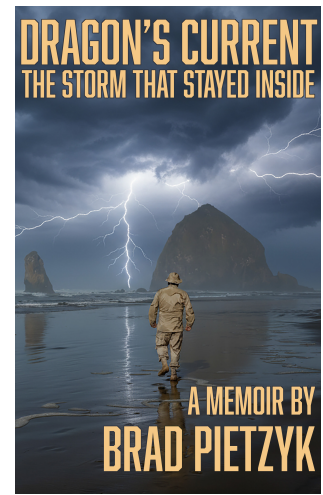


Dragon's Current

The Storm that Stayed Inside

A Memoir by Brad Pietzyk
about identity, collapse, and the
long work of rebuilding.



- Local author (Astoria, Oregon)
- Veteran memoir with a mental health focus
- A candid look at schizoaffective disorder from the inside
- A slow, lived in narrative of identity, loss, and rebuilding
- Concludes on the Oregon Coast, where rebuilding begins

Summary

Dragon's Current opens early in Brad Pietzyk's military career, with a lightning strike that left him physically shaken but determined to continue the work he had built his life around. For years afterward, he served as a combat engineer and mathematician, moving through deployments, responsibilities, and the quiet pressures that accumulate over time. The memoir follows this path forward, tracing the slow shifts in his inner world long before he understood what they meant.

The onset of schizoaffective disorder came later, without a single clear cause to point to. What followed was a gradual unraveling — paranoia, hallucinations, breaks from reality, and the loss of the identity he had spent fifteen years constructing. Brad writes plainly about the confusion of living inside a mind that no longer behaved the way it once had, and the crises that could have ended differently. There is no neat explanation, only the lived experience of trying to survive something that doesn't announce itself cleanly.

The heart of the memoir is the rebuilding. Dragon's Current is about the long, uneven work of learning to live with symptoms that never fully fade, and the effort to create a life that can hold together after the old one collapses. It's a story about identity, loss, and the quiet persistence required to keep going when the storm doesn't pass — and about finding a way forward that isn't a return to who he was, but an honest reckoning with who he is now.

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Media Angles

- A veteran's story of mental illness told without sensationalism. A candid look at schizoaffective disorder from someone who has lived through its most destabilizing moments.
- Life after the uniform: what happens when the identity you built collapses. The memoir explores the quiet, often invisible aftermath of leaving the military under circumstances you didn't choose.
- The slow onset of mental illness — and the confusion of not knowing what's happening. A narrative that challenges the idea of a single breaking point.
- Rebuilding a life when symptoms never fully fade. A story about persistence, not cure; about living with something, not defeating it.
- The Oregon Coast as a place of recovery and reinvention. Astoria becomes part of the memoir's emotional landscape — a quieter place to start over.
- Writing as survival. How the act of writing became a way to understand a mind that no longer behaved predictably.
- Breaking silence around schizoaffective disorder. A disorder rarely discussed publicly, told from the inside with honesty and restraint.
- A memoir that resists the "redemption arc." No tidy ending, no miracle turnaround — just the truth of ongoing work.
- The gap between external stability and internal struggle. How mental illness can be invisible even to those closest to you.
- Being the person you needed in your darkest moments. A story about carrying forward resilience that's still being built.

Discussion Points

- The loss of identity after leaving the Army.
- A slow unraveling. Not a moment, but a long shift in the mind.
- Living with schizoaffective disorder as a daily negotiation.
- Writing as a way to understand what was happening.
- The difference between surviving and rebuilding.
- The Oregon Coast as a place to start over.
- The reality of mental illness without the usual narrative shortcuts.
- Being the person I needed in my darkest moments.
- The gap between how mental illness looks from the outside and how it feels from the inside.
- Why telling this story matters — even when it's uncomfortable.

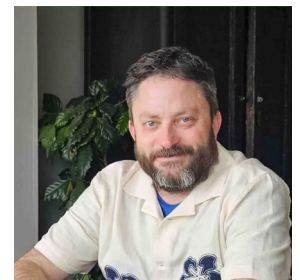
Book Information

Author: Brad Pietzyk
Publisher: Pietzyk Press
Distributor: Ingram
Publication: May 19, 2026
ISBN: 979 8 234 09280 9
Format: Paperback
Trim Size: 6" x 9"
Page Count: 290
Price: \$19.99
Wholesale Discount: 55%
Returnable: Yes.

Brad Pietzyk Biography

Major Brad Pietzyk served fifteen years in the U.S. Army as a combat engineer and mathematician before being medically retired. The work had shaped most of his adult life, and losing it forced him into a kind of freefall he hadn't prepared for.

He turned to writing because it was the only way he could make sense of what was happening to him. Living with schizoaffective disorder meant surviving paranoia, hallucinations, and several crises that could have ended differently. The symptoms never fully go away, and the work of



managing them is something he carries into every day.

Dragon's Current grew out of that effort — an attempt to understand the collapse of a life he had built carefully over years, and the slow, uneven process of rebuilding something that could hold together.

Brad now lives on the Oregon coast. He tries to be the person he needed in his darkest moments, even on the days when the ground still shifts under him.

