me when the neurons in my brain misfired.

Let me share my journey with you.

No one knows yet what causes it, but doctors think it may be a combination of genetics and environmental factors.
I was 17, a senior in high school, when my manic episode happened...

MANIA =

- Impulsivity
- Euphoria
- Racing thoughts
- Talking rapidly
- Grandiosity
- Not sleeping but not feeling tired
- Psychosis

This period lasted for 10 days.
My parents had to take me to the emergency room, where I was admitted to the mental ward. Being just a month shy of my 18th birthday, I was put in the pediatric side.

The food tasted the same every day.

For exercise they had us speed walk up and down the ward...

Our bright yellow socks slid across the cold tile floor.

...listening to the radio.

After 9 days in the hospital, I was discharged.
... After being happy for so long, it was only expected: I became sad (due to a chemical imbalance in my brain).

LIES THAT I BELIEVED

I can’t do anything right.

I am so stupid.

I’ll never be good enough.

No one likes me.

I suck.

I slept too much and overate out of hopelessness. My world was dark.
While I was in the hospital, they put me on medicine. It eventually helped me out of the depression.

I take my meds twice a day.

It has been nearly 5 years since my diagnosis. I have changed a lot since then...
Although all this was unexpected, shocking, and extraordinarily difficult in the aftermath of grappling with a mental illness diagnosis...

...it ignited my faith in God.

I love you, Annabeth.

He understands when no one else does. His love is restorative.

I have family and friends that love me, fantastic doctors, and access to medication.

Keith, brother
Keri, sister
Dad, Mom
Awesome doctors
My supportive pets

God has blessed me with the gift of encouragement and redeemed it all by enabling me to speak out of my own pain to help others that are struggling.

me
metamorphing
over time,
by God's grace, into
new strength
and beauty
what do you think of when you hear the term "mental illness?"

I am none of those negative words. (Well maybe a little weird, but aren't we all?) I am a person—just like you are.
Today, I am flourishing. I take good care of myself and am blessed with a stable life.

I am even living out my dream of world travel by being in Peru for 3 months and in Zimbabwe for 5 weeks.

Really? We all have a burden to bear or a cross to carry; mine just has a medical name.

Throughout all this I have learned when life tries to eat you alive? Hang on and trust God. He knows what He's doing.