

*The story about a young man in pain
And his views on this pain...*

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Songs Of A Boy In Silent Grievance

Introduction

- See footnotes at the end of the story -

“Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light”

Dylan Thomas 1951

One should keep this in mind as one reads the following

Today someone died.

And I do mean that, yes someone died today.

In fact, many people died today, on average it is said that over 150 000 people die every day. Out of those 150 000 maybe less than 500 were in my own country, but She was among those 500 people.

People are born and die every day and yes as they say: 'you hear of it happening but never expect it to happen to you.'

Well that phrase just became real to me, today became real to me, am writing in the present tense, you know what that means.

If it is alright with the audience, I would like to describe the events of my day in an attempt at some sort of grievance and confrontation of my emotions, this is the only way I know how to deal with these things and so I ask you, please indulge my story.

Some laugh, most cry, few stare at the wall...

End of introduction

Start of Part I

Yesterday was a great day for me, I got some errands done, developed some film rolls and got my watch resized, the one I had just received for my birth – day, my birthday, My Own Birthday, celebrating the passing of age to make yourself feel better about how old you're getting.

You can tell the event that is about to unfold, has gotten to me as my fingers are not typing the way I would want them too, they are tight and clamped up, they are not moving the way I want them too, this feels unusual.

As I was saying, yesterday was a great day, got things done, had a cup of coffee with a good friend of mine and later that evening I went for a long walk. During some of my longer late night dog-walks I tend to try and entice others to come with me. It was during this enticing process that I guess it all started. After having messaged a friend of mine to come along, they replied very bizarrely, I thought nothing of it because I often do the same, so I left it at that and thought nothing more of it.

I went to bed late that night which meant that I would get up late the next day, I had a few things planned for this day, a few things I had envisioned in my mind that would constitute some sort of a work day, some sort of productivity, some sort of acceptable use of time...

I woke up and had an urgent need for the bath-room, I then went on to take a shower and get dressed. I walked downstairs and made myself two eggs which I placed on bagel slices. I checked my phone and there were no messages. I didn't find this odd but I remember having sent a few messages before going to bed about certain projects I was working on and so I assumed the people contacted hadn't seen it yet. But as it turns out this was only half true. After breakfast, I went upstairs to my office to start

some administrative work. I realise then that I am home alone as my mother has gone to help out at the school and the rest of the family are off doing other things in other countries with other people.

The weather of the day was grey with soft mild showers, on and off, on and off, a theme if you will to the events of the day. Writing this now, I can start to observe some reactions I have had during today which I usually never would indulge in and I can start to understand my character further, because if I was a character in one of the stories I write which I am doing now, then I would be the silent sufferer. I have always related to this character, whenever I see him on the street, on the screen or even on the page; I recognise something within him which I understand.

As I said the weather was grey, an ordinary day weather wise, nothing to look forward to and nothing to be too disappointed about. I have always liked the rain while being indoors, it reminds me of my youth and a different time in which a rainy summer day meant watching a film indoors with my mother, eating pop-corn and hot chocolate. These memories are fleeting in my mind and every so often they come rushing back. They are powerful like a waterfall but slip through my mind like sand and are quickly buried. Now the question is dear audience, do the memories flee naturally or do I make them flee.

Once in the office, I turn on the computer and am greeted to a Hello courtesy of Apple, and then I am bombarded with unread emails and unfinished tasks and calendar reminders. It is an unfulfilling way to motivate someone that is, to burden them with multiple things in one go and to expect them to power through it all one by one. Sometimes and only sometimes I think to myself if today is important, if today will mean something in the grand scheme of things, if today might go on to change everything about me? And when I ask myself these questions I usually find myself answering no to most of those questions and I sometimes and only sometimes lay in bed staring at the ceiling until Something or Someone intervenes with this process.

