

Remembering Renata Azman

In the introduction to Renata Azman's highly acclaimed book, *Depra, (Depression) (2007)*, her former psychiatrist commented on the difficulties involved in the process of Jungian 'individuation' and reaching of wider Self. It was observed that the journey for Renata and others before her was into challenging dark and difficult places as well as an experience of soul connection and realisation of the essential unity of all Being.

In her struggle with long term manic depression the helpful effects of creative writing were a lived experience for Renata. She brought great warmth and compassion to her work with others in her therapeutic writing workshops. In Slovenia, her country of birth she shone a light through her books, articles and website on the hidden effects and costs of mental ill health, both to the individual sufferer and to society.

On 14th February 2016, her 53rd birthday, that cost became all too apparent when she took her own life.

She will be missed by many. Her message will I am sure live on in the hearts and minds of all those she inspired and helped in her battle to destigmatise and normalise mental illness in Slovenia and elsewhere.

Renata's writing workshops in Slovenia and Birmingham gave rise to an anthology including articles and poems by members of Suresearch (*Write Out Your Pain, 2014*). My own poem *Cell Memories (2007)*, appeared on the last page of the book. The spontaneous writing of the poem had marked the culmination of a thirty-year journey of 'individuation' through various levels of psychological and spiritual awakening and awareness. It also heralded a fuller realisation for me of the lifelong personal impact and influences of complex PTSD and post traumatic spiritual development.

As a tribute to Renata, one year on from her death, I am posting my article '*Why I still have Hope*' and accompanying poems from the anthology on the Suresearch website. I would like to encourage others who contributed to the anthology to also publish their own work on the website, in her memory.

Tony Devaney

15th February 2017