

# **All Empires Crumble**

**Documenting personal struggles of Mental Health**

by Anthony J. Langford

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## **Anxiety Advances**

And the blackness  
Swoops in again  
Like an omnipotent fog  
Impossible to escape  
So I give myself to it.

It wears out  
A little more resolve  
Every day  
And I wonder  
If there will ever be a time  
Where it doesn't exist  
Or at least  
Allows empathetic  
Periods of grace.

Or is it merely  
A wistful fancy?

It permeates all thinking  
Of brighter futures  
Only more of the same  
With a daily addition  
Clocking up the victories  
To my ultimate loss.

4.7.19



## **The Front Line**

Asking someone to deal with  
Their anxiety and depression  
By doing exercise  
Is like telling someone  
In a shallow pit  
That if they reach up  
To the surface  
and then jump  
Over a hurdle  
Everything will be better  
On the other side.

It takes a lot of mental strength  
To get out the door  
And face what lies beyond.

Anxiety is fear  
When there's nothing to be scared of.

Sometimes just getting up  
And dressed  
Is a real struggle.

Yes exercise works  
Yet getting to the front line  
Is the major part of the battle.

## **Broken brain**

I've got all the answers  
For everybody else  
But none for me.

I can make someone else  
Feel good  
Encourage a laugh  
Ask them a question  
People love to talk about themselves  
Offer an opinion  
And I guess seeing them light up  
Makes me feel better  
If only temporarily.

I've got all the excuses  
To drink  
And few to stay sober  
That's the broken brain  
Trying to put out a fire  
With fuel.

## Caught in our rip

We gasp in the dying light  
Struggling to keep head above  
Pleading to be understood  
Knowing we probably won't be  
Fighting the undercurrent  
While waiting to be swept away.

It's human nature  
To struggle against  
All the odds  
For survival.

It's the struggle  
Against the self  
That's the hardest.



## Growing pains

The smoky bacon flavour of age  
Snuck up to slap my face  
And laugh at a dilemma  
I once would have overcome  
(Drama free trauma).

It can hurt  
Without injury  
Without mistake  
Sufferance of existence  
A silent epidemic  
You don't require Sin  
To Suffer.



## **The Scales**

Like you

(Perhaps subconsciously)

I seek that sweet spot

The pathway

Between what I deserve

What I'm owed

And what I should accept.

Between the need

To be nurtured

And to nurture another.

Between putting on a happy face

And actually feeling it.

Being outraged

And realising it's not personal

Merely a generic trend.

To drowning genuine sorrows

And sagging in self pity.

To seeking love

Seeking companionship

Without being subservient

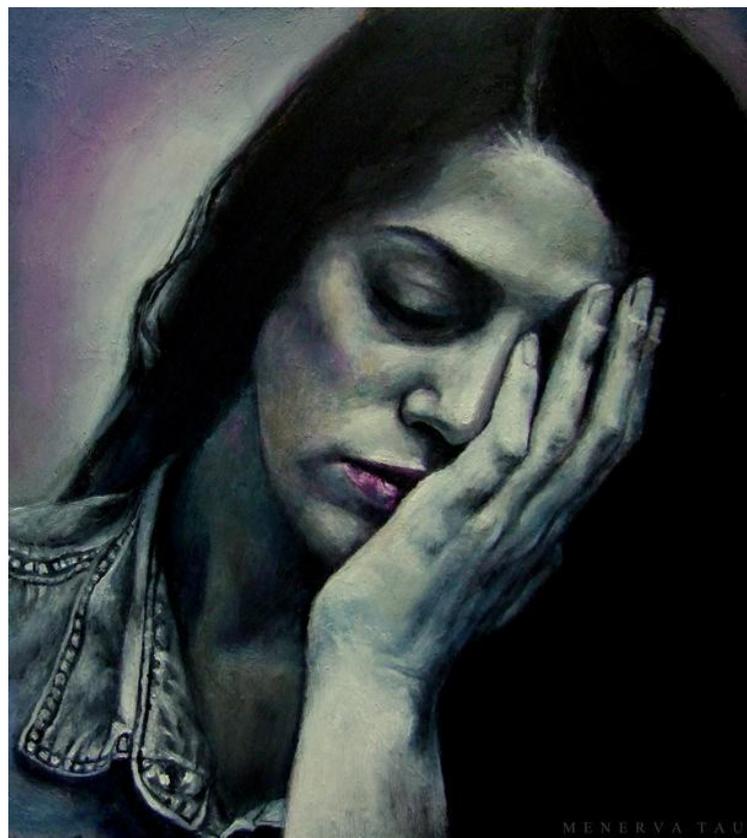
Or building unrealistic expectations.

