



The Angel and the Dragon: A Father's Search for Answers to His Son's Mental Illness and Suicide

Jonathan Aurthur

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On November 1, 1996, Charley Aurthur leapt to his death from a freeway overpass in Santa Monica, California. He was twenty-three years old. It was the culmination of five years of heartache for Charley and his family, as he struggled with severe mental illness, numerous hospitalizations and several other suicide attempts. Despite his family's love, intensive therapy and numerous medications, in the end, nothing could save Charley from his own encroaching sense of exhaustion and isolation.

Tragically, Charley's story could be anybody's story. In the United States, more than 30,000 people commit suicide every year; it is the eighth leading cause of death overall and the third among young people aged 15-24. But the effects of suicide are even more far-reaching: Its impact on the family is frequently devastating and lifelong.

Author Jonathan Aurthur knows this firsthand. His account of his son Charley's short life and death is both riveting and compelling. Charley's own letters, poems and journal entries demonstrate the terrible complexity and multidimensionality of mental illness and suicide. In the process, the author addresses his own search to understand mental illness and the inability of many medical treatments to help troubled people like Charley. He also offers an alternative treatment plan known as the "psychosocial rehab" model, which seeks to "treat the person, not the disease." This page-turner will stay with readers long after they've heard Charley's story.

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