

"Momentary Relief" & "A Fool's Guide to Grief"

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As medical students we have the privilege and the burden of witnessing human suffering, death, healing, and humanity on a daily basis. Regardless of our will and fortitude it is natural, and in some ways beneficial, that many of these experiences leak into our subconscious and infiltrate our emotions. Our decision then becomes whether or not we recognize the distress amongst our emotions and embrace it in the hope of becoming grounded and empathetic physicians. Personally, I believe that reflection is key in this journey to self-awareness and development. Poetry and personal narrative are my own feeble attempts at untangling the confusion and emotional burden that stems from my experiences on the floors. If left unexamined those burdens threaten my growth as a physician. I can only hope that my writing will encourage my peers to embark on their own journeys of reflection, awareness, and humility.

Momentary relief

Winter seems endless. Incurable. Light is sparse, darkness abundant, And the disease as cold as the snow outside. Warm humidified breath is Replaced by icy harsh wind. It slaps your face like the prognosis That the tumor has resurfaced.

Still, melting snow gives rise to hope— Resurrected from the depths of icy despair and Slushy salt stained roads— Hope that highlights happiness In blooming tulip buds, clear skies, and winter coats Abandoned to the back of closets.

And one day when you least expect it, A miraculous act of divine mercy, The Sun too returns, ripping off your covers and Kissing your wounds with its warm embrace. It comes with memories Of open windows, hair blowing in the wind, Songs of summer love and short skirts.

Spring is the food I take with my medication, It is the light at the end of my tunnel, Reassurance that the end is near.

A Fool's Guide to Grief

I sit here contemplating death. And the foolish notion That I could possibly capture in one poem What thousands before me have tried to say.

All that / know is fear: The frightening possibility That life only exists as a series of Chemistries and hormones, now immobile.

How can I stare Him in the eyes And walk away unscathed each time? Ingrained in my training is the theory That acceptance leads to apathy And so I'm left to dread its toll, The jaded nature it births through oblivion.

What a grotesque thought To wish I could have experienced more loss, Maybe it would prepare me for Death's arrival. Bringing order to the inexplicable, Maybe I could find the Formula of how to grieve and grow.

They say, "Death is a part of life," But I will never find comfort in this paradox That losing life is cornerstone to living.

So I surrender myself to death, To my fear of the end, To my confusion on coping, To my failure at acceptance.
