

MY
DAYS



JULY
2023

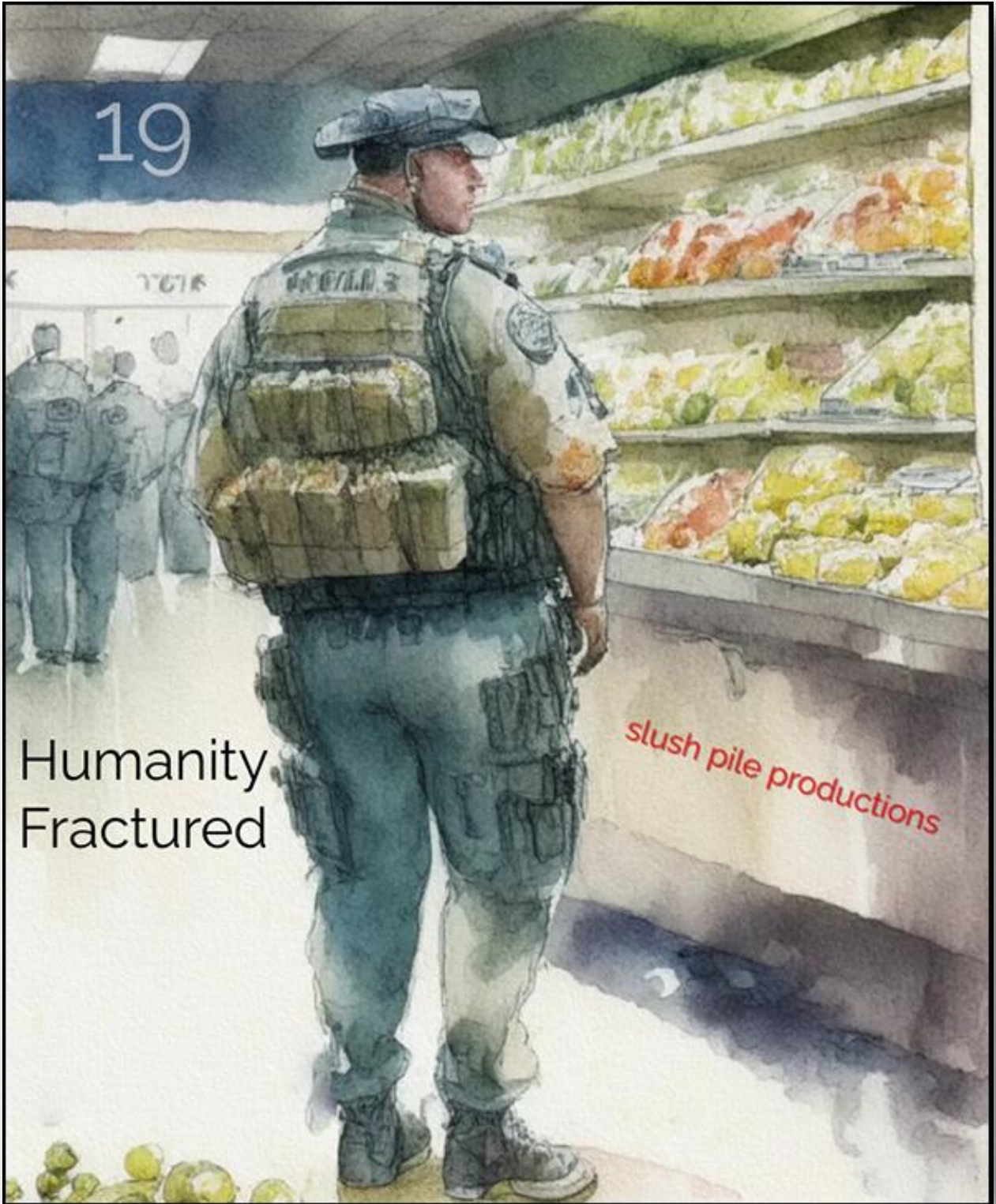
LINDSAY
WINCHERAUK

Lindsay Wincherauk

JULY 2023

2

MY DAYS: JULY 2023



Humanity
Fractured

HUMANITY FRACTURED
HUMANITY FRACTURED



For the past four nights, my dinner has consisted of a meager bowl of homemade chicken soup.