That being said, I guess today was important, today did mean something and today will go on to change my life. I figure that maybe I shouldn't have gotten out of bed at all or even started writing this story as I want to postpone the self-medication of my mind a little while longer. Maybe I shouldn't have gotten out of bed and postponed the self improvement I need and go out and grow as a person, but instead, I say this reluctantly, today, I cannot find the will to grow. I do not want to face the realities of life, I do not want to face the consequences of society, not today and not tomorrow for yesterday was happy, yesterday was easier, yesterday was simpler. I long to be re-united with a seven-year-old self, a self I see on the screen very often from home movies, a self that knew things for certain. Bleeding was bad, food was good, and mom would always look out for you. But a wise young man once tried to tell me that you can't relive the past *Jay*, and like a fool I had then told him, '*well of course you can old sport*'.

Once I started getting to work then all of the weather, the solitude and the cold, faded away and a soft self-fulfilling state of mind pushed its way into the front of my mind. I kept working until I heard the door open. It was my mom; she had come back from school. I heard her walk up the stairs slowly until she finally reached my room, she hesitated and then made her way next to me and with an obvious 'bad news' face told me she had something to tell me.

"Sebastian, the Girl in your chemistry class has died from an epileptic shock¹."

End of Part I

Start of Part II

Bits of information started rushing in, I remembered some good times I had had with her, some bad and some not so bad. My mom sounded sad and I told her it was alright and that I didn't know the Girl that well. My mom left and I sat there for a second and went back to work. After having finished my sentence I looked around and felt the need to confirm the news, my mom could have been mis-informed.

I picked up the phone and dial the Girl's best friend. She picked up, she was, she was crying. I hesitated,

Hello? (crying)

Hey, sorry to bother you, is it true ?

Yes .

- Pauze -

Am sorry I don't know what to say when it comes to these things.

That's ok, me neither, and the worst part is, I have an exam in 30 minutes.

Boy, I don't know what to say, I am sorry I think I will just leave you to it, let me know if there is anything I can do for you.

Pray for her...

*I will, ...
Goodbye.*

When I put down the phone, things felt a little different, things felt a little stranger, things felt a little more numb. All of a sudden that same grey weather outside seemed a little darker, and I didn't know why. I just sat there and went back to work. But I didn't go back to work, I thought about it.

I picked up the phone again and called my best friend. He declined; I didn't insist. So, I went downstairs, and my mom had made me lunch. I didn't say anything, neither of us did; we just sat down in front of the TV and put on some cartoons. Neither of us laughed at any of the jokes. I finished and went back upstairs. I went back to work, calling people, emailing people and messaging people. I remember getting an email back that I was hoping would bring positive news but it came back negative. I pushed my chair back from the desk and felt offbeat, like this one piece of bad news would be the end of me. I got up and went to the bathroom, while washing my hands I splashed some water on my face and looked up in the mirror as it ran down my face and as it dripped down my neck to wet the top of my shirt.

I went back to the office, and sat down, I read that email I got back, and I started mumbling under my breath. I started mumbling louder and louder, I began to rant about bureaucracy and how it kills anything original, anything creative, anything naive. I started to speak faster, and it got louder and louder until I started shouting at the screen, I shouted so hard that I hurt my voice. I stopped, my throat hurt, and I don't know why, but I was mad. I couldn't figure out for the life of me why I had gotten so mad at this one piece of bad news. So pushed the chair back from the desk again and left. I went to my room and dialled my best friend again as he had said he could talk now.

Hello?

Hey.

So, I heard some news?

Yes, so did I.

So, it's true then.

I guess so...

Why didn't you answer before?

I was meditating for my exam. Trying to get in the right state of mind after having been told the news.

I see, should we talk about it or not?

Yes, I think we should.

