

# Ask Not For Whom...



Life since the last update has been fairly routine, if by routine one means a seemingly endless succession of inpatient chemo sessions punctuated by deep exhaustion, malaise, and occasional mild bouts of tummy tumult.

The last round of standard chemo left me pretty well flattened, a piece of unidentifiable road kill sprawled on the sofa, incapable of following a thought for more than a few seconds at a time. It was as though I were looking at a huge, jostling crowd from above, everyone wearing big, yellow hats with nothing to distinguish one from another. Then, one person would take off their hat and I would try to follow that person/thought. But no matter how hard I would try to concentrate, the damned thought would put the yellow hat back on and start trying to hide. Then another would take off the yellow cap for a few seconds before hiding. Ad infinitum.

Then, everybody's hat would turn red, and I would try to figure out what had changed, but there was no hope of ever remembering what that change could have been. Then I would forget anything had changed at all.

Rinse. Repeat.

Gah.

This lasted a solid week. Since then I have enjoyed a rare stretch of clarity and (slightly) elevated energy. Reading is again enjoyable, the words alive on the page and taking lively shape in my mind.

Alas, all good things must end.

My PT Scan came back with terrific results and I have been off all meds, feeling pretty darn good. The scan showed that the chemo did its job. That means I am eligible for stem cell transplant. That process begins next Monday. Once more, unto the breach.

I am filled with hope and dread. Hope that the SCT will work as planned. Dread because the chemo I will receive for this will make the previous chemo look like child's play. And dread because following a few rounds of outpatient testing and treatment, I will likely spend the bulk of August and September in confinement.

An essential part of the transplant process is application of chemo in doses sufficient to destroy pretty much everything I've got in the way of bone marrow, white cells, platelets, etc. The whole immune system has got to go, basically, and cell division – which is the basic characteristic of any living organism – will be nothing but a memory. Shorter: They want to get as close to killing me as they can without me actually dying.

The original begin date for this was July 23, and boy was I looking forward to the next couple of weeks. But somebody canceled their treatment, so I was moved up by 8 days. On the one hand, this is good. We get started on my treatment sooner and deny the AITL an opportunity to return.

On the other hand: Well, fuck.

Fun Fact: Because the transplant process will take my immune system down to zero, I will have to get all my childhood immunizations again.

Greatest thanks to all who have sent messages, books, food, music, &c. I have a universe full of amazing friends. Can't wait until I can see you all and can give you a giant hug.

This elbow tapping is a poor substitute for a heartfelt neck squeezing.

Locals: Hoping to set up an outing to one of our local drink spots before I once again disappear into the gaping maw of the medical-industrial complex. Likely Friday or Saturday. Stay tuned via FB/Twitter.

Also too: