

# Lucy Howard-Taylor

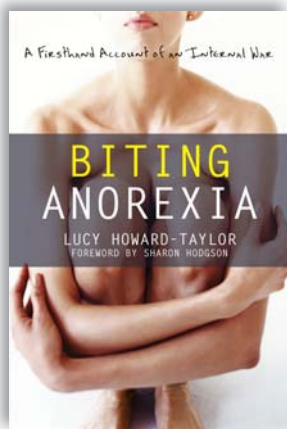
**AUTHOR OF *BITING ANOREXIA: A FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF AN INTERNAL WAR***



AUTHOR PHOTO: JEREMY YAO

## About the Author

**LUCY HOWARD-TAYLOR** is a student studying English and law at Sydney University, a talented photographer, and a published poet. She has edited Australia's oldest literary journal, *Hermes*, as well as the university women's law journal, *Yemaya*. In between writing articles for the campus newspaper, she likes to eat cinnamon toast and dream about studying at Oxford. She lives in Sydney, Australia.



**"My name is Lucy. I am in recovery from anorexia nervosa and major depression, each of which almost killed me."**

So begins this extraordinary depiction of a young girl's descent into the tortured existence of anorexia and of her remarkable recovery. *Biting Anorexia* is drawn from the pages of Lucy Howard-Taylor's diary as she struggles with her condition and offers an insightful view into the world of an ambitious and intelligent young woman attempting to claw herself back from the point of no return. With each journal entry, readers learn more about how anorexia and depression devastate Lucy's brain—at one point she writes in her diary *"apparently my weight is so low for my height that I'm eating myself (brain included)."* During her agonizing struggle Lucy spends countless hours on the internet reading ProAna websites and suicide stories, and her desperation leads her to attempt suicide more than once.

Anorexia is the most fatal of all psychiatric illnesses, and, as Lucy says, "To challenge an eating disorder, or any mental illness, is to wage a prolonged, painful, and devastating war—it is the most confusing and draining part of the illness." Lucy's penetrating insights, beautifully written and tinged with a wicked sense of humor, capture and reveal the mind of a person with anorexia. Her story will inspire and support those troubled with anorexia and depression, and also help their family and friends better understand the power behind these mental conditions.

**"... a graphic yet poetic insight into the pain and suffering experienced by sufferers of eating disorders." — Claire Vickery, CEO and founder of The Butterfly Foundation**

**"An intense and compelling insight into the mind of an anorexic. A must for family and friends." — Rachael Oakes-Ash, author of Good Girls Do Swallow and Anything She Can Do I Can Do Better**

**FOR AN INTERVIEW REQUEST or  
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**BITING ANOREXIA**  
A FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF AN INTERNAL WAR  
by Lucy Howard-Taylor  
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## BITING ANOREXIA

### A First Hand Account of an Internal War

BY LUCY HOWARD-TAYLOR.

#### Excerpt

"I have just turned eighteen as I write this. I should be writing an essay on the accuracy of Virginia Woolf's representation of women in interwar Britain. Clearly I am not, and that is both partly the result of procrastination and partly because I am trying not to think too much about the roasted hazelnuts I just gave my body. But mostly it is because I have something to say.

Here are the facts. Make of them what you will, but they are an attempt to establish a context for the barrage of self-hate I heaped upon myself for an indeterminate number of years. Here are memories; here are thoughts; here are parts of my past that psychiatrists have narrowed their eyes at and scribbled about on institutionally lined paper...

At the year 11 formal at the end of the year, a friend commented on my thin legs. I danced with and kissed a boy whose name I never asked for. I contemplated being a few kilos lighter, still. What about –kilograms? That was a nice, round, clean weight. Nice and even. Nice and contained, ordered, simple. But of course, it is not common knowledge that if you alter your weight you alter your mind. *I'm going to lose ten kilograms, you say. I'm going to lose ten kilograms and then I'll be exactly the same except thinner and more attractive.* Wrong.

Everyone has a set point, a set weight, below which one ceases to think independently. I know exactly what it is for me. If I go below it, I succumb to compulsion—stuff any intention otherwise. With anorexia, we are not dealing with a superficial vanity. We are dealing with a combination of knots and anxiety unfathomable to those outside. We are dealing with a psychological mess of which weight loss is merely a symptom.

And so it started. And I refused to open my eyes.

#### Interview Questions

1. How old were you at the onset of your eating disorder? How old were you when you began to heal from it?
2. You are very careful in your memoir, *Biting Anorexia*, not to give specific weights when telling your story. Could you explain your reason for that?
3. In your book you say that the desire to disappear was a driving force behind your anorexia. Can you explain why?
4. Your anorexia must have had a profound effect on your whole family. What were you like to live with during this time?
5. Can you explain for us how you developed bulimia?
6. In the book you discuss your experiences with "pro-ana" websites. What are these sites? How did they affect you? What are your thoughts on the impact they have on girls with eating disorders?
7. You feel very strongly that most people have the wrong idea about anorexia, that they feel it's a vanity-based illness. Can you discuss this misconception and why you think it's so popular?
8. There is a moving section early in the book where you reprint a note your mother left you asking you to see a dietician. Do you have any advice for family and friends of those suffering from an eating disorder? What are some things they can do to help?
9. What is your life like now? Would you say that you are completely recovered?

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