

Agony

(inspired by: Private Worlds Francis Gower)

Bad news about your health inflicts its own unique pain.

Facing the Doctor, I heard his words and I felt my whole world collapse in on me. I couldn't create a single question. I couldn't voice a single thought. A maelstrom of darkness swirled through my body rendering me dumb and turned me into a black hole. My eyes, my window to the world, became part of the problem. I wanted to curl into my own private hell, and retreat into this darkness.

My husband of 40 years there as always, next to me, tried to take my hand but his attempts to offer comfort were lost in my pain.

"We'll fight this together. We'll get a second opinion. We'll spend what we have to..."

His voice petered out and he tried to turn me towards him, to show that this was a together moment. But it isn't. It can't be a team effort. This is not the purchase of a new house. This is my life. There are no plans, no strategies to cope with this. There is no future for me. I will not exist.

I have never experienced emptiness like this, aloneness that defies description. I am adrift, helpless and totally unprepared for this news. I can almost feel my heart shutting down, my brain disengaging from thought. My limbs aren't responding to commands. Shouldn't my basic fight or flight instincts kick in now? I seem to have lost all physical and emotional control. I find I haven't even got the breath to cry.

Instinctively, I revert to childhood and do the one thing that always offered me comfort when life was tough. When my father beat me; when my mother died; when I had my first miscarriage. And now, when I'm told I have no future to watch my children grow; to walk on the beach with my beloved husband. I put my jacket over my head, hug myself and rock in silent agony.

Word Count: 318