



Not Hungry Anymore

Nicole Hadler¹

Received: 23 January 2021 / Accepted: 20 April 2021 / Published online: 18 May 2021
© Academic Psychiatry 2021

Mix cinnamon into cereal. Swirl. Swirl
Murky liquid, brown wreckage. Dirt.

Continue to swirl. Swirl
Brown clumps cling to the flakes. Sorry specks of earth.

Swirl. Scoop the cereal at the bottom to the top
No piece unscathed. Each one cursed.

Take a bite. Chew
Limp flakes, tongue. Tongue, tissue.

Swallow
Tasteless.

Hear the children's morning chatter below
I do not recognize the tune.

Turn toward the sun's warm greeting
My window is black with dust.

Notice the sky's orange and pink hu—
A concrete building blocks my view.

Take a bite. Chew
Limp flakes, tongue. Tongue, tissue.
Bare, icy feet grip the coarse hardwood floor.
My calloused flesh does not wince or object
To the stale, hardened crumb that stabs at my toe.

Take a b—
No more.
I scrape the soggy heap into the trash,
Inhaling the stench of decaying meals.
Button my yellowed runty coat —
A radiant snowy white not long ago.

Poet's Statement: In this poem, a medical student recounts her experience with burnout and a period of depression during her medical training. It captures the depth of a student's depression by taking the audience through an activity as mundane as eating breakfast, which turns out to be a very difficult task for this student. Her exhaustion and hopelessness overpower the voice of optimism that unsuccessfully attempts to lift her up. She lost sight of why she went into medicine, symbolized by her white coat turning yellow. This poem enhances the reader's awareness that in the field of medicine, we are all human, and no one is immune to suffering from low periods or burnout.

Declarations

Competing Interests The author declares no competing interests.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

✉ Nicole Hadler
hadlernl@umich.edu

¹ University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, MI, USA