



Day 10: Well Hello, Cousins!

If you arrived here from my article in today's [Bitter Southerner](#)....

Welcome! Come on in.

If you are new here, this is my home base for rambling, witterings, rants, laments, and other such. Lately things have been focused on my stem cell transplant, because what could possibly be more captivating than details about, well, me?

I'm pleased you dropped by. Stay as long as you like, come and go as you please. But be careful about the one-eyed cat. Trust me.

If you are regular here at the shack, you know the rules. Wipe your feet. No spitting. Be kind. No cussing unless cussing is all that will do.

Now on to business.

When I posted on [Day 5](#), I told you that “I feel pretty bad, but not terrible.”

Let’s just say that sunny outlook changed right damn quick. Day 6 was the proverbial long dark night of the soul, albeit one that lasted about 48 hours. I’ll spare you details of the suffering, but it was dark and frightening and helplessness-inducing and all manner of dark mojo. (And still, none of it has been as specifically awful as the [Tick Apocalypse of 2014](#).)

So let’s blast through Days 7 and 8 as if they never happened. Day 9 found me awake at 6.30 a.m. with three pitch ideas, a scheme for reorganizing the home office, and an itch to play a damned guitar. For the next five hours I interspersed these endeavours with some robust physical rehab action. I was a World Beater.

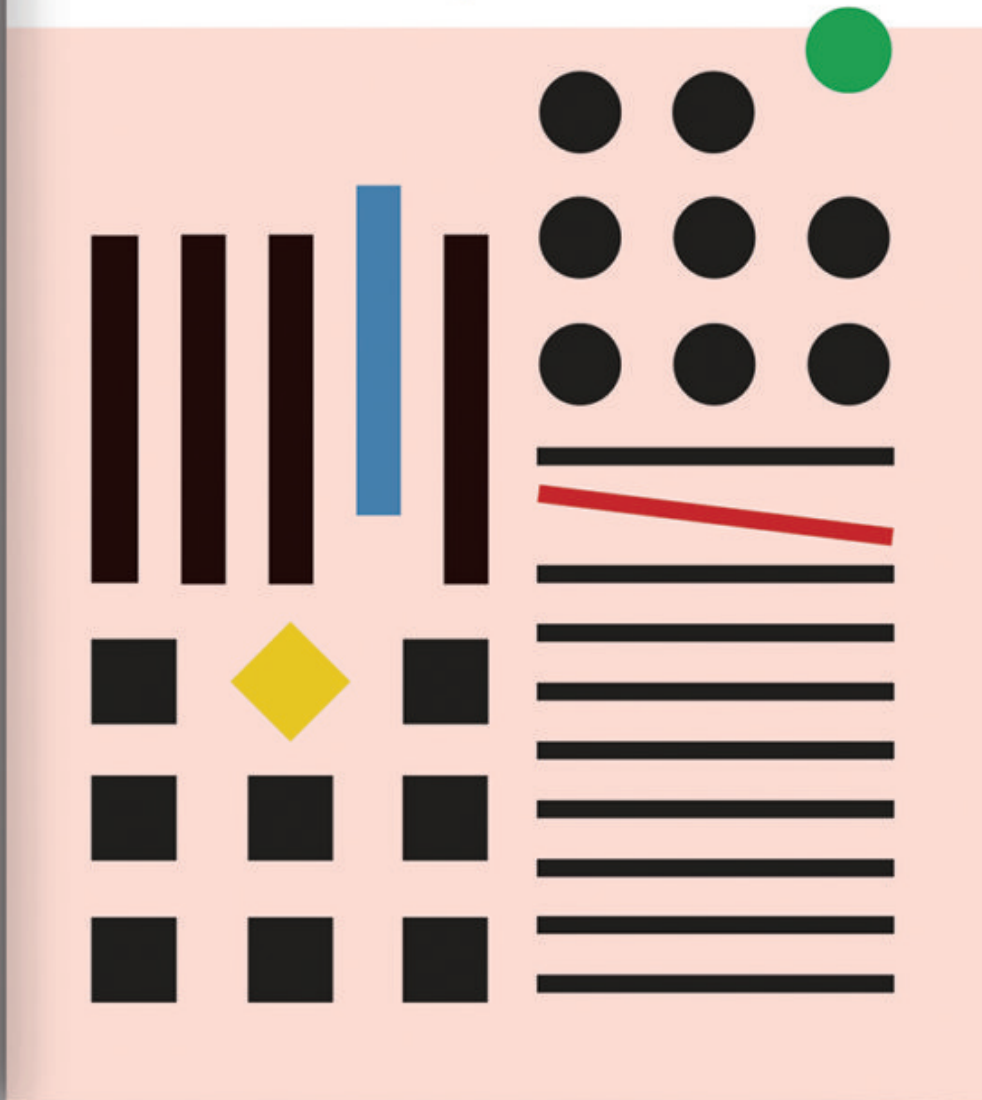
Then I crashed to Earth with just enough energy to watch the US Open final.

Today, Day 10, I awoke at a more sober hour, but no less enervated for achievement. More writing, more rehab, and devouring a huge chunk of Nate Chinen’s terrific new book [Playing Changes](#).

**PLAYING
CHANGES**

Jazz for the New Century

Nate Chinen



Buy this, read this, write in it, love it.

I have not managed 50 pages in a sitting since before we came to hospital. I am very encouraged.

I kept up the snappy pace, doing laps around the nurse station, hailing all good fellows and ladies well met.

And then a nurse said “Hey, looking good.”

Was I ready with a snappy comeback? Is the Pope an enthusiastic outdoorsman?

“Pngr diung shkr,” I parried.

It was clearly time for a lie down. A long one.

There’s this thing everybody in Cancer Land calls ‘[chemo brain](#)’. Signs and symptoms of chemo brain may include the following:

- Being unusually disorganized
- Confusion
- Short attention span
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty finding the right, uh,
- Difficulty learning new skills
- Short attention span
- Difficulty multitasking
- Feeling of mental foginess
- Short attention span
- Short-term memory problems

- Short attention span

In short, dumber than a box of hair.

But the super most excellent thing about chemo brain is that one minute you might be expostulating like the third-act Scarecrow in *Wizard of Oz* and in the next blink of an eye you revert to Act One Scarecrow.

Best estimates on shaking chemo brain range from six months to a year or perhaps even more. (That 'perhaps' is doing a lot of work right there, and not especially well.) Apparently it is, as they say, just a matter of time.

Before I checked in, I removed myself from our car insurance. One reason is to save a little money. The other is that I do not want the temptation to hop in the car and joy ride down to the malted shop to hang with Reggie and, um,

Never mind. Forget I said anything.

I also have really intense dreams in which a conversation in the dream will cause me to respond out loud, which wakes me up, which scares the shit out of me because the person I was talking to has been replaced by one or more severely alarmed observers puzzling whether to get the restraints on me before I get spagiggady, and yes I know that is not a real word, at least not yet, and since the word I want won't come I will devise its replacement.

All this to say: Things are well and truly on the upswing here. Blood counts are where they should be, my physical/mental condition is ahead of the curve. There is a good chance I will get out of here next Monday. (They don't do transplant discharges on the weekend, and Friday is likely too aggressive a target.)

From there it's 2-3 weeks in the halfway house – though some beat the odds and get out quicker. Again it all depends on bloodchemistry and how I am tolerating the transplant.

So far, so spiff.

In the meantime, y'all introduce yourselves to each other and please tidy up before you leave. I'm late for a chat with Jerry Garcia and AP Carter. I hope I can keep it to myself.

Til next time...

LOVE EACH OTHER MOTHERFUCKERS!

It matters a difference.