Having the sense

And wisdom  
To know  
Where that Middle Ground  
Is served best.

I fear  
A perpetual reassessment  
Never striking the perfect note  
Hoping for a compassionate balance  
More often than not.

6.1.19



## **I'm sorry to hear about that**

She posted about her sick aunt  
Dying really  
She hinted at that aspect  
But wasn't it already obvious?  
'I'm sorry to hear about that'  
They said  
Sad face emoji  
She stared at her phone  
And it's comments  
And felt suddenly empty.

He texted his ex  
Again  
In a variation of detail  
About his physiological problems  
Brought about by real life obstacles  
Or were they just the catalyst  
For the exaggerated stress  
He was enduring?  
He knew  
As did she  
That it was long standing issues  
That had brought him to this juncture  
Almost to his knees  
And that's what he didn't want  
To be ground to a halt  
Nervous breakdown  
Or whatever the modern term was.

'I'm sorry to hear about that'  
He went on some more  
But quickly understood the futility  
His pleas and requests  
Fell on not deaf ears  
As she had heard him just fine  
He was on his own  
And had no idea  
How to make any of it better  
He'd never felt more alone in his life.

Sorry  
Not Sorry

'R U Ok'  
No, I'm not  
But what will you do about it?  
What will anyone do?

'You need to get some help  
Have you seen a doctor?'

It was the first port of call  
Doctors come long before  
Confession to a friend  
Pills come long before  
Public admittance  
Battles are fought  
Long before fragments of defeat  
Are admitted.

'I'm sorry about that'  
Makes them feel better  
Do they really care?  
What can they do anyway?  
Sometimes, plenty  
Simple practical steps  
Take part of the life load off  
Offer to pick up a chore  
Something  
If only a small amount  
Rather than buzzwords  
Spewed out like an autocorrect response.

'I'm sorry to hear about that  
Now, where was I?'

Sep '19



## **In the Wallows**

I sit  
Slouching really  
In the tepid gloom  
Of a season in decline  
An unflinching force  
Towards winter  
A lowly lit room  
A pathetic metaphor  
For my fatalistic mood  
Defeated, it feels  
By the everyday  
The alarm chime, the routine to rise  
The traffic, the commitment  
The morons whose mistakes  
Aim to trip us up  
Our constant guard exhausting  
The arsehole whose harsh words  
And selfish actions  
Taint our worldview  
And make it all  
Unnecessarily difficult.

And now I'm aware  
That I've gone from  
I to Us  
As though I'm speaking for others  
Universal practices or not  
Whereas

It's just me here.

The battle is very personal

And right now

I feel I've lost.

That's the true evil of depression

That the current mood

Stands for all time

The pervading, cloying doom

Eternal.

Whereas in half a day

I may have clawed my way back

As we often do

As those aforementioned tediums

Require that we must

As money is still required

To survive.

So I'll rise once more

No doubt

But for now

I'm home

In the wallows.

## **Dissolve**

Sitting

With too many thoughts

Is like slow boiling acid

Eating away

At the insides.

Over analysing

Every situation

Every movement

Of whatever's around me

Wondering why

People make such idiotic

Manoeuvres

Or don't make

As the case may be.

I only know that in the end

I do myself a disservice

Creating only damage

Losing a little more strength

Each day.

Occasionally I'll catch myself

Take a breath

Have a laugh

And shake my head

And wish I could be as blasé as some

Either not knowing what they do

Or not caring  
Of the impact  
Their actions have  
Or the potential disasters  
Awaiting such reckless acts  
Like a game of chess  
Across a booby-trapped board.

Being ultra-aware  
Does have its advantages  
Like knowing when to stay clear  
Of a distracted driver (as an example)  
And who to avoid.

Ultimately though  
It's a cobweb of crap  
That I've enmeshed myself in  
And I don't want  
To pass that  
Onto my daughter  
Though with her intelligence  
And her genes  
It may already be on the cards.

I only know  
That I'm worn out  
And dissolving  
Like the passing of days  
Finite  
Sad to see those days go

And me with them.

18.9.19



## **Tomorrow**

One day... I'll start over.

One day... the anguish will be swept away.

And I can begin again.

I will pretend to forget

Where I've been

And where I went wrong

The loss of that first love

That first death shock

And I'll pretend

That I can commence anew.

I'll look to the ocean

And the sky

And imagine a life yet to be

And one that never existed

As that's where sadness does not live

And tragedy never sweeps in

To pull us under.

I will begin again

In the sunset

Where tomorrow whispers

And hope is born.

All poems 2019 Anthony J. Langford

Art by Menerva Tau