Beating down an impulse to jump into my car and spend the night at a hotel, I persisted until I opened the door of the dark house. The intensity of my reaction increased and I realized to the full what my patients meant when they said, "My heart pounded; I felt as if I were going to faint, or die, or scream, or go crazy." I went upstairs to the bathroom adjoining my bedroom, and there promptly vomited. When the vomiting and retching ceased, I felt entirely tranquil, went to bed, and slept perfectly well throughout the night. The fear entirely disappeared and has never reappeared even though the possibility of death when my family is away has enormously increased.

This is the only episode of pathological anxiety that I had during a period of nearly eleven years. My condition, subjectively, has deteriorated. In general, the pulse has been slower. Psychologically, I must say there have been periods of despair or, at least, such a profound weariness of the whole situation that I would, at such times, be glad if the end came. There is sometimes a restless, irritable impatience with the situation, but I think, on the whole, that it has been easy for me to maintain cheerfulness and to continue to work. I have a notion that what I am doing interests and to some extent thrills and amuses my family and friends. They find it consoling, I believe, that I am interested and willing to work and have not yielded to the circumstances of the situation. I find this latent admiration very pleasant and perhaps I go out of my way a little bit to pose as the stoical philosopher. On the other hand, if there exists such a tendency, it is merely an exaggeration of an existing state of mind.

The healthy mind does not really dwell with death. One throws it off as an inevitable event, though he may die tomorrow by edict. I remember interviewing a man once whose death sentence was revoked on the day set for his execution. He told me, and this was corroborated by prison officials, that he became restless, but, he said, "I never quite figured that I was really going to die. At least I couldn't think consecutively about it."

In the bright sunshine of today, writing at my desk, I feel reasonably well; and though I would not bet that I shall live six months, it *seems* as if the real *I* were indestructible. I think psychiatrists preach nonsense when they say adjust to reality. We can only really endure life if we cherish healthy illusions, if we have faith no matter how fantastic, or the kind of healthy-mindedness that shakes off, as a dog shakes off water, the disagreeables of now and the future.

ANNOTATION FOR AN EPITAPH

by ADRIENNE RICH

"A fairer person lost not heaven."
— *Paradise Lost*

THESE are the sins for which they cast out angels,
The bagatelles by which the lovely fall:
A hand that disappoints, an eye dissembling —
These and a few beside: you had them all.

Beneath this cherubed stone reclines the beauty
That cherubs at the Chair will never see,
Shut out forever by the gold battalions
Stern to forgive, more rigorous than we.

Oh, we were quick to hide our eyes from foible
And call such beauty truth; what though we knew?
Never was truth so sweet and so outrageous;
We loved you still the more because untrue.

But in the baroque corridors of heaven
Your lively coming is a hope destroyed.
Squadrons of seraphs pass the news and ponder,
And all their luxury glitters grand and void.

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