

## WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BECOME HOMELESS AT 63.



**M**y loved ones (family) consists of my significant other and our twelve-year-old cat Hana. We find ourselves in a dire unprecedented situation. Tears have become a daily occurrence for me. I have always been wary of the term “unprecedented” due to its overuse, but the reality is everything in life is unprecedented when you break it down. However, our current circumstances truly embody the meaning of the word. Homelessness is knocking on our door.

KNOCK. KNOCK.



I DON'T HAVE A FUCKING DOOR  
I'M HOMELESS

Gramps, Grams, and the kids are still gathering themselves at Gilbert's before heading to the renowned Mikey's Human Belly Bacon Bistro and Bar, the most popular restaurant in Foodville. Can you smell the sizzling bacon?

Am I having a heart attack?

The tantalizing aromas waft through the air, creating an overwhelming sensation. *Sizzle. Crackle.*

Are you okay?

Sizzling bacon doesn't equal heart attack, burnt toast, does. And that is BS., as well.

Phew.

Nevertheless, my tears continue to flow. Life doesn't pause, even as I attempt to write a complex narrative that combines comedy, reality, and a search for a better way.

At 63 years old, I no longer feel like I belong in this world. All I have left to offer are my experiences, many of which have been traumatic. I thought I had survived the relentless challenges life threw at me, but now I find myself being knocked down once again, and this time, I'm not sure if I can find the strength to get back up.

The kids will be here soon. I need a moment to let my emotions flow freely.

One would think losing your parents twice would be more than enough to endure in a lifetime. Finding humour in pain seems to be my innate talent.

Yesterday, all I had to eat was a boiled potato. The money has completely dried up. I did everything I thought was necessary to protect my family, but I failed. I dedicated fifteen years of my life to a company that ultimately deemed me disposable.

Now, almost four years later, we are broke, drowning in debt, and I can sense the vultures circling above.

Homelessness arrives tomorrow.

But the truth is, I have nothing left to give to the vultures, not even my own skin. Maybe I should offer myself as a meal to one of the fantasy restaurants in this tale of survival and hope.

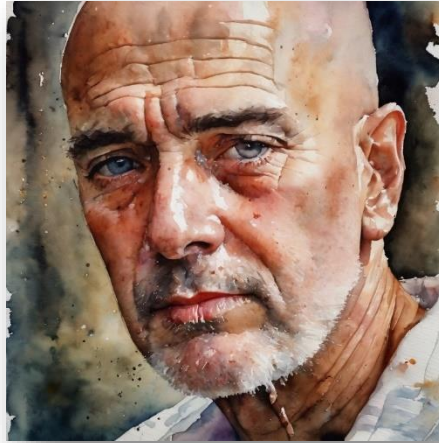
Hope, where are you going?

I can't take care of my family anymore. Can you imagine what it feels like when you are 63 years old?

Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Can you see the pain etched on my face?

My sides ache, and my eyes are drying out, except for that single tear streaming down my cheek.



I'm 63 and in desperate need of help. I don't have immediate family. Never really did.

One friend offered their support, saying, "Just ask, and I'll be there for you."

So, I reluctantly found the strength and I asked, but my friend's offer wasn't real – they were just shallow words.

Another friend offered help but quickly withdrew the offer by announcing, "I'm declaring bankruptcy soon," slamming the door in my face.

And besides, my friend is 68 and suffering from Parkinson's disease, as if I could ever ask.

Do you know what it feels like to ask for help at my age?

Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Naively, I held onto the belief that my unwavering determination and my commitment to leading a kind and understanding existence would ultimately lead to a positive outcome. Furthermore, I held firm to the notion my polymathic nature, coupled with a compassionate and empathetic approach, would serve as a guiding force, shielding me from any hardships life might throw my way. However, I came to realize intellect, compassion, and empathy, holds no true value (cash).

Please don't believe the previous paragraph. I'm depressed.

Hope... please slow down.

Why is Hope running away?

As I continue on this journey, I find myself drained of all energy. The exit looms before me, and I find myself pondering whether to embrace it. It's possible I may not even have a say in the matter. Surviving on the streets at my age, having suffered a stroke, seems futile. What purpose would it serve?

The question lingers in the air, begging no answer.

Do you know what it feels like to beg?

Let me tell you, it feels like this.

The government said they might help, but at 63 years old, I have to prove I'm not trying to exploit the system. It seems like the exit is beckoning me once again. I survived a damn stroke, and now I have to prove my worthiness for charity.

What's the point?

To delay the inevitable?

Later today, I will speak to my former employer, humble myself, and beg for help. That is if he even picks up the phone. A few days ago, he said he would assist in any way necessary, but now his tone seems to be changing, citing illness and legal complications.

I can't help but interpret that as a resounding "FUCK OFF" directed at me.

I need to take care of my family, but I can't. The tears flow.

If I choose the exit door, it will be the greatest failure of my life.

I can't give up. I can't let my birth mother be proven right.

I'm a 63-year-old stroke survivor, and I'm pushing away friends because I'm broke and don't want to appear as a failure.

I'm floundering.

I'm failing.

I'm consumed by depression.

I'm a 63-year-old stroke survivor, and I even applied for a job at a 7-Eleven.

Yet, I have a so-called friend who has repeatedly told me to get off my lazy ass and find a job.

Should I report to him the fast-food restaurant, the hotel bellhop position, and now even the 7-Eleven rejected me?

Should I confess how much I'm hurting inside?

Do I need to let him, like the government, know, that poverty is not a game?

Do I need to reconsider keeping him as a friend?

Life doesn't halt while I write this story.

I hope the sun rises again tomorrow.

A solitary tear rolls down my cheek.

The kids will be here soon.

I need to summon the strength to continue writing their story tomorrow?



Discovering a silver lining in an impossible predicament: Just as I am about to meet my demise on the merciless asphalt, a glimmer of hope will emerge. In that fleeting moment, I will experience the sensation of having a six-pack, a long-lost treasure from my youthful days at twenty-one.

## This | A Poem |

I can't take care of my family anymore.

Could you imagine what it feels like when you are 63 years old?

Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Do you know what it feels like to ask for help at my age?

Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Do you know what it feels like to beg?

Let me tell you, it feels like this.

Should I confess how much I'm hurting inside?

## Rejected | A Poem |

1.

In a world of rejections, I stand tall,  
A spirit unbroken, though they've seen me fall,  
Stock boy, London Drugs, 7-Eleven too,  
Every door shut, but I'll find something new.

2.

Air Canada's wings won't carry me high,  
Grocery store shelves won't let me apply,  
Potluck non-profit, serving hearts so kind,  
But I'm not qualified, they left me behind.

3.

Rogers, oh Rogers, why won't you see,  
The potential in me, the possibility?  
Don't judge from afar, don't make assumptions,  
You don't know my story, don't question my intentions.

4.

117 places turned me away,  
Everywhere I searched, rejection was in play,  
A stroke survivor, aged sixty-three,  
Left homeless on the street, it's hard to believe.

5.

But hear me now, for my voice will be heard,  
I may have been rejected, but my spirit won't be blurred,  
For the homeless deserve compassion and care,  
No matter the struggles they've had to bear.

6.

So let us rise together, hand in hand,  
And build a world where rejection's not in command,  
Where dignity and support are given to all,  
No more stories like mine will ever have to fall.

### A 63-Year-Old Stroke Survivor/Dies on the Street? Homeless