

A Letter

To Any and All:

I have been afflicted with a terrible sickness.

Peculiar and malignant – the issue is not one of physical pain or fatigue, but of time and predictability. I don't know why, but

I
can
on
ly
w

I suppose the problem is evident.

It started, not too long ago, with the occasional fallen period. I blamed my own sloppiness at first (it being such a minor lapse of punctuation), but I quickly began to notice more substantial punctuation marks missing from my work; question marks and exclamation points absent from where I was *sure* I had left them. At this point I became somewhat concerned – but I thought it to be a merely *cognitive* issue, a problem of forgetfulness.

Then entire letters began falling off.

First it was just "i"s and "l"s – unstable, thin, letters without much base of support. Then the middling letters ("k"s and "d"s) were lost, and it was only a few days before even the sturdy "m"s and solid "z"s were consistently falling from my page. This is when I became fully aware of the unusual character of my affliction. Certainly I could not be forgetting entire letters – and, more than that, I could *see them as they fell*. The first one I rem

em
be
r

I begin again...the first one I remember distinctly – the last "l" in "formal". I watched as it plummeted from my page, falling and tumbling into the abyss. I laid my hands by my sides immediately, not daring to cause any further harm and quite unsure of what I had just seen. Could it have been what I thought? A letter there and gone – not erased or deleted, but *fallen*? Humans are prone to mistakes of the mind (especially in visual perception and cognition) and I convinced myself this was the more likely explanation. A visual illusion.

It quickly became apparent that I was wrong, or at the very least a more profound explanation was necessary.

The letters continued to fall with increasing frequency, and it was clear that I was either suffering from an outright mental illness or what appeared to be happening was so. Considering that I showed absolutely no other signs of mental disorder, I was forced to accept the latter option. And while it was important to come to terms with the fact of circumstance, this left me with absolutely no understanding of what exactly was occurring.

I searched for any and all materials I could find, for any information on the subject, for any previous case, and found the problem completely without precedent. The only form of information gathering available to me was first person inspection; a case study of my own peculiar ailment.

I watched intently during the dur

ati
on
of
th
d

I watched intently during the duration of the deterioration, hoping for some clue to stymie it. This I was not able to do. However, I was able to infer at least a few facts concerning my condition which hopefully can help you understand.

From what I have gathered: the form and content of my prose is irrelevant. The affliction strikes at random. The random occurren

ces
inc
rea
se
i

The random occurrences increase in rate as time goes on, but only if I'm writing. As in – if I was to put down my pen and rest, coming back to the page a few days hence I would find the state of my condition exactly as I left it. But, if I was to continue writing, my condition would continue to rapidly deteriorate.

This is the extent of my knowledge on the subject.

Without any clear way to reverse, halt, or even slow down the decline, I was continually forced to change both how and what I write.

It quickly became impossible to even *think*

of
writing
an
arg
u

It quickly became impossible to even *think* of writing an argumentative essay. Similarly, any serious attempt at literary fiction was made hopeless.

For a while poetry became my refuge. The focus of all my energy.

Its malleable conventions allowed me to convey grandiose ideas and feelings in relatively few words. Considering the difficulties inherent to my condition, poetry felt like nothing short of a panacea. Yet, even within the domain

of
ve
r
s

I am very sorry...even within the domain of verse I was forced to continuously adapt. Fewer stanzas and lines, fewer words and letters. I continued to at

te
m
p

I need you to understand...I continued to attempt it for as long as I could; until I was *insurmountably* persecuted by this awful ailment.

I have not written anything for qu

ite
a
w

I have not written anything for quite a while due to worry over my conti

nu
ed
de
t...

...I say, due to worry over my continued deterioration; overwhelmed by the fear of where this is all going.

I write this now out of desperation.

Please help.

I do no

t
w
a...

...I do not want to give up my pen yet. I am scared.

I'm not sure what you can do, but there must be something. Anything.

I have given you

the
fa
c...

I have given you the facts and circumstances. There must be so

me
th
i...

...someone you can can call or re

a
c...

...reach out to.

I am no
t
s
u...

...I am not sure what h
a
p
p...

...happens now.

It is a
I
I...

...falling away.

But you h
a
v...

...the fa
c
t
s...

...I have given th
e
m...

...to you, p

l
e
a...

...help. Pl

e
a...

...I am sc

a
r...

...I

a

m

s

r

G

x

e

!

a

b

d

?

- ,

t

"

g

f

k

n

?

J

t

s

x

n

v

(

-

o

<

b

*

A

&

/ ,

w

p

-

d

.

y

u

q

c

y

— f z p l
a r n b v c x
s m y b ; i
g ! x b d
q ? - , t “
g f k m . ?
J t s t
n v (- o
c b *
e & / , u z
o d . y u q c
y F z p l h
s x b - m
u r h
g ! x b a s
e ? - , t “
r w ? i c