

Traffic

Ice pack

To the head

Swelling's antidote

Brain Fog they call it?

Try mood and cognition

Traffic jam

As the

Street lights

Of my eyes

Flicker explode and burnout

Didn't I

The dog heartbeat soundtrack on YouTube
Seems to soothe Sammy
It sounds like a sped up version of
Ocean waves coming in
Going back out
Coming in
Going out
In
Out
Lu-
Duub
Lu-
Duub
My pacing¹ timer offers a prolonged, limping version
Of this rhythm
Six minute rest
15 minute activity
Six minute rest
15 minute activity
Rest
Do
In
Out

¹ Pacing is one method to manage chronic fatigue and increase capacity wherein you alternate doing an activity with rest, sometimes using a timer to stop before symptoms worsen. It's helpful and empowering, frustrating but necessary. As I write this footnote I'm writing in five minute blocks and resting between 4-10 minutes. The insurance mandated Occupational Therapist told me that you can't get much done being productive only five minutes at a time. But I
Wrote

These Poems
Didn't

I

Wheelchair Metaphor

Wheels spin in soft snow

On my way to yet another intake evaluation

Or should I say

Existential shame and measurement chamber

The document shredder truck is blocking the access ramp

I'm stuck

Solicit the only guy walking by

To push me

Try not to equate this temporary bind

To celestial proof that this return to work

Process is failed from go

The marathon runner was so healthy before

It's still loss for those of us whose health

Ebbled and flowed

(Prior to it not getting better)

It's loss- My voice, my breath

Power behind my words

It's still a loss for those of us whose marathons used to look like

Weekend getaways

Three-day work weeks

Whose bodyminds called out for rest,

craved pacing Long Before the word, pacing,

was repeated on wellness podcasts

Loss doesn't cost more for formerly healthy people

For middle and upper class people

For white people, like me,

over represented in rapidly closing

Long Covid clinics

Even when you float your body is more than halfway in the water

What are the hard things that I'm not saying?

The things I'm avoiding and therefore need to

Write

It's hard working with limited energy

It's a challenge to learn new patterns

Like resting proactively

Like avoiding the impetus to leave the house

In order to avoid resting

Like saying no, I can't come

I'm not up for that today

Prioritizing short bouts of exercise over

Socializing

Prioritizing water over wine

I'm sitting in a coffee shop with a mask on

Unable to drink my coffee

Coffee shops are where we writers have a

Semblance of colleagues

I need human contact

Very, very privileged immunocompromised

Problem

Latte problem

But still

I used to work as a journalist, reading and

Researching all day

Now I can't make it through one article

I miss reading things on paper

But I'm literally trying to write a book

That the contradiction of this season of being
Disabled
Doing something for others that you might not
Talk in yourself
At least not in that way

If I were talking to a friend I'd say
Try to float among these truths
Let grief be the river that pushes you along
You're not a flat stone
You can't skip this river
Remember, even when you float your body is
More than halfway in the water