

Tired Of Being Tired

He just turned eighty and already Arnold had grown tired of being tired. Medications helped his underlying problems but created both diarrhea and constipation, an odd combination which created an unsettled morning and rest of the day. The heart meds lowered his energy, which he tried to replace with B12 pills and coffee. He would be awake but still tired.

He hated naps as a waste—now he fell asleep by eight without them. Life was not meant to be slept away. He resented needing rest.

Arnold needed a solution to the insoluble: aging. He had time left and certainly nothing better to do. And he knew other folks had his problems and were looking for solutions. Cryogenics? Delaying the inevitable. Preserving his brain in a robot body? Science fiction. Virtual reality was a temporary escape. Arnold lived, especially these days, in the now, in the practical. He remembered easily walking for blocks, years ago. Forever ago, it felt like.

An idea came to Arnold while he was walking for half an hour, which he forced himself to do each day, panting at the end, regularly having to stop and rest. The cane helped, though at first was embarrassing. His idea was the answer was in his heart: he had to think young. So the next morning, he remembered discovering something new every day (still happened, but it meant less. He tried to make it more. Faltering, he thought of riding a carousel while trying to poop.

He surrendered to a nap.

That evening, Arnold told himself there was only one solution to aging: acceptance. He refused to accept that. Sitting back, he accepted that life was much more difficult, that at times he lost his breath just crossing the room. What he could not accept was being old. He was tired of being tired but not tired of being himself.

He mixed his gut drink and wolfed it down. He could accept naps, he realized, if when awake he despite aging he remained himself. Himself as he always was, physicality irrelevant. That was the only solution.