

## *When is the time for me to go?*

*By Luisa Ganz*

My breath was fogging up the freezingly cold glass beside me.

I watched the world change in what felt to me like seconds. The sky turned pitch-black, as more and more clouds began to turn the sky murky. Or was it the foggy glass making my vision blurry? Thunder made the ground I was sitting on tremble like a small earthquake and as soon as the first lightning struck for a second, it seemed like its light was giving me back my vision. I knew over the next few hours the storm would pass by, however, I had no idea whether, or more importantly how, the rest of this would end. The one thing I was certain of was that I was going to die - either way.

I pressed my cheek harder against the freezingly cold glass beside me as if it could save me from what had brought me into this situation.

To help you understand how I got into this situation, it would be best if I told you my story from the very beginning.

I grew up in a small trailer with my parents and my little brother. My parents came to the US in order to allow us the life they had hoped for me and my brother to live. They often worked overtime as well as nightshifts in multiple nerve-wracking jobs just so they could pay at least some of the bills. I don't want to sound ungrateful because I love my parents, I really do, but sometimes I just wanted to be like other kids my age. Going out with friends, shopping clothes and telling stories about my amazing vacation I spend overseas. Instead, I had to babysit my brother and fulfill my parents' duties, when they couldn't due to their occupying jobs. As I grew older, I began to realize that the American Dream my parents talked about so often was never more than just a dream.

Eventually, it was time for me to go to college. Thanks to my grades I received a scholarship in the South. I felt like a weight, of whose existence I hadn't taken notice of before, was lifted of my chest. Could this be that one part in the movies when the main character finally gets to live their own, independent and happy life?

Month after month passed by, seasons changed, I got my first few exams over with: my life was great. I finally had friends and spent every spare minute I had with them. If it was up to me this way of living could've gone on forever.

Then, on one rainy morning I woke up to my stomach indescribably hurting. I had to spend the day lying in bed without moving an inch. Although, one might question the sense to my wondering, I have to admit that since this particular day I often wonder: Would things have ended the way they did, if I had attached more importance to my pain?

At this time, I blamed the stress for my nausea. In the end it was my best friend who told me to visit the doctor, as more and more symptoms worsened my state of being.

At the clinic I hadn't been prepared for what they were going to tell me. How could I have been?

After running a few tests and taking one of many blood samples, the doctors assistant, a small woman with an angel-like look, appeared in front of me. As soon as she told me - in a surprisingly serious and deep voice that would not slightly fit her petit appearance - to sit down in a chair in front her wooden desk, I was sure that whatever she wanted to tell me, I didn't want to hear it.

Cancer? Cancer!?!? My consciousness slowly faded away until I just sat there in total disbelief.

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What, for goodness' sake, has led to this? I felt like I was about to throw up. The misfitting voice of this angelic looking woman entered my ears, but her words didn't reach in my brain. I was in a daze of which I think I never fully recovered from.

A week later I had to visit the depressing clinic and its stifling walls again to talk about the further procedure. My head hurt and I didn't even know what caused it. Was it the overwhelming feeling of knowing every breath I take could be either my last or at least minimize the number of breaths I had left on this earth? Was it the fact that I still hadn't told anybody about it? Or was it because I knew that I couldn't pay any of the treatment my doctor offered me? Nevertheless, something made my head hurt!

I never wanted to leave a place that badly in my entire life and my life brought me to places you wouldn't even want to know of. My life saving moment - well, okay that would be a bit exaggerated considering my state of health- was my 1 am class, which at least was some kind of a reason for me to get out of this living hell. The bus I needed to catch was only a few corners around the block. But the fact that the cancer had not yet erased my bad habits quickly revealed itself, since I still managed to almost miss it.

Before entering the campus, I checked my weather app. Only a twenty percent chance of rain. The weather app seemed to be right. The sun was out for the first time since I got the bad news and there were only a few clouds hanging from the sky. Even though, it was still cold due to the fact that it was winter I truly enjoyed the sunrays tickling my nose tip. It filled my heart with a warmth I had deeply missed and made my headache go away. Maybe this could be the sign that everything would be changing for the better sooner or later.

I entered the classroom and got hold of the seat at the window. Next to me, my best friend. I watched the outside rather than listening to what my teacher had to say. Small people were walking across the campus; some slower than the others, some faster. Some of them seemed to have a destination, others were just walking around aimlessly. The world was once again a bearable place to spend my time on... or so I thought.

Suddenly, not only clouds were darkening the clear sky, but at the same time there was an alarm going off.

Fire? No! The alarm was too high-pitched. Maybe just some technical difficulties? I was ready to settle with this idea, when my teacher jumped out of his seat and reached the door much faster than I was able to process what had just happened.

"Get down, NOW!". The first few shots were fired. They were dull and yet so deafening. A girl cried in what I believed to be the upper right corner of the room. Other than that, the room was quiet, so quiet that I could hear my own breathing, which was fogging up the freezingly cold glass beside me.