

State
by Liv
Fall '17

I dreamt you read this letter from right to left before you ripped the envelope closed, dropping it off into your mailbox. I sealed the envelope open when it arrived to the prison cell from which it was sent. Unwriting these words is the first thing I've been able to garner the strength to start when I went to sleep at dawn before awaking at dusk, listening to clocks going tock-tick, tock-tick, tock-tick...

Hunger overflows from the edge of waking nightmares into nightly dreams, drowning me in a dense emptiness of nothingness. Starvation floods my brain disconnecting thoughts as they float away in its waves, freezing in place before I can reach them from the pervading Cold cementing me in glacial quicksand to slowly drown under an ocean of Hunger. I am discombobulated in a stupor of disjointed synapses, willing everything Black forever. A brain cannot mentally cope with its unyielding physical starvation. I practice slipknots while burying myself under the salt of evaporated tears.

Unrelenting Cold sweats the Hunger out of every pore, dripping into a thick crushing wet blanket of fog enveloping my face, encrusting the insides of lungs, collapsing them in its sticky thick film. Cold's chilling humidity collects on my eyes, whiting out pupils with its impermeable opaque condensation. Its pervasiveness absorbs my breath, blinding me in an impenetrable haze from which there is no reprieve.

In my dream I unbrushed my teeth before pulling dinner's burnt soydog & couple of tepid carrot slices out of my mouth onto the 'chow' tray...and waited. I spooned out lunch's pasta-less side of tomato sauce, spitting the warm sugary punch I started drinking for the calories (*however empty*) into the mug...and waited. I unlicked breakfast's chilly corner of farina into the bowl & unchewed the frozen rotted banana into its peel...and waited ...while summer turned into spring, turned into winter, always returning to autumn's fall.

Hunger seeps out of each of these thrice-daily filters, transforming a meandering stream aching for nourishment into roaring rapids void of any hope for respite. Hunger treacherously pierces through Band-Aid 'meals', clearly not created to keep it at bay. Eating leaves me hungrier than not, exponentially amplifying food cravings. The 40 consecutive day 'hunger strike' I endured with nothing consumed but water to 'win' these meals void of both my religious AND medical restrictions was easier than this. Days have turned into stretches of anxiety-filled anticipation for trays with forgotten items & shorted portions, leaving me ravenous. These words exhaust me.