

September 21

I didn't even finish typing in the date and I hear Stephan calling me from the bedroom. Maybe I'll have time tomorrow to write.

September 22

Yesterday was the day that wouldn't end. After only four hours of sleep, I dragged my ass out of bed to get Stephan to the hospital so he could have his port put in his chest, making his IV treatments easier to administer. The procedure took more than five hours. I read for a while and then fell asleep (kind of) in the waiting room. Not fun.

We got home a little after three, both of us completely exhausted. I helped Stephan into bed, called his sister and mother and then took the phone off the hook and collapsed next to him. I don't know how much rest I got before I woke up to Stephan moaning and rocking back and forth. His side was beginning to hurt him - really bad. When I called the doctor, he suggested coming in to the hospital, Stephan refused. So we have an appointment for this morning at ten.

Stephan took two nice dumps today (always cause for celebration), so whatever is going on, it's not interfering with his digestion. The doctor took a look at him and thinks it may be related to the spleen. Stephan has to go back to the hospital - again - tomorrow for a CAT scan. And.....there is a transfusion scheduled for the next day at 8:30. Fortunately, someone else is on duty to bring Stephan to and from the hospital the next two days. It all feels endless and I could use a little time away from all this.

I took a little walk today, since Stephan's mom was over for her weekly visit. I found a sunny spot and fell asleep for a while at Washington Square Park. It was breezy and a little warm and felt soooooo good. I lay down on the grass, closed my eyes and let everything go. The stress has been unbelievable the past few days. With each new problem, I feel a little hope and a little fear roll around

in my heart. Hopeful that the end is near (and always incredibly guilty for thinking that way), I am so afraid of how it will play out and the pain that's in store – for both of us.

September 24

Today, I found myself in bed, arms wrapped around a pillow, and tears.....those paralyzing, gut wrenching tears. Fortunately, Stephan was at the hospital getting his transfusion, so I was able to really let go. I could hear myself asking "Why?" over and over, then, "It hurts!" which would then me into even bigger convulsive sobs. Bigger moans, heavier sobs. Finally, after about ten minutes, I just lay on my bed completely exhausted.

Now I feel like my head is about twice its normal size and I'm moving through this thick fog. Sadness can weigh an awful lot.

The doctor is supposed to call this morning with the results from the CAT scan. I hold this secret hope that we'll be told to start getting ready for the end, I don't think any of us need another continuation. Not that I know how to help him get ready. And today, anyway, Stephan seems more willing to fight what is happening.

September 26

Last night, Stephan said that he is finally coming to accept that he has a terminal disease. He talked about everything that happened this week, all the tests, the results of the CAT scan (he's got some kind of nodes in his stomach and his spleen is inflamed). Without shame or hesitation, he cried and said he had nothing left to hope for. "It's only going to get worse. There's nothing I can do. I just want my old life back." Suddenly there are things he still wants to do, places he wants to go.

Then, he looked at me, and talked about how much our relationship had changed. "I don't know how to be with you. I don't even know

who I am by myself!" So distracted by my own emotional roller coaster, I forgot how much Stephan has to deal with and how much harder things are for him.

One of Stephan's favorite sayings is, "Letting go is a receptive process." Stephan has got a lot to let go of, and knows very little of what else is to come. I've got some letting go to do as well - mostly I've got to let go of looking at the future and try to be a little more about the here and now. This thought scares me over and over.

I just checked on Stephan. He's finally found a position that is comfortable after several nights of restless sleep. He is lying across the top of the bed with a pillow propped under his chin and another resting along his side. He's got a snuffle now and his chest sounds congested. What he doesn't need right now is another infection, but he thinks he's got one. He said he had a hard time today. When I called from work, he was whispering and his breath was heavy.

I'm glad he's finally getting some rest. I am in the living room reading and smoking. I've increased my smoking to almost a half a pack a day - most of the time at work. This is not good, I know, but I can't help myself. I'll stop again, just not today.

I've started reading without any music on. I have to now. I need the quiet in case Stephan calls. Every sound that is unfamiliar catches my attention. More than once, I thought Stephan was moaning, or calling my name. I'd look up, holding my breath, sitting perfectly still and listening....waiting. The quiet mocks me and I go back to reading. I did just checked on him again. He was sound asleep. He must have been sweating because he wrapped towel around his head like a turban.

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October 6

Stephan fell into the bathtub last night while trying to sit down on the toilet. I was in the bedroom reading when I heard this loud CRASH. In the few seconds it took me to run into the bathroom, a thousand images went through my head. It felt like my life had stopped. I didn't know what I'd see. Was he unconscious? Dead?? Luckily, Stephan wasn't hurt, just scared. I helped him onto the toilet and washed his face. He looked so confused. "I don't know what happened. I lost my balance and couldn't keep myself from falling." That shocked innocence is always so unnerving to me, he becomes so helpless. It might be time to get a portable pot for him to use in the bedroom.

October 9

Since falling the other day, I've been rearranging my work schedule so that I while work a few days in a row; Stephan can stay with his sister. I have to say I feel an incredible sense of freedom without him around. I miss him and think about him, but I like not being the only one that takes care of him. I like being able to walk through the apartment without worrying if I'm making too much noise, or when I'll hear my name being called from the bedroom. It is so incredibly draining. It's not like I've done a whole lot with my free time, mostly I go to work, come home and rest.

Sometimes, I it is hard to know what to do with myself, I'm not used to being with just me. I got "Grand Canyon" from the video store, but I feel too restless to sit and watch it right now. My plan was to start another story that's has been brewing in my head, for some reason it feels hard to get started.

With a little quiet time, I've let myself start really thinking about my life and how it will look when Stephan is gone. Where will I live? Should I go back to counseling? With everything we've been going through, I sometimes think I want to work with AIDS patients. Other times, I think that's the last thing I should be doing. Then, there are always the fantasies about running away. They come up a lot. California, New Mexico. Anywhere but here. It's nice to just

disappear into another world, another life. It all seems so perfect there.