

The Beginning of My *Roots & Wings* Journey

by Danielle Betts

I met Lisa while I was in high school. We met at a time when I believed that if I could help enough people I could fill the dark hole inside me without ever having to look into it. I tried to be part of Lisa's dreams, but barely knew why I got out of bed each morning. Despite all of that, Lisa always saw something in me that I never could. Here we are, about 4 years later, and I can finally - at least most of the time - say that I am worthy and enough. How is that so?

My mental health journey has been bumpy, but what has always gotten me back on my feet is art. When I can't find my voice, all I have to do is find a pen and paper and let my hand do the talking for me. When all I can do is drag my feet, I put some music on, and I just let it take over my limbs. By fully indulging in the beauty of life, specifically all its opportunities for expression and creativity, I was finally able to feel at home in my own body and feel in charge of my mind. When the world goes blurry, all you have to do is allow yourself to surrender to your thoughts and emotions, and through art, let them tell you what you need. Whether it is my anxiety, depression, ADHD, insomnia, or PTSD, art is there for me and I know it is there for you too.

I feel beyond grateful that Lisa has once again trusted me with something she is so passionate about. I am overcome with hope; I can feel its light run from my fingers all the way to my toes, making my heart beat and my mouth stretch from ear to ear. To be able to be part of someone else's dreams while also chasing yours: that's something very special. Creativity comes from such a raw and vulnerable part of us; it is no wonder that mental health and art go hand and hand. I am so excited to begin this Roots and Wings journey and see where it leads me and all of you. The main hope with this project is that you find a community here at Roots and Wings. I want you to know that when things get big and scary, you can come here, be creative, and through your art and that of others', the big and scary becomes small and manageable. I am ready to start this adventure with Lisa and you because this is just as much your dream as it is ours or else you wouldn't be here. So, officially, welcome to Roots and Wings; welcome to a better tomorrow.

Earth without 'art' is just 'eh'.

- Unknown