

Cancer Treatment Ends, and Death Cab for Cutie's "What Sarah Said."

It is my sad duty to share that I am out of cards, writes blogger Robin McGee, so all my efforts now will be directed to palliative care.

May 7, 2024 By [Robin McGee](#)

It is my sad duty to share that the oncologists are telling me I am out of cards. They are recommending no further treatment. Scans show the disease has escalated, appearing in my liver and both lungs now after 14 years. My nine lives are up.

When I asked about my timeline, they said if I catch Covid or some other virus, my lifespan can be measured in weeks. If I avoid that, it will be months. She said, "You won't see Christmas."

So all my efforts now on must be directed to palliative care. I must discover that magic spot between pain control and sedation. Some of the drugs are so strong I fall unconscious for 1-4 hours each day. My physical disability has likewise increased. I have lost the use of my right foot, so I must use a rollator to get around. To avoid further bowel obstructions, I am on a low fibre, low residue diet. I am supposed to eat several small meals a day, which is more difficult than it sounds.

My disability creates more work for Andrew and it is starting to wear him down. We could use help with so many things: yard work, house chores, and companionship for me while he is busy taking care of other things. (He is afraid of me falling when I am home alone—it has happened). Thank goodness a robot mows our lawn!

People ask me if I have bucket list plans. My remaining ones are very modest: can I visit with my family? Can I go on the camping trips we booked? Meeting those goals will bring enough contentment.

Now does not seem like a bad time to leave the world. Since my initial diagnosis I have accomplished a lot: I finished raising my child, concluded a satisfying career, wrote [The Cancer Olympics](#), camped across Canada and traveled to Alaska, Costa Rica, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy. I have done the big things, so what is left now is to enjoy small things in the time remaining.

Today's song is "[What Sarah said](#)" from Death Cab for Cuties 2005 album Plans. The song is about the perspectives of someone watching a loved one die, and the loved one watching that happen. Its muted message to invest in life and love while one can is underscored by the hospital imagery

and melancholy voice. In marriage, our vows about “till death do us part” imply another commitment: One of you must watch the other die.

I am not actively dying now. I still get up every day. I have writing plans and objectives as goals to keep me focused. And, truth be told, I was so tired of treatment that stopping it feels like a reprieve. Nevertheless, the next few months would also be the time for friends to visit or call, for those looking to say goodbye.

And it came to me then
That every plan
Is a tiny prayer to father time

As I stared at my shoes
In the ICU
That reeked of piss and 409

And I rationed my breaths
As I said to myself
That I’d already taken too much today

As each descending peak
On the LCD
Took you a little farther away from me
Away from me

Amongst the vending machines
And year-old magazines
In a place where we only say goodbye

It stung like a violent wind
That our memories depend
On a faulty camera in our minds

And I knew that you were truth
I would rather lose
Than to have never lain beside at all

And I looked around
At all the eyes on the ground
As the TV entertained itself

’Cause there’s no comfort in the waiting room
Just nervous paces bracing for bad news
And then the nurse comes round
And everyone lifts their heads

But I'm thinking of what Sarah said

That love is watching someone die

So who's gonna watch you die?

So who's gonna watch you die?

So who's gonna watch you die?

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<http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/cancer-treatment-ends-death-cab-cuties-sarah-said>