

# A STORY

UNEMPLOYED @ 61

HOW LONG CAN YOU AFFORD LIFE?

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**D**EAR LIFE,  
What's lies ahead, the finish line?  
Barring a miracle, after doing calculations, I can afford life for a few more months.

1 Dark, I know. But tragically, it is my reality. I do not have a safety net, and my life savings are –

If things don't magically fall into place in the next couple of months. I will become homeless. At my age, that equals death.

*How did this happen?*

I'm not sure if I'm allowed to talk about it because people are monitoring my every word, trying to find something I say to bury me with. One of them used to be a ~~friend~~. I thought.

I assure you; my predicament is through no fault of my own.

Twenty-two months ago, I lost my career (↑↑↑).

Maybe I should pause, lighten the mood with a joke.

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**KNOCK. KNOCK.**

**I DON'T HAVE A DOOR. I'M HOMELESS.**

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*Are knock, knock jokes offensive to the homeless?*

I hope I never find out.

Back to the story: I work incredibly bleeping hard at trying to build what I believe is the only viable future for a man of my age, a creative life. All I have are my life experiences.

A quick Google search tells us more than **101 MILLION ARTICLES** about age discrimination during COVID have been written, resulting in devastating career + life losses.

Another quick Google search tells us there are **PRECISELY 0 ARTICLES** about older employees happily returning to their careers. Some people have returned, but the companies they worked for altered the work for these workers giving them the final push out the door.

*Ouch... I'm fucking terrified. Wouldn't you be?*

You see, I'm a writer. I'm pitching. Pitching. Pitching. Pitching. Stories. Articles. OPEDs. Reviews. Manuscripts. +++

It is a long, gruelling process without guarantees or a safety net.

*Did I say I'm terrified?*

Perhaps, I'll win the lottery.

*What's that, the odds are between 14-17 million to one.*

*Ouch. Sounds reasonable.*

2  
My bubble burst yesterday. I had finished revising part of a book I'm getting ready to pitch. My spirits were soaring as I felt a sense of accomplishment. Then, someone I care about, made a comment about my revision – **AND POOF** – I sailed around the room defeated as super-sensitivity kicked in, bringing with it a hard look at reality and the unbearable pressure to make something happen in a literary world that moves at a snail's pace.

I escaped my environment + met up with friends, feeling vulnerable, weak, breaking.

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I shared a story about how this time of year is hard on me, + how this whole long-drawn-out ordeal (I can't talk about), perpetrated by a crew of what can only be called a-holes, who would likely care less if my life reached the finish line, exacerbates the pain. Individuals so tone-deaf one of them, every single year I've known the person, complained about hating the holiday season because (*Wah*), it's busy with family obligations.

*Why tone-deaf?*

Because (...) complained every year about family obligations to someone who hasn't had a family for more than thirty years.

I swallow my emotions.

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## FRIENDS

I share with my friends what I have left of a family only reaches out to me when someone dies. I don't get to be part of the family, but I must live the pain.

I recently received a call from a family member to tell me my last living sister is dying; she doesn't have much time left.

Queue the emotional wreckage. I'm human. This news about my dying family member is heart-wrenching. I don't know what I'm supposed to do? I can't afford to travel to see my dying sister, I did call. I was going to ask during the call if she knew who my father was? I never got the chance; she wasn't interested in talking to me.

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### THE BARRAGE COMMENCES (1)

#### 1.

A great, well-meaning friend who's privy to my family situation kept suggesting if I get one of my family members to cooperate, they could likely find out who my father is?

I had to shut him down, letting him know my emotional plate is far too heavy right now to find the energy to talk to people who cut me out of their lives and ask the father question. One they'd most certainly reject.

The next time I hear from the family will be when the phone rings to tell me my sister died. I don't think; *the do you know who my father is?* – would be a timely query.

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*When someone shares vulnerability with you, pay attention. They are not asking for a debate.*

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#### 2.