Sleep continues to elude me, and my mind is filled with worry.

Despite my best efforts, being cast aside by my former employers in my sixties has shown me that the golden years are anything but golden.

I keep pushing forward, but sometimes I question why.

I write, exercise at the Fitness Asylum, read, and strive to surpass 30,000 steps each day.

They say exercise is beneficial, but when my diet consists of only soup and the occasional cheap soda from McDonald's, I'm not so sure.

I take a breather to visit with friends.

Luke expresses anger and frustration about the state of society and its failure to address the suffering of many, I don't necessarily agree with everything Luke says.

However, what matters is that Luke despises the suffering and the lack of action to alleviate it. Suffering people are living in tents a block away from where we are, across the street from a hospital. A gated community garden looms directly across the street from them.

I keep moving, and someone comments on my appearance, saying I look trim and good.

I'm not sure if that's true. It feels like my body is starving itself, turning into a parasite that feeds off its own resources. I can no longer afford to just exist.

Or rather, it's been much longer than just **"no longer."** I've been living in denial as my debts continue to pile up, reaching a point where the weight becomes unbearable to acknowledge.

A man I used to work for, who pretended to be my friend, sits down in his comfortable home with his wife and children, enjoying a hearty meal.

Meanwhile, my stomach gnaws at itself, and my face becomes gaunt.

Being poor is an incredibly expensive state to be in. J and I are running out of toilet paper, unable to afford anything more than a single roll at a time. It feels futile. Soon enough, we might have to resort to using public restrooms.

In my mind, I envision the man who masqueraded as my ally reveling in our anguish, just as the company's owners do. They exploited the veil of the pandemic to ruthlessly terminate my career, showing no remorse for the immense suffering their callous choice would impose upon us. I am well aware that our pain will conveniently serve as their excuse, as they conveniently blame our struggles on **"mental problems,"** absolving themselves of any accountability for our downfall.

5

This begs the question: what comes first →↓

- a) Poverty?
- b) Starvation?
- c) Drugs?
- d) Suffering?
- e) Mental Problems?
- f) A Combination (a-d)?

As I walk home, I pass by Choices Market. I question why I'm even there, knowing that we can no longer afford food.

A security guard in a flak jacket, resembling riot police, stands in front of the produce section. His presence does nothing to ease my discomfort; in fact, it only makes me feel nauseous.

I shouldn't be here; I no longer belong.

I have an urge to buy chips, hoping that the sodium will provide some sort of escape. But I can't justify it. The chips cost \$2.00 for members and \$4.99 for non-members.

Meanwhile, ten blocks away at a busy McDonald's, a man uses the self-service station to order his food. A disheveled homeless man approaches him, asking the man if he can buy him a cheeseburger.

Instead of telling him to go away, the man graciously agrees, and the homeless man says don't worry I will get my own drink. He searches for a cup among the trash, planning to use the self-serve soda station.

After finishing his order, the man waits for it to be ready. When his number is called, he collects an orange juice and the cheeseburger. He finds the homeless man, hands him the cheeseburger, and the homeless man introduces himself as Patrick.

Patrick expresses his gratitude, revealing that he hasn't eaten in a week.

This act of kindness restores a sense of humanity, and the gentleman walks away, leaving Patrick with his dignity intact. I feel a warmth inside me.

What am I doing in Choices?

I can't justify buying chips, even if they are only \$2.00 for members and probably \$4.99 for Patrick, who likely isn't a member.

I approach the counter, aware that the security guard is watching me closely. I'm not stealing anything. I feel violated, and my stomach churns as my insides continue to devour each other.

Across town, the man who pretended to be my friend pours gravy on his children's dinner, seemingly unaffected by the suffering around him.

I reach the checkout and hand the clerk my membership card.

The security guard paces back and forth nearby. I don't have the answer to heal suffering.

