

Mothering
May-June 2007

losing it

Postpartum psychosis is every mother's worst nightmare.
With the help of quick, aggressive treatment,
this woman made it through.

BY SARAH R. FIELDS

SHE'S SO FRAGILE. I could kill her without trying. I realized this when my daughter, Anna, was born. Such innocence and utter dependence! Two years later, the arrival of my son, John, brought a return of the same fears. What if I dropped him down the stairs? Becoming a mother brings a sense of reverence and holy fear, in the face of the awesome responsibility of caring for a tiny little life. Sometimes, when a mother loses touch with reality, those fears come true.

When I learned, from one study, that one in 25 mothers with postpartum psychosis kills her child, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of gratitude.¹ Postpartum psychosis affects only one to two women per thousand in the first year after giving birth, but when my son was six months old, it happened to me. No harm came to either of my children while I was psychotic, thanks to close supervision and quick intervention by my husband and my parents. But I realize now that it could have.

Mother-to-Mother is referenced Losing It article in May-June 2007 Mothering Magazine

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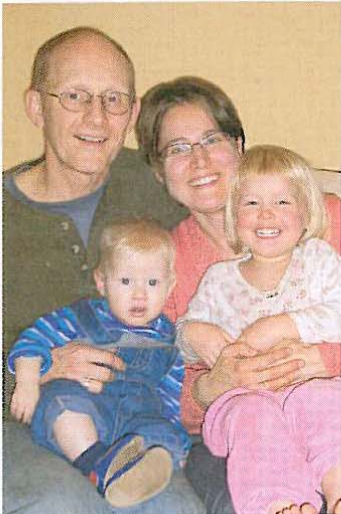
nd, nurture, and protect my
They are alive today because
remembered how to care for

them, and took over for me.

It is over a year now since I became
psychotic, and I have had no relapse
in symptoms. We found out last

Christmas that we are
expecting our third
child, and I am
overjoyed with
the news. I feel
confident that
by maintaining
good nutrition
and sleep hab-
its, implement-
ing preventive
measures, getting
comprehensive blood
work done by my health
care provider, and remaining under
the watchful eye of my family and
midwife, psychosis will not happen to
me again. If it does, I'm ready with a
treatment plan, care providers, well-
informed friends and family, and the
wisdom that comes from experience.

While conventional
psychiatric medicine
helped me to sleep at first,
I believe it was homeopathy
that brought me **true
peace and
healing.**



Christmas 2006: The author and
her family on Christmas Eve

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Resources

Health Research Institute
and Pfeiffer Treatment
Center, 4575 Weaver Parkway,
Warrenville, IL 60555-4039;
866.504.6076; 630.505.0300;
www.hriptc.org.

Postpartum Support
International (PSI); PSI
Postpartum Depression
Helpline: 800.944.4PPD
(4773); www.postpartum.net.

Karl Robinson, MD, homeo-
path, 713.621.3184.

Books

Bennett, Shoshana S. *Beyond
the Blues: A Guide to
Understanding and Treating
Prenatal and Postpartum
Depression*. Moodswings
Press, 2006.

Hale, Thomas W., PhD.
Medications and Mothers' Milk,
12th Edition. Hale Publishing, 2006.

Pfeiffer, Carl C., PhD, MD. *Nutrition and Mental
Illness: An Orthomolecular Approach to Balancing
Body Chemistry*. Healing Arts Press, 1987.

Poulin, Sandra. *The Mother-to-Mother
Postpartum Depression Support Book: Real
Stories from Women Who Lived Through It and
Recovered*. Berkley Publishing Group, 2006.

*Sarah Fields sings, writes, and mothers
in Hobart, Indiana, where she lives with
her husband, Carl, and their children,
Anna (4) and John (2).*

this day

The wise ones teach
that to be content
we must burrow
into the heart of the moment;
relax in the kernel of the day...

This moment's heart
is wet and sweet
with creek water,
smells of corn silks
and ripe tomatoes
split open on the vine.
It is dusty all over
with red earth.

This day's kernel
is a watermelon seed;
the fat whirl of cicadas;
a sighing wind chime;
the soft pop
and flash of fireflies
at dusk.

This day's heart
is a school of meteors;
kamikaze moths
in the persimmon
porch light;
the creak of a rocking chair.

Today's kernel is the heart
and the vanilla-pudding face
of my baby
as he melts
into immaculate sleep.

Gina Ball