

Lindsay Wincherauk

A 60-YEAR-OLD-MAN RUNNING IN 

STORIES

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**BROKEN + ALREADY DEAD
A STORY**

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I feel shattered, broken, teetering on a fragile limb – if it fails, I die.
I'm already dead. I don't like these emotions; who would?
I feel alone. I think everything I'm doing is the wrong thing.

Is that depression?

Or is it sadness?

I hate myself for typing these thoughts.

I hate myself because other people have real problems, and I'm whining because I'm ageing another year, with my life turned upside down, torn apart, my economic life allowing me to survive until, maybe, early next year. Then what shall I do, jump?

That probably makes sense. I will no longer be able to support myself. I will risk dragging loved ones down with me. Out is my best option.

I hate myself for the darkness.

I'm turning sixty-one. What's the fucking point?

Hope is galloping away.

I have an incredible life to share – nobody is interested – they're living their own.

Reinventing myself at this stage of life *is not a thing*; I cannot dedicate myself to another career outside of my creation for another day.

I blast out queries; I'm rejected, REJECTED, *FUCKING REJECTED*.

I've been through much in life, never lamenting or droning on about what life has dished my way. But now, what I've been through, is being used against me. As if my traumas provide a reason to nail my coffin shut.

I lash out at those I love.

I don't think togetherness brings strength; I think togetherness is destroyed by sharing pain because those who love you have opinions, and what you are going through is draining them as well. The ideas don't help. How could they? I'm a mess, and this is my mess.

And telling someone floundering *what you would do*, doesn't help.

I want to climb into a fucking hole and disappear. I want to be hit by a bus.

I want to be mauled by a cougar. I don't want to, BE. I have brief moments of happiness; I fake my mood around others. I try to laugh through my suffering. It doesn't, fucking, work.

This is what pain is.

I'm a failure.

I'm failing. I'm dying. I'm not sure I want to live.

Every day, I sink more.

The day has arrived where inside my 500 square foot hovel, I've come to realize I'm one of the marginalized ones, the used-up ones, the ones who provided others with luxury.

I will never travel again, drive a car again, breathe freely again.

My heart is pounding in my chest; I don't want to talk to anyone; I don't want tomorrow to come.

What was any of it for? For you?

And what did you do with what you were given? Destroy? Let your ego control you? Throw friendships out with the trash?

I'm hurting.

I must be. I don't have control over where my fingers go on the keyboard.

Is this stress?

Stress kills. I'm being murdered, slowly.

You never cared for one second about anything but what you gained.

I will keep trying. I will keep reaching for the sky. While I stretch upward, I'd be okay if tomorrow never came.

Fucking dark?

My mind flashes back to my youth. The Coachman Restaurant in Market Mall (Saskatoon). My first job: a busboy. My mom, who turned out not to be my mom, was the cook. I sure was adorable. I'd often find a few quarters with my name on them under the sugar-shaker. I was twelve.

Mom's fried chicken was mouth-wateringly delicious, putting the Colonels to shame. Her cinnamon buns, world-famous, at least Saskatchewan famous, people travelled from miles around for the gooey goodness.

I picked up my mom from the restaurant when we watched my father die—a cancerous punch to the family's gut.

Less than two years later, punched again by cancer; this time, mom was gone.

Left without parents, I meandered through life, trying to find a place of belonging.

PUNCH. PUNCH. PUNCH.

Surgeries. Deaths. Family deceptions. Isolation. Love coming and going. Direction skewed.

Try. Try. Try.

Get up. Get knocked down – more surgery. Punch.

Comedy arrives in pain.

I wander down a busy street, glimpsing at passers-by. I imagine they have life figured out; they have their lives together. Mine is reeling; I laugh; I make others laugh. I feign I'm okay. I'm not.

Another punch. I'm down again. Get up. Get up. Get up.

I scratch + claw to get back on my feet.

I'm blessed with great friends. I get up again. I don't know why?

Finally, a break, I found a place where I belong. I excel. I know I'm being used, but that's okay, I'm climbing.

For the first time in what feels like an eternity, I walk down the street and, getting up seems to have worked. When I look at the passers-by, I smile, I'm finally together, the future looks bright. Trying and never giving up was the correct route to take.

And then:

PUNCH. PUNCH. PUNCH.

There is nothing more violent than silence.

My existence is no longer acknowledged. In a single heartbeat, I'm disposed of – thrown out with the bathwater.

Depression is kicking in the door.

Depression swallows me. I want to find solitude. The people in my life, I don't want them around me. I don't want to bring them down; I'm selfish. I want to fucking wallow.

I can't fucking reinvent myself. I'm turning sixty-one.

I've become the youngest person on the Senior's Tour. When did all of my friends become older than me?

I run into a good friend. He's retiring on my birthday. He tells me of another friend who is also retiring.

I can live until early next year, I think. Then, jump?

I can't reinvent myself. But I try and try and try.

Why do I try; for me? Sure.

But because in this world where many people are pawns to be marginalized, dictates: I must reinvent – or a *fucking bleep* will use it against me to kill me.

I feel like my world is collapsing around me. *I feel like this will be my last summer.*

A moment of calm arrives.

Why?

Because I've come to the realization: winning and losing don't matter because I'm already doomed. I'm exhausted. Broken. Scared.

I no longer exist. I haven't lived for the last sixteen years.

I'm turning sixty-one; *there is no fucking reinventing myself.* There is no going back to school, no fucking computer classes; there is to be no –

My life experiences are all I have.

A well-meaning friend sent me links to companies looking for writers. I sink deeper into depression.

I flashback to when well-meaning people used to circle help wanted ads in newspapers.

They are not well-meaning.

In the past, I could read the help wanted ads. Today, I have a computer. Well-meaning amplifies my hopelessness. I sink further; I'm now being judged by well-meaning people. The lights are dimming. My comedy is becoming darker.

Last week I dreamt of a monster; the grim reaper, tugging at me, pulling me away, taking me to forever-no-more, I screamed out, "*Help. Help. Help me.*" Someone who loves me tried to hold down my arms. I began punching violently. **HEADSHOT. HEADSHOT. HEADSHOT.** I woke up for a brief moment. The someone who loves me eye was blackened. I regained lucidity. I'm not sure if I would have stopped punching.

Stress is killing me.

I want to die.

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