Cancer Plan and Sting's "Another Day"

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October 22, 2018 By Robin McGee

At last, a plan. We saw the specialist urologist at Sunnybrook and he has a surgical strategy: a combination of an open and transvaginal approach to my defect repair. He still holds little hope that it will work ("It may fall apart that same day," he said) but he will try it. The surgery date is likely 1 March.

But there is a new development as well! We saw an expert in an obscure treatment known as hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). It involves breathing in high levels of oxygen under pressure, which improves the quality and operability of radiated tissue. There is a special chamber at the QEII Hospital in Halifax. She strongly recommended that I do not attempt any surgery without 30 days of HBOT preoperatively, and 10-15 treatments postoperatively. To access it, I will need to live in Halifax at the Lodge That Gives for seven consecutive weeks. Treatment must occur within 5-7 days on either side of the surgery. Postoperatively, I will need to go to Toronto General for the HBOT.

The "dives" will be each day at 7 am or 10 am for 90 minutes each day except weekends and holidays. Which means I must twiddle my thumbs for the rest of the day in Halifax until the next treatment. To avoid Christmas disruption, I will start January 6th. Others who have undergone this treatment tell me the loneliness of living away from home for so long is challenging. Although this will be a hardship, I want to know that I did everything I could to improve my dubious outcome.

Today, we met with an Ontario couple who read The Cancer Olympics. The husband was tearful as he thanked us for giving them the inspiration they needed to get through the same cancer and its brutal complications. It was touching, and warming, and comforting — all at the same time. Feedback like that helps us to go on.

Superstar Sting wrote "Another Day" as the B side for his famous song "If you love someone set them free" for his first post-Police 1985 solo album, Dream of the Blue Turtles. I prefer the live version from his live album of 1986, Bring on the Night. I choose it to reflect how, when each day ends, I am hopefully one step closer to defect recovery. At the same time, each day that goes by erases one from my foreshortened life. So I am hopeful and sad, both at the same time.

But it's hard to tell the poison from the cure
It's harder still to know the reason why, why, why

The only thing I really know for sure
Is that another day, another day's gone by

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