

Börkur Sigurbjörnsson

Till morning

flash fiction



Urban Volcano

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Till morning

I close my eyes and take a deep breath through my mouth. My nose is blocked. I have a heavy sensation in the chest and my throat is swollen. The incoming air irritates my lungs and I cough. I feel a dense fog in my head and know that the fever hasn't passed. This flu isn't going anywhere.

I turn on my side, draw my knees to my chest and huddle into fetal position. I know how to cure myself. I know the magic medicine. It's not complicated. All I need to do is sleep.

Rest. Give my body the space it needs to work itself through this flu—in its own natural way.

I open my eyes and look at the clock. It is still relatively early. There is hope.

These days I wake up every morning with a profound sense of self-reproach over not having executed the tasks I had set my self to complete for my work. It pains me to have lost so many work hours. All my plans have gone south. And now, I need to sleep to be able to rid my body of this invasive mucous membrane. I need to wrestle back the control over my own existence. Therefore I went to bed early. To be able to sleep. To let my body recover.

I turn and lie on my back. The mental fog moves to the back of my head. I turn on my side. The fog moves into the forehead. It doesn't matter how much I twist and turn. I can't find a relaxing position. The brain fog amplifies. The knot in my stomach tightens.

If I don't fall asleep now, tomorrow will be the same disaster as the other three days I have wasted on this stupid sickness this week. I will wake up at nine, exhausted and full of guilt. I will go out of bed anyway and try to get some work done in order not to fall even further behind of my plans. I will convince myself I'm sufficiently recovered to work. I will argue that I'm not sick enough to justify wasting the day in bed. Just because

I refuse to acknowledge that I'm not well enough. I will get little done because my head will be heavy and the eyelids heavier yet. As the day goes by my greatest achievement will be to aggravate my ailment without making hardly any progress towards my desired outcomes.

Unless. Perhaps will I manage to fall asleep sometime soon.

I open my eyes and look at the alarm clock. Zero, zero, zero. Midnight. Now I really need to fall asleep. I need to stop worrying about not getting better. I just need to use the night to collect strength. Give the body the rest it needs to recover.

Good luck with that. I'm wide awake. Full of angst and anxiety over not being able to sleep. It isn't long past midnight but I feel I have already destroyed tomorrow by not falling asleep. I feel it. I know myself. I need to sleep. It isn't happening, though.

I raise myself up in bed, grab some tissue and blow my nose. It's always the same story. Over and over again. I always tell myself that next time it will be different. The next time I will relax and allow my body to be sick. I will allow myself to sleep. I will allow my body to work itself speedily through the infection yet at its own natural pace. Yet, when next time comes around I never allow myself to become sick. I toil on without getting anything done. I don't allow myself to sleep all day. I don't allow myself to recover.

I throw the duvet aside and grab my head in my hands. I cannot tolerate this flu anymore. It's so sad that I know how to get better. I just need to sleep.

Now my thoughts have reached yet another full circle without discovering anything I didn't already know. The only progress that has been made is for time to progress on its way from the beginning towards the end. It's fast approaching two o'clock. I'm still not sleeping. It isn't happening. I'm not going to sleep anytime soon. I'm not going to be fresh in the morning. The whole week is ruined.

About The Author

Börkur Sigurbjörnsson is a computer scientist by training and makes his living by developing software, but writes fiction in his spare time. Börkur is born and raised in Reykjavík, Iceland, but has over the past decades lived in various cities around the world, with prolonged stays in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Burseid, Düsseldorf, London, Montevideo, Reykjavík and Paris. Börkur regularly publishes flash fiction and short stories on his website Urban Volcano.

Books By The Author

Talk To Strangers, short stories (2019)

Flash 52, flash fiction (2017)

999 Abroad, short stories (2012)

Other links

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