Chemotherapy Begins and America's "A Horse With No Name."

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July 9, 2020 By Robin McGee

So chemotherapy has started after several COVID-19-related and other delays.

I have only had one treatment infusion (the first of at least nine). Due to the pandemic, no family or friend can accompany me during the 6-hour infusion. This current protocol of FOLFIRI plus Vectibix seems less toxic than the one I had been on previously; however, it is early days yet. I am working hard at side-effect prevention by being religious about such prophylaxis as mouth rinsing and moisturizing.

The recent MRI news is not good. The cancer has invaded my urethra as well as the right anterior vagina. This is so discouraging to me, given the Herculean efforts I made to save those organs in the past. Perhaps the chemotherapy can shrink this mass, perhaps not. Hopefully I can learn if I have any surgical or radiotherapy options. Once again, I must pour over research literature to learn what I can, and try to find a way forward. Sigh.

Relay for Life is virtual this year, and is taking place on 13 June 7-9, EST. I am appealing for your donations once more. To donate to me and my team—Team Robin—click here. The Canadian Cancer Society has lost considerable funds due to COVID-19, and their essential services like the Lodge have been compromised. I want to do what I can to help the organization that has been such a help to me over the past 10 years.

Yes, it has been 10 years. I was diagnosed originally in May of 2010. Given that we now know I had stage IV disease all along, I have lived far longer than the statistics would predict. I like to think that your support has something to do with that! That, and the solidarity and misson described in The Cancer Olympics.

So what is the song that goes with the bewildering head-trip that is a second cancer recurrence? The melodious folk-rock group America produced their greatest hit, the famous "A Horse with No Name" in 1971. It reached the top of the charts in many countries. Banned in some states due to the thought that the horse was a synonym for heroin, it has outlasted that interpretation. It describes a trek through a mind-bending landscape, and a psychedelic loneliness. My cancer journey has feels like that—so surreal, so lost, so strange, so ever-shifting. In this song, the

singer’s desert is behind him—or is it? Like the vast Arizona desert, my journey stretches out in front of me again.

I’ve been through the desert on a horse with no name
It felt good to be out of the rain
In the desert you can’t remember your name
’Cause there ain’t no one for to give you no pain
La, la

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