

A Morning Prayer



My nemesis, the alarm clock, is shouting at me, urgently notifying me that it's time to leap out of bed and go to work for the day. My eyes snap open. I can see! Without thinking at all about it, I contract the appropriate muscles in my side and my arm to slap the snooze button for the fifth time this morning. I have to use the bathroom, but I can hold it and I take a moment to appreciate that fact.

Sunlight is seeping in between the window blinds, slowly illuminating the room with its warm glow. What else can I see?

My nose catches a scent very similar to that of corn chips and I look over my shoulder to see one of dog's feet poking out from under the bedsheet, just inches from my face. I make a mental note to give the pups a bath tonight. And there's the rest of her, still safely attached to that foot and resting in sweet, blissful slumber. She was a gift from my husband shortly after receiving my diagnosis and she has been my main source of comfort ever since. She even stays close to my head around times of relapse.

There's my handsome husband, asleep, but teetering on the edge of our king-sized bed, our second dog pressed against him. While our two dogs weigh no more than thirteen pounds each, we've come to understand and accept that their tiny bodies require the most prime mattress real estate. I reach across the bed and poke his tiny wet nose (my dog's, not my husband's). He lazily opens his big eyes and gives my outstretched finger a good morning kiss. His kisses don't send electricity across my skin today.

My body is starting to wake up a little bit more and I stretch and curl my toes. I'm filled with gratitude when the texture and weight of the bedsheets don't give me pain, but rather offer a

cool, soft embrace.

I could choose to lament over the stiffness in my limbs. I could complain about how tired and fatigued I am, no matter how much sleep I did or did not get. I could dread having to stumble out of bed and start the routine of getting myself ready for work.

And sometimes I do.

But not this morning. No, this morning I think of those who cannot see their bedside clocks, who do not have the mobility to silence them, those who must rush to the bathroom or depend on products to keep them dry, who will need to write down everything in order to remember it, or who can no longer use their hands to write down everything in order to remember it, those who do not have caretakers who accept them as they are, whose fingers and toes are set ablaze at the slightest touch.

The demyelination process does not happen overnight and can lay dormant for a long time, but symptoms can manifest swiftly. Sometimes I experience guilt because there are so many others that have so many more limitations than I do at this time. Every morning is my own secret game of roulette. But this morning I offer thanks to my body for not further succumbing to the course of the disease—at least not that I can tell.

My sweet nerve fibers, you little tiny things that I've never in my life considered, thank you. Thank you for providing an open line of communication between my brain, that spectacular thing, and the rest of my body. My lungs fill with air, my heart beats, my eyes see, my feet dance because of you—over 90,000 miles of teeny tiny nerve fibers.

But...

But like the magnificent stars that burn so brightly in the night sky, the ones we and our children will wish upon, you may already be dead.

Are you there?

I trust you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.