Through the tide of hormones surging within my body, and the little runnels of blood, and the sour tang of my breasts, I lay awake, listening, and thinking of breath and of water. I had broken my relationship with sleep.

Things that Helped: Essays is a series of essays by Jessica Friedmann which discuss Friedmann’s journey through Post-partum depression after the birth of her son Owen.

Friedmann vividly discusses emotions and thoughts of depression, discussing ideas which are often unspoken. The essays draw off critical theory, popular culture and personal experience, and touch on class, race, gender, creativity and sexuality, as well as the journey of motherhood with mental illness. The essays are confronting although moving and beautifully observed, and notices Friedmann’s slow and complex process of reassembling a life fractured by depression.

Friedmann also uses several references which relate to her journey, and are listed in the back of the book for further research. These references are beneficial to the reader, as they give us another place to look at the closing of the novel.

‘to read these essays is to observe a keen intelligence at work both coolly analysing the social forces and gender expectations that inform our understanding of this condition, while grappling with powerful feelings that bewilder and appal her.’ PICK OF THE WEEK – Saturday Age