

2CPETRIFIED!

This is an anti-drugs article, but not in the typical sense. I'm not trying to judge anyone or scare them into straight behaviour. These are the reflections of an open minded 'hippy' type who has more than dabbled in her fair share of drugs. This is coming from a 22 year old who has been brought up in a generation where the clubbing scene is fully reliant on dodgy pills, cheap cocaine, 'skunk' weed and crazy hallucinogens, often several times more potent than that previously available, even in the 60s.

This is coming from a girl who is almost entirely sure that drugs have had a massively negative impact on the mental and physical health of both herself and many of her friends. Drugs are fun, they say. This is not a complete lie. Some of my wildest, most exciting experiences involved drugs. However, what those pushing you to partake may fail to tell you is how drugs can also rapidly make you feel so sad that you want to die. Or so panicky that you feel like you actually are dying. Think about it logically - what goes up, must come down. The massive serotonin release that accompanies drug taking may feel euphoric for a while but that euphoria will end. It is not real happiness.

The scariest part is that this is exactly how people become so easily addicted - chasing that high again and again, delaying the eventual, inevitable crash. Time and time again beautiful, talented individuals, bursting with potential and excitement for what was to come in their lives have been left broken and destroyed because of their drug habits or even by just one bad 'trip'. Of course this is focusing on the dramatic side of things. Many young people party hard and experiment with drugs for a while, without developing serious addictions. Taking the occasional drag of a joint does not set you on the path to becoming a homeless heroin addict. However, the stories you hear, of it only taking one bad pill to kill or a tiny bit too much cocaine to comatose, are not lies. Whilst these extreme occurrences are rare enough, there are also much more common but nevertheless devastating side effects that I personally want to share with you.

The anxiety and depression that often come alongside this 'party' lifestyle can be so crippling, it only feels like one step less than death. 'I remember sitting on the cold tiles of the nightclub floor staring at the ceiling afraid of what was to come. There was some green mould growing on it and before my eyes it slowly turned into a giant, green monster that was coming to get me. I was petrified. After seeing these extremely distressing visions it felt like my brain would never be the same again. I had not known what to expect and I was not ready for it. The height of the hallucinogens went on for about 8 hours but it seemed like it lasted for eternity. In some way though I think it does last for an eternity.

The underlying mental health problems that I have experienced after being sparked by that trip have been astronomical. I have seen and experienced the world in such an intensely vivid manner that I will never be able to not see or not feel and in a way I feel like I have seen too much.' This is my experience on a drug called 2CP. I was taking antidepressants at the time. This combination is potentially lethal but due to a lack of proper education I really hadn't had a notion what I was taking. The guy I was with had asked me if I ever went 'trippin' and innocently I had answered 'where, down the country?' He was hot and I was easily convinced.

I fell over while dancing and ended up in the emergency room (with scarily high blood pressure and a bruised skull) followed by a three week stint in St James' hospital – psyche (I hate that word) ward, which was not I must reiterate a pleasant stay. It was a near death experience that almost scared me figuratively to death but also one where death could have become the literal outcome. Seriously kids, drugs are not to be taken lightly.

This is the piece in my diary I wrote the next day. I was confused and terrified and had no idea what was going on. The following evening I would be committed to my stay in hospital whilst in time I slowly regained my connection to the everyday, physical world.

'My head hit the floor but my whole life did not come flooding back to me as they said it would. Instead my brain was filled with painful regrets whilst my eyes flooded, with the tears of past mistakes.

What meaning could I find in the darkness of the afterlife that became me. What realness could I take from this hallucinatory concussion.

I write so I do not forget.

I died. I'm sure of it. Or maybe I was just hallucinating? After all what force separates our hallucinations from the truth and what force distinguishes our mundane relative normality from the lies. If we are but mere pixels in a video game, nothing more than quantum physics, codes and bullshit then how I wonder is my pain so real. How is my love so strong, my touch so soft, my laughter so gut wrenching and my connections so deep.

Do I feel more than anyone else and is this constant confusion I possess based on my knowing too much or my knowing too little? I ask this whilst my eyes sting with stagnant water that I cannot let run. These tablets have seeped into my veins. The two types. Both bad and both good. Both wrong and both right. Numbness fights feeling. Anger fights love. Life fights death and this time, luckily, life wins.

This thing they gave me is not a happy pill. One is a method of keeping 'sane'. But with sanity comes a brick wall that encapsulates us within its seemingly peaceful garden. The garden where kids eat ice cream and parents walk their dogs, Hand in hand. The moderate calm before the inevitable, catastrophic storm. The other pill is a 'fun' one and it is even worse. Together they are lethal. They work in tangent to self destruct and I am left here breathless. Sitting on the cold floor. Hands in head. Willing the pain, the purgatory to end. An explosion erupts.

This is the storm that brakes down barriers. Crisis. Where uncontrollable splashes of death and heartbreak and failure, push past striped normative patterns and leave you on your knees. Begging and praying.

What else can one do you ask. To risk everything, to be everything, to feel ... everything. But with this blatant self discovery comes a somewhat eerie loneliness. As you become but a painful, difficult memory, that rips former peers apart.

For when I died my almost death I delved deep into these questions. Into the overlooked departments within my brain and the most intricately woven vessels within my pumping heart. My body, my soul, my being awakened - universal energy floating through the

crowds. The clouds. Visions that would shape my future. Hallucinations that had shaped my past. And I was left damaged. Alone. Tired. 2CPetrified.