

Don't Forget Your Medicine

Overcoming the painful monotony of refilling your medication until you suddenly forget

Content Warning: Horror, Realism, Mental Illness, Depression & Anxiety

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You're living with Bipolar Depression. You've been on a working medication for several years now, you can't remember what it felt like before you were on this medication (or, perhaps, it's too traumatic to remember).

Several years ago, you remember bumping physicians frequenting a flight of frivolous medications. Prozac, Effexor, Lexapro, Zoloft, Cymbalta, and Wellbutrin. Each medication felt as though it were eating you alive, your emotions melting and your energy dwindling. The days melded one another during high school, eventually your teachers stopped accepting your apologies after you missed 40 days your senior year. You couldn't remember a day you felt control over your life.

You've never been very good at following routines, nothing sticks. Wasting time makes your throat hot with acid and fills your mind with dubious thoughts stemming from a downpour of white-hot, numbing anxiety. You can't tell if the anxiety or the depression keeps you from brushing your teeth.

You've been taking this medication for at least 3 years now, since you've graduated high school. You're privileged, you have good insurance and it covers your current medication. It's considered a class 4 prescription drug and a 3-month supply goes for at least \$3,000, but costs only \$300 with your current insurance.

You've been feeling these thoughts of depression and anxiety welling up again in recent weeks. Perhaps you need to increase your dose. They're not enough to ruin your day, but you seem to spend more and more time every morning trying to get out of bed. Your body aches, but you don't feel any physical pain. Your legs cramp as you try to swing them over the side of your mattress.

One night, like many other nights, you try your best to follow the slightest of a routine you could create. You fill your aquafina bottle from the tap and you sit at your computer. You open your pill case and find all of the days empty- it's that time of the week where you need to refill your case. You think about your partner, how you want to spend more time with them. You think about going to school tomorrow and that missing lab assignment. It's all too much, really.

The next morning, your stomach is repulsed and the saliva in your mouth starts to simmer between your tongue and the roof of your mouth. You feel sick. Nausea slithers through your stomach like a tapeworm mixed with a rattlesnake. Your hands are infested with dozens of petechiae as they grow itchy. It's all too much.

You can't cry. There's a tingle behind your eyes, warmth in your cheekbones, but your eyes cannot leak. The sadness is numbing. It's all very overwhelming, a consistent electric signal shooting down the back of your neck.

Your first instinct wasn't to run away, it was to give up. Dark, engulfing dread. Your legs have atrophied and trying to move them felt like squeezing a rusty joint. Emotional dysregulation and unrelenting, crushing despair.

Your arm supinates and your fingers curl. You feel your fingerprints catch the skin on your other fingers, it's a feeling you don't recognize. Words scream when you think, but your thoughts are deafened as if distant. Your lower lip hangs open, you've run out of energy to keep your mouth closed.

The blinds from the window are open, heavenly rays pouring across my bed. Their warmth gives me the slightest remorse for whatever crimes I've committed by the heavens.

Next to you are your glasses and your phone. You missed your alarm for school, but that wasn't because you were asleep. The warmth from the sun gives you enough energy for you to curl your thumb against your phone screen, unlocking the device and showing you all the missed notifications from the past 10 hours. Each unread message feels like a stabbing knife, a missed opportunity.

Maybe I'll do some self-help today. I'll skip school and watch youtube videos with a bag of brownie bark and a sugar free pepsi. I'll rent a movie on amazon, or maybe buy a ticket to something at the AMC. And for dinner, I'll buy a greasy burger from McDonalds or maybe get a frosty at Wendys. I'll treat myself. I deserve it.

You think about missing work tomorrow, but your head throbs as you imagine the joy of being unemployed again. Let alone, all that would entail. It felt like a steel hook pulling on your entrails. Let's face it, you deserve minimum wage.

It's odd, how the self-doubt is the band-aid on top of the bursting wound that is chronic depression. And it's terrifying how universal depression seems today. However, I'm privileged, and I know that other people must have it worse than me.

Thank you for reading.
Pace luceat lux mea in nocte.
<https://youtu.be/u5CVsCnxyXg>