



# **Agnes's Jacket: A Psychologist's Search for the Meanings of Madness; With a New Introduction for the UK Edition**

*Gail A. Hornstein*

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In a Victorian-era German asylum, seamstress Agnes Richter painstakingly stitched a mysterious autobiographical text into every inch of the jacket she created from her institutional uniform. Despite every attempt to silence them, hundreds of other patients have managed to get their stories out, at least in disguised form, and so it continues today. A vast gulf exists between the way medicine explains psychiatric illness and the experiences of those who suffer. Hornstein's brilliant work helps us to bridge that gulf, guiding us through the inner lives of those diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar illness, depression, and paranoia and emerging with nothing less than a new model for understanding so-called 'mental illness', one another and ourselves. One which asks not 'what's wrong with you' but 'what happened to you and how did you manage to survive?'

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