

Waking up sick is never fun, usually it has its perks though. You get to call in sick from work or school, lay back and enjoy some hot chicken soup even if your nose is plugged. Being sick is staying in during cold winter months, it's hot soup made by someone you love. Being sick is being cared for and tended to, resting for yourself. Everyone gets sick *sometimes*, and sometimes is plenty.

*Sometimes* you wake up sick, and you never feel quite better. I woke up sick, and I still haven't felt better.

It's sort of funny, watching as people change from sympathetic to *impatient*. When will I be better? When can I do this? What *exactly* is wrong with you? *You seem fine to me*. I started calling out of work often. I was a cashier first, I liked meeting people well enough even if my number skills weren't great. I could deal with the pain at first, it was always there anyhow. The body pain came first, the aches in my back, my shoulders, my feet, my knees and ankles. Everything really. I was told again and again this was normal, I couldn't believe how much stronger everyone else was than me. How did they smile when their back seized so badly? How could they laugh when their feet felt like pulp? How could they do anything when the pain bound *me* to my bed?

I figured it must be standing in one place. I changed jobs, and lowered my school course load. I walked all day long at my job, and only felt worse. Soon I was throwing up each morning, then throughout the day. Then I was calling in sick again. Again and again till I was wincing listening to the phone ring. Four shifts a month, then three, two— then I just stopped going. I quit, and hoped I'd be granted disability benefits. I'd been working with my support worker for months before to get the forms done. It was a stressful few months waiting for the first cheque to arrive.

Now, waking up sick isn't just an unfortunate sometimes for me. Waking up sick is my morning routine. Every morning I wipe my bleary eyes and turn over, praying I can fall asleep again before it starts. Inevitably my stomach begins to twist, the aches in my body from laying in rest for hours settling in. I only manage two days of classes a week, so thankfully on other days I can just lay in bed. I wish it were as relaxing as it sounds, rather than rotting in the coziest prison watching my house work pile up. Some days I need to get up anyway. Most early mornings I spend gripping my counter while I pray for the Tylenol I took with my Wellbutrin and Lamictal. This combination usually makes my stomach nauseous, and so I have a Gravol too- and I might smoke some weed if I still feel a need to hunch over the toilet when 8:00 is rolling around.

It's hard to feel sick all the time. It's harder to explain to others. *No* it probably isn't that bad *right this second*. Yes, I do know that many people have it much much worse. Yes I've tried walking, I've tried this and tried that, yes I've heard of a glass of water and no, it isn't the dairy.

It's hard to grasp pain you can't see, it's hard to imagine how hard life feels when you *never* feel 100% if you're in good health. I try not to judge others for how they judge me, I only feel bad that no one told them that you don't need to be productive to be worthy.