



6 February 2026

Welcome to the second edition of
Fragments.

This February edition explores
life transitions — the quiet ones.

FRAGMENTS

Deteriorating Health

Deteriorating health is often the first trigger of transition.
When our health starts to fail, everything around it shifts.
Our lifestyle changes.
Our job changes, if we are still able to work.
Our relationships change.
And most importantly, we change.

What is often the hardest, and what we don't always recognize right away, is the grief we carry for the person we used to be.
We grieve the version of ourselves who had energy.
Who didn't calculate every movement.
Who didn't need help.

We have to accept that we are no longer fully capable.
That we need others.
That the freedom of being young and untouched will not return in the same way.
This is not an easy process.
That is why grieving consciously matters.

Because only by naming the loss can we begin to live differently with what remains.
Then comes the work of accommodation.
Learning how we function now.
Understanding our rhythm.
Noticing when energy appears and when it disappears.
Discovering which foods, which activities, which moments suit us best.

Trying, gently.
Not pushing beyond our limits.
But walking when we can.
Every day, every two days, or once a week.
Asking for help when we need it.
Seeing our doctors regularly.
Knowing our rights.

In France, for instance, disability, whether physical or mental, can grant access to job accommodations, state aid, and reimbursed health care, depending on one's condition.
Knowing this matters.
Asking matters.

Self-care does not have to be perfect.
It does not have to be aesthetic.
It does not have to be constant.

Sometimes, caring for yourself means watching a video that makes you laugh.
Reading a poem that makes you feel something.
Doing something small with your hands.
Something that makes you proud.

Hope does not disappear.
It simply becomes quieter.
You have to do small things to remember that you can still like yourself.

If you're a woman, maybe it's putting on lipstick just for fun.
If you're a man, oiling your beard or brushing your hair.
It can be anything.
As long as it brings you back into your body.

When illness enters your life, you begin to live through details.
You may no longer move mountains.
But you can collect moments.

Favorite films.
TV shows.
Books.
Sentences worth keeping.
Write them down.

And above all, do not be ashamed.
Do not be ashamed of needing more time.
Of asking for help.
Of claiming your rights.
Of not being as "successful" as before.
Of what you lost and cannot recover.



This may be the moment when reinvention becomes possible.
Finding new ways to exist.
New meanings.
New forms of purpose.
Dance.
Sing.
Move when you can.
You are still alive.
And you still have the right to be happy



Between Fog and Rain

Feeling low, and tired.
The air presses down on you.
You struggle to stay composed,
Not to fall, not to crumble.

Things don't make sense anymore,
When you're too busy fighting every speck of dust,
Trying not to become one of them.

Your body aches, or floats away,
Leaving you behind, abandoned.
Your mind no longer knows
Who she is, when she's alone.

But sometimes,
You feel a slow breeze.
You notice the dark leaves.
You smell the passage of rain just gone,
And see the marks it left on the ground.
And just for a second... maybe,
You feel alive.

But then it all returns,
The same routine.
You're too tired again.
In your head, half a thought
Fights with the fog.
Damn. Here you are again.
How long will it last this time?
Three months or a year?

But you're not falling into despair,
Even that would ask for presence.
You just want to stay awake.

Sometimes, you're strong enough
To feel a flicker of hope.
You know, one day,
It's going to be different.



Held Together

Held Together

When health begins to deteriorate, work is often one of the first things to shift.

Suddenly, we can no longer work the way we used to.

Whether in an office or on a construction site, the body no longer follows the same rhythm. Fatigue settles. Concentration fractures. What once felt stable becomes uncertain.

From there, a quiet process starts.

Most of the time, it begins with accommodations.

Adjusted schedules. Reduced hours. Modified responsibilities. On paper, these measures are meant to protect. In reality, they often introduce a new form of fragility.

Rarely do accommodations look exactly like what was requested.

Sometimes the workload is reduced, slowly, until one feels sidelined.

Other times, the opposite happens. More work. More pressure. As if endurance were being tested, until leaving feels inevitable.

Both situations are exhausting.

When the workload increases, the body cannot always follow.

When it decreases, something else erodes. Confidence. Progress. The sense of belonging.

What happens in this short span of time is subtle but profound.

Health was already unstable.

Now its consequences are visible.

At this point, options begin to narrow.

Some choose to leave.

But resignation often comes at a cost. Loss of financial protection. Loss of security.

Others stay.

They accept the adjustments.

They learn to work differently. More slowly. More carefully. Redefining what progress means.

And some are eventually dismissed for incapacity, after months of uncertainty and quiet negotiations.

None of these outcomes feels like a real choice.

When work ends, another question appears.

What comes next?

It is rarely just about finding another job.

Health has not changed.

And now there is a gap to explain. To recruiters. To employers. Sometimes to oneself.