We went on to talk for another 30 minutes or so about what our respective thoughts were on the matter, who we knew that was closer to her, and how the family would be doing. We talked about what we wanted to learn and get out from this experience as we could appreciate that it is an experience that everyone goes through at some point in their journey through this world. One should try and stay objective in these situations and learn from it so that it might benefit them and not let the harsh realities of our mortality drag you down with the deceased. We agreed that we should not let this be a waste and that we should do something to make sure we remember this event and that we remember how we felt when we first heard the news, how it made our skin crawl and our mouths dry and our hands stiffen. How we didn't know what to say or how we just sat and stared at the ground for a little while. The goose-bumps that rushed on our skins along our whole body shooting from toe to head. We decided that that wouldn't go to waste, and we would learn from this experience.

He told me he had already set out clearly in his mind what he thought was the right course of action and what he was going to do to take it, to be able to learn from this and never take life for granted. We spoke about how fragile life can be, how there are still so many things we want to experience and take part in on this journey and how we wouldn't be ready to leave it all behind right now. We spoke about her, and how she passed, he revealed to me the cruel truth of how she had been prone to epileptic seizures and how she had lost her dad to a depression related suicide two years prior. How through therapy and a loving boyfriend she seemed to get over it and how hard it was to walk around school whilst everyone looked at you differently.

I have studied this phenomena of PTSD's² in which returned veterans who suffer from it get worse while at home because everyone who knows you have this disorder looks at you differently and treats you differently, everyone is worried for you and wants to accommodate you which makes you feel like the most incapable person ever to live which adds to the mental strain and makes life a living hell. People avoid you, walk the other direction, don't talk to you or deal with you all because they have

this predisposed idea that you are sick and that we should try and be nice to them by trying to avoid making it worse.

YOU are MAKING IT WORSE by doing that ma'am or Sir don't you see this poor girl was traumatized and now you treat her like a mental patient, and she may never recover, oh wait maybe she didn't, she's gone now. Partly thanks to you, and I mean you, the person who gossiped about the news behind her back while she walked past, the person who was in-sensitive or avoided them, am talking to you.

My friend explained to me how the mom had to scramble for a job and money and how her older siblings had to step up to the plate and start earning. He explained to me how the girl had gone to university, a fresh start and had made great new friends. He explained how she had been doing better that year, off alcohol, off drugs and getting better grades, everyone was so proud of her for getting through it all. To top it off she had been getting less seizures that year,

I can barely keep my eyes from watering at this point, these last two paragraphs have been hard on my throat. I told my friend to stop, I had heard enough, I had heard enough. We changed the subject and talked about what we were going to do that day. He invited me to go swim with him, release some tension sort of speak. I agreed, I hung up, went to the bathroom, put my swim shorts on and grabbed a shirt and went straight to his house. I biked to the house in silence, not holding the handlebars as I was too busy trying to get my mind off it with the help of music. When I got there, we walked to the beach in silence. We put our things down and walked into the ocean, we walked into the ocean on a grey meaningless Thursday.

Everyone around us was busy worrying about themselves but in that moment, we were busy worrying about her. What it must be like, to be doing so well only for it to end so abruptly.

I walked into the extreme chill of the water, it didn't bother me. I walked until I couldn't walk anymore and then I dunked my head under. I stayed underwater for a while, I looked around and couldn't see anything, I couldn't see anyone, I couldn't see myself. When I surfaced, I noticed it had started to rain, I noticed how my friend was lying on his back looking up at the rain while it hit his face, his eyes and his lips, I noticed how everyone had left, I felt tranquility. We looked at each other and nodded. We swam to each other and agreed to let it out. We both shouted as hard and as long as we could.

My already damaged voice seized to exist after this...

End of Part II

Start of Part III

After a little more swimming we went ashore and got our things and walked home. Once at his house, I gave him a hug and thanked him and wished him well, he did the same for me. I biked home slowly with very little on my mind. Once home I took a cold shower, I didn't put any soap on, I just sort of stood there as the ice cold water ran down my body as I watched the water run down the walls. After a while I sat down. I shampooed my head and once rinsed, got up and dried off. I got dressed and went straight to the game console.