The people I used to work for find Patrick lying on the ground, barely breathing. Instead of offering help, they ask if he wants to work that day.

Patrick has only eaten a cheeseburger in the past week.

He has no toilet paper and sometimes sleeps under a tree with rats crawling over him.

One night, another suffering individual stole Patrick's shoes while he was consumed by exhaustion.

Meanwhile, Luke suggests that one of the problems facing society today is the closure of mental institutions.

Patrick may have mental issues that are not his fault. The company that tries to recruit Patrick for day labour recently fired the ten lowest-performing workers, making room for more individuals like Patrick.

The man who pretended to be my friend spends cash on several of his “**moneys**” on a luxurious fishing trip that costs \$10,000 per person. He also takes some of his “**moneys**” to a strip club to try to get them in compromising positions. He amusingly refers to this peculiar practice as “**bonding.**”

If you read yesterday’s story you know money = client.

In the midst of all this, a woman protests against the construction of social housing for the homeless in her neighborhood, citing concerns about the children.

Yet, when she walks through the downtown streets and witnesses the growing suffering, she acknowledges the need for action.

A group of naked cyclists ride by, there is nothing sexual about it, just people who aren’t ashamed with who they are. I pass a lady who says, OMG, this shouldn’t be allowed, think about the children.

7

Meanwhile back at Choices, the cashier asks if I want a bag for my bags of chips. I find the question redundant.

As I make my way towards my humble abode in The Eden, a once-affordable haven that now eludes my financial grasp, I am compelled to shield J from the harsh reality of our predicament. Despite his stable profession, it is evident that unless a miraculous turn of events occurs, akin to stumbling upon a magician's hat with a hidden rabbit, our lives will be irreversibly altered. The imminent loss of his job would inevitably lead to our collective downfall.

The deceitful man who masqueraded as my friend, accompanied by his lascivious accomplices, could be heard raucously celebrating this impending event.

I find myself as a 63-year-old man, plagued by the gradual decay of my body due to the relentless burden of stress. The predicament I face is daunting, for the kind of work that once catered to individuals like me is now nonexistent. To make matters worse, the absence of a reference letter for my last fifteen years in the workforce further complicates my uncertain future.

The man who pretended to be my friend helps himself to a second serving.

I check my mail, finding nothing troubling or of value.

Delivery drivers often leave packages in the mail area. I once read a story about Amazon warehouses where employees were pushed to their limits, resulting in some collapsing due to the lack of air conditioning in overheated mega-warehouses. Amazon's solution was to station ambulances outside the warehouse, considering it a cheaper alternative.

I look down and see a 45-pound box (Pretty Litter) of kitty litter on the floor, most likely delivered by an exhausted driver struggling to make ends meet.

On the opposite side of the street, the security guard stands tall, clad in a uniform reminiscent of law enforcement, diligently safeguarding the precious apples in Choices.

I enter the elevator in my building, and a food delivery driver joins me.

I ask him what he's delivering, and he replies, **"7/11 Slurpees."**

My stomach churns.

Every day, I strive to be the best person I can be.

I excelled at my job, but it didn't matter.

We are failing each other.

I don't want to become homeless.

I don't know how to survive.

What about us?

Think of the children.

