

Jump-start

by Phillis Ideal

"I am supposed to meet my nephew, Johnnie, to move my van from in front of his dad's house in New Jersey. I don't know what to do. I need to catch the 11:30 train, but what is the difference between doing it today or tomorrow? His dad is such a prick and he wants my van out of there. I'm dry-mouthed. Johnnie will be so disappointed — he needs a trickle charge to start my van, which I have just left there for months."

"Go up there and start it. It is important for you to get out."

"I was under the covers. Miracle I heard the phone and found it in my pants under this pile of clothes. I am such a miserable son of a bitch. I don't know. I have this panic — terrible thoughts going through my mind, desperate thoughts. Everything is a logjam — a collision of different things. I feel panicky and want to stay under the covers."

"Do you still see that woman — the shrink?"

"She lives at Ninth Street and Third Avenue. She is very nice."

"I take Seroquel to sleep, Zoloft for depression, Lamictal for mood stabilization. You wake up and you don't know what is going on. Some bipolar people take Lithium but I don't think I am bipolar. I'm not manic, just depressed. Can I get on the train and make it up there?"

"Johnnie will be disappointed. Go help him jump-start your van."

"I just opened my eyes and looked out. The weather is beautiful today — not that I can enjoy it. I am in terrible psychological shape — Monday was terrible. Yesterday was terrible, and Dr. Weinstein called to see how I was doing. I went to an AA meeting last night. It wasn't bad. It wasn't good. I felt disconnected but didn't want to come home either. I don't know what I am doing. I am out of my mind. Do you think Johnnie will care if I don't go today?"

"Yes, he adores you and is counting on seeing you."

"OK, I am going to throw on my pants and try to catch the train."