I let myself fall onto the couch and picked up a controller from besides me and started playing. I turned on the console. The game that was in was a Star Wars game which I played for an hour or so, a very mundane experience. I had left my phone playing music which later turned to some aggressive Techno tunes. When this started to play I turned off the console and turned off the music and went back to work.

I started working again on some assignments I had to finish for school. I didn't complete them, but I did progress a lot even to the point that I was ahead of my planned-out schedule for these assignments. The next thing I heard was the call for dinner. I went downstairs and ate some simple spaghetti bolognese which my mom had prepared for us. We ate in silence, my younger sister talked about her day at school, nearing the end of the year she remarked. My mom spoke about how I had a dentist appointment tomorrow which I nodded to. I finished dinner, placed my dishes in the sink, thanked my mom for the food and went upstairs again. Once upstairs, I finally started getting some messages from some people that knew her. They referred to the death as 'it' or 'the incident' which I thought was odd. One of them mentioned how most of them had met that day and grieved together and how the family was a wreck with a small funeral plan having been drawn up. I offered my condolences and any help or service I could think of. They thanked me but told me there was nothing I could do really.

I have only ever dealt with Death a few times in the past; I remember how several years ago I once had gone to a friend's house and the mom came back in tears and it was explained to me that she had just lost her mother and favourite horse. I didn't know what to do, I turned to my friend, who happened to be very tough, he said that I should just offer my condolences and leave. And so, I did.

The next time I dealt with Death was when my dog died, which I remember, I didn't seem to react to, I remember feeling unhappy about it but the eagerness to get on with the day quickly pushed this feeling aside and well we got a new dog anyways.

The next times I dealt with Death was through my siblings who lost friends, or my parents losing family or loved ones. It was never directly involved with me and I never attended any funerals. Whenever one of these incidents would occur, I never understood how everyone gets quiet and acts very differently, they act shy, cautious and instantly regretful.

I remember when I was very young seeing my father hurt at the progressive decay of his mother. I remember trying to ask my mom about, she would brush me off or ignore me. Death has always been something I was taught not to ask about or question, something I should Fear, with my eternal judgement waiting on the other side. I have never been to a funeral and I hope I never will, but I have been taught to treat Death with respect and caution, like a taboo in my family. Death can be cruel, death can be kind, death can be expected but Death will never be welcome...

And so I went on to lie in my bed that night staring at the ceiling wondering if tomorrow will mean something, if tomorrow will be important, if tomorrow will change my life the way today had.

End of Part III

Epilogue

This day has been excessively unexpected. It has been long, and it has been grey. I feel little towards the situation still now, but I have come to understand the consequences and circumstances this has brought for so many others. When I think of all the people this one single life touches, knows, or even inspired, I begging to ache inside. Because of this one incident, now hundreds if not thousands of people will be involved in some shape way or form. From the mother to the caterers. Everyone will soon know. Today was unexpected and today I learned that it doesn't matter if I knew someone who died, as the people around you don't know or don't want to know that I know someone has died. Life must go on...

This Girl believed in the false promise of health, the fake guarantee of a future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded her then and it eludes me now. But that's of no matter – To-mor-row you shall run faster, stretch your arms out farther... and during one fine night -
So we beat on, human lives against the currents, borne back ceaselessly into our fears.

No one cared, neither did I. Maybe I do, it doesn't feel like it tough,

Some went for a drive, others united in grievance, I sat and wrote. All I can think about is how cheesy of a phrase it was to hear in films: 'you hear of it happening, but you never think it will happen to you'.

And then,

It,

did...

I hope, you, dear reader, learned something from Death has he can be a great teacher,
now that is something,

I am learning to understand...

End of Epilogue

End

S. Casares

¹ If you do not know what epileptic shocks are, please look it up and inform yourself on the subject before reading the rest of the story, it helps provide insight into the matter.

² PTSD's stands for post traumatic stress disorder, if you do not know what that is, please inform yourself on the subject before moving on to something else after this story.