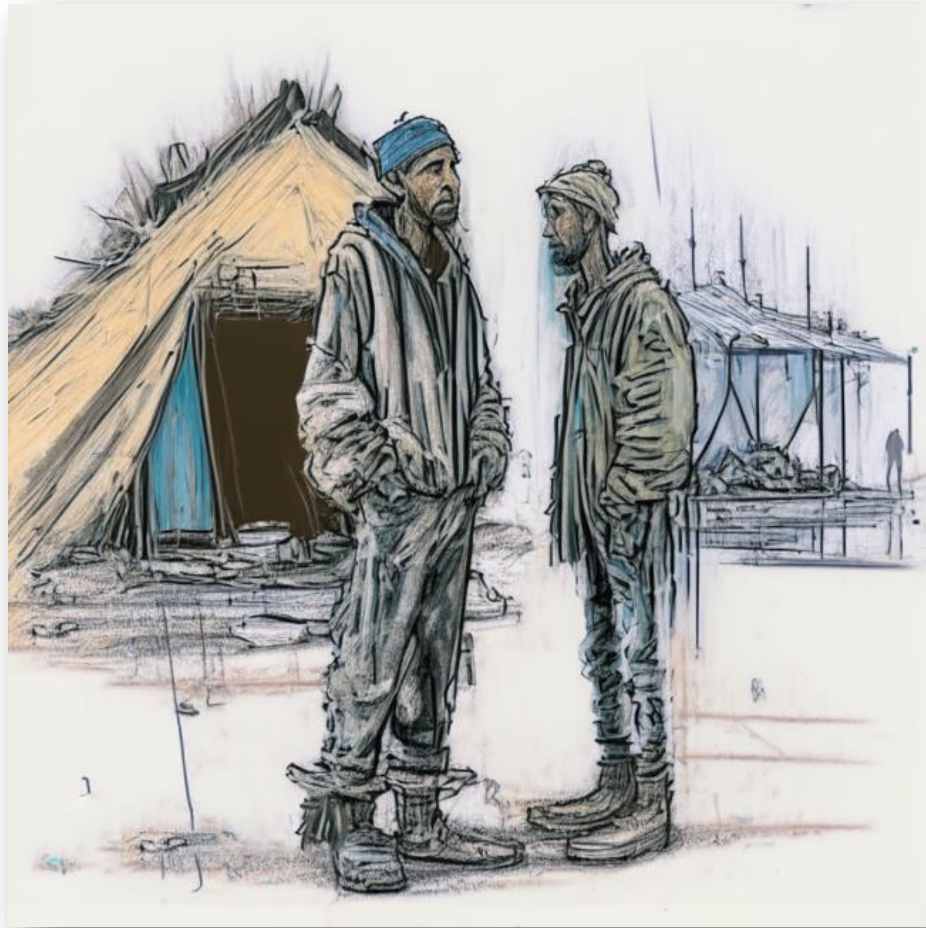
Maybe the sodium in the chips will provide an escape.

How long can a person survive on nothing but a small bowl of soup before their vital organs start shutting down?

"You look good. Are you losing weight?"

The deceitful man who masqueraded as my friend generously serves his family dessert before summoning three **"moneys,"** to invite them to join him in the company's luxury box for the upcoming football game this weekend.

Patrick dies.

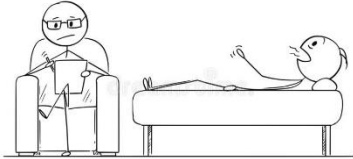


||

Grammarly Readability Score = 93.

Grammarly Readability Record = 99 (May 1, 2023)

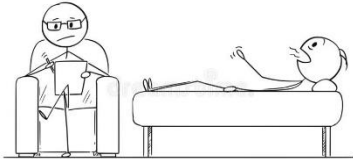
A 60ish-Year-Old-Man Lives put on Hold (Part 1).



Welcome back.
I think I (we'll) be regular visitors for a while.
That's why I'm here. What would you—
—like to talk about today?



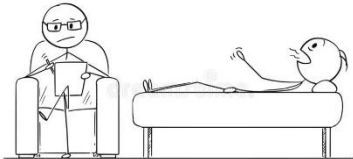
Well, it's sensitive subject matter.
Of course, it is about the pandemic—
—and my demographic—how it's affecting it.
If you don't mind, I will talk in your font—



—colour today, I will be ranting, I think.
No problem. Rant away. It's important.
Thanks Doc. I may go overtime.
Let it out. Tell me your thoughts, your fears.



Doc, you know I lost my employment—
Like many people. For f-sake, I'm 60.
Could you imagine what that's like?
I know you can. It's fucking terrifying.



I'm a man with many talents.
My main talent is being alive at 60.
I know. You've been through lot in life.
Your mother/father dying when you were young.



Navigating life mostly on your own.
Finding out your parents weren't your birth parents.
Friends dying. Life threatening illness.
Your mother dying again. A stroke. You are strong.