The conversation shifts. As I'm wallowing in an obvious bout of depression. This same friend tells me because I have someone important to me of Korean descent in my life; I should learn Korean so we can communicate with each other.

My demeanour changes. I turn blisteringly red. My friend keeps pressing. My friend of Korean descent speaks perfect English. I tell my friend I am NOT going to learn Korean.

I tell my well-meaning friend to **STOP**.

**I SINK.**

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### 3.

The conversation turns once more. My friend works at a local University, apparently, when you hit a certain age, I think sixty-five, you can take courses for free.

*Why is he telling me this, I'm sixty-one, in pain, and he's fucking forty-five, + working for the University?*

My blood boiled. I'm sixty-one, which means I'd have to live four more years. If I become homeless, I won't make it.

I suggested the philanthropy of the University is bullshit. Who is it for? I barked.

My blood boiled more. I kept stressing it was a pointless gesture. My other friend said he will take engineering courses when he's sixty-five. My friend does not have money worries.

I retreated to the washroom, upset. I felt bad I was bringing the mood down, and about engaging in an argument. When I returned to the table, I spoke up.

### STOP

*How far does fucking entitlement stretch?*

Homeless people don't often live to sixty-five? Waiting to sixty-five to kick your life into gear by going to University...please.

4 Nobody of means. Not even (likely) my friend who says he's going to take engineering courses is going to go back to school. It's not a thing most people do. Because you'd have to be privileged in the first place to be able to take advantage of the University's kindness.

My blood exploded.

If the fucking University wanted to do something philanthropic, it wouldn't offer these courses to people who really have no need for them. Instead, it would offer them to some of the countless homeless, disadvantaged, people in this fucking world. Maybe a thirty-year-old as opposed to an entitled sixty-five-year-old.

I'm closer to the sixty-five-year-old, and if my life continues to unravel, even if I make it to fucking sixty-five, I couldn't, like I said before, even afford a free course. *Think about that.*

*I asked him why?*

My first friend suggested taking courses help people fend off Dementia + Alzheimer's.

I burst. I feel defeated. Alone.

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*So, the University is such a great enhancer of humanity because they offer free courses to old people, likely privileged, who don't have financial worries so, they can...?*

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I lost my career twenty-two months ago through no fault of my own. People are reading my every word in search of justification to ease guilty consciences.

I'm terrified, afraid to share my thoughts, afraid to be free, afraid to be alone.

I need a miracle; I will never quit trying; I work incredibly hard at my craft and, hopefully, allowing me to have a future. I don't want to die.

The Christmas Season is upon us; this year, it is bringing with it hopelessness + depression.

I don't want to bring those around me who I love, down. I don't want to bring anyone down. Sorry if you've read this far.

I don't want us to lose everything; I don't want to have to give away my cat.

These realities may sound harsh, they are, but they are realities.

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*What do you think happens to a sixty-one-year-old man when the money runs out?*

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Will 'you' feel good about yourself if I die?

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*If the miracle doesn't come in, and I don't make it, the saddest thing will be, nobody will be calling my family to let them know.*

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I'm feeling low, vulnerable, I'm breaking. I hate typing these thoughts. I need to vent.

I'm at the age where my friends are all retiring. I can now apply for CPP, but some jerks think I need to be applying for careers that do not exist ([101+ MILLION ARTICLES ON AGE DISCRIMINATION](#)). In the past twenty-two months, I've been without an income, + I was scammed out \$70,000 by a stock huckster.

And now:

I can afford life for only a few more months, through no fault of my own.

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1. My friends did nothing wrong. They were just trying to have conversation. I'm super-sensitive these days. Maybe it is because of the looming homelessness. I'm suffering. I don't want to be alone. Pay attention.
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Fire me a message on the TALK PAGE of my website: [www.lindsaywincherauk.com](http://www.lindsaywincherauk.com) if you have more suggestions on making our world a better place!

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