Fear settles in.

So does shame.

And with them, the feeling of no longer fitting into a system built on continuity and performance.

Some find alternative paths.

They work independently.

They create small activities that allow them to follow their own rhythm.

They find environments where flexibility matters more than endurance.
For others, there is a period of instability.
Lower income.
Administrative weight.
Time that stretches.
As difficult as it is, this time can also become necessary.
A pause forced by the body.
An opportunity to stabilize. To rest. To recover.
If you find yourself there, this matters.
This pause is not a failure.
It is often the only way forward.
Financial pressure makes everything harder.
In France, state aid can offer a temporary safety net. Elsewhere, such protection does not always exist, and vulnerability deepens.
Still, this is not the end.
There is always room to reinvent.
New professions.
Different rhythms.
Entrepreneurial paths.
Or simply time, before deciding.
The best option is never the most productive one.
It is the one that does not put health at risk.

Because life is not measured by employment status.
Life is measured by presence.
And if one manages to build a life that is imperfect but livable, fragile but honest, one that allows breathing and moments of joy, then something essential has already been preserved.

A stylized illustration of a man in a grey suit and brown shoes running towards the right. He is carrying a brown briefcase in his right hand and has his left fist clenched. The background is a solid dark red color.

Under Control

In an attempt to keep her figure,
She walks towards the sun,
As if the night hadn't consumed her.

She talks with a sweet voice,
As if nothing were screaming inside her.
She laughs and smiles,
Though she fears her face will soon be twisted by
fear and pain.

Her body is trembling. Arms, legs, torso.
But she keeps the face, pretends to dance.
The angelic mask has silenced all the voices in her
head.

Resistant, they choose revenge,
Returning through nightmares
And body aches.

And while something inside
Is trying to crack open her chest,
Just to get out of there,
She calmly reads her books,
Ignoring the vertigo.

The next day, she's all shaken up.
Almost falling, like a cat,
She lands on her feet.

The reflexes she trained for so long
Guide her steps.

She vibrates with the music in the air,
Ends up dancing, composing the melody she
hears.

But how long will the game last,
Before she finally says it:
"Okay, I quit."



In Between

The beginning of a transition is uncomfortable.

Difficult. Disorienting.

You no longer recognize yourself, yet the world still expects you to perform.

You are asked to keep up, to stay consistent, to remain who you were.

But you know, deeply, that you are no longer there.

This is the in-between.

A space where nothing fits quite right.

Where the old version of yourself no longer works, and the new one has not yet taken shape.

It is also the moment when reinvention becomes possible.

Not an ideal version.

Not a perfected self.

You already grieved everything that once seemed possible.

The plans. The projections. The imagined future.

And yet, so much remains.

You can learn new skills.

Not to prove anything, but to adapt.

You can learn how your body functions now, how your energy moves, where it stops and where it returns.

You can discover capacities you never needed before. Patience. Precision. Listening.

You can build a life that is quieter but more intentional.

Work differently. Create differently. Think differently.

You can write.

You can paint.

You can learn a language slowly, without pressure.

You can change fields.

You can work fewer hours and live more deliberately.

You can create something small that belongs only to you.

You can rest without apologizing.

You may realize something unexpected.

That you are stronger than you ever thought.

Not despite illness, but through it.

Because you endured.

You adapted.

You lost things.

And still, you are here.

You do not need to accomplish heroic acts.
You do not need to be brave in a way that impresses others.
You do not need to fix the world or transform suffering into achievement.
You only need to decide, for yourself, what happiness means now.

What being fully you looks like, without comparison.
That may be the most demanding task of all.
Redefining yourself.
Without scripts.
Without external validation.

It is frightening, and it is tempting to resist it.
I spent a long time refusing this shift.
Refusing the idea that my life would look different from what I had imagined.
Refusing slowness.
Refusing limits.
I believed it meant being less myself.
Less strong.
Less capable.

But it does not.

You are not necessarily slower.
You are not behind.
You are moving differently.
At your own pace.

On a terrain others do not know.
You cannot compete with them.
And they cannot compete with you.

The in-between is uncomfortable.
No one enjoys uncertainty.
No one likes not knowing what comes next.
But it is also a powerful place to stand.
It is where identities loosen.
Where possibilities reopen.

Where life, quietly, rearranges itself



Just Beneath the Blue

My ship is sinking,
and I have nothing left to hold it back.
Yet the sea is not rough,
it is weary,
and its blue has faded,
as if exhausted by itself.
It mirrors me far too well.

I try to rise,
but something keeps pulling me downward.
Alone, I row,
toward a surface that does not want me.
In the depths,
I begin to lose myself.
There is not a single living fish,
and I feel myself thinning,
slowly dissolving into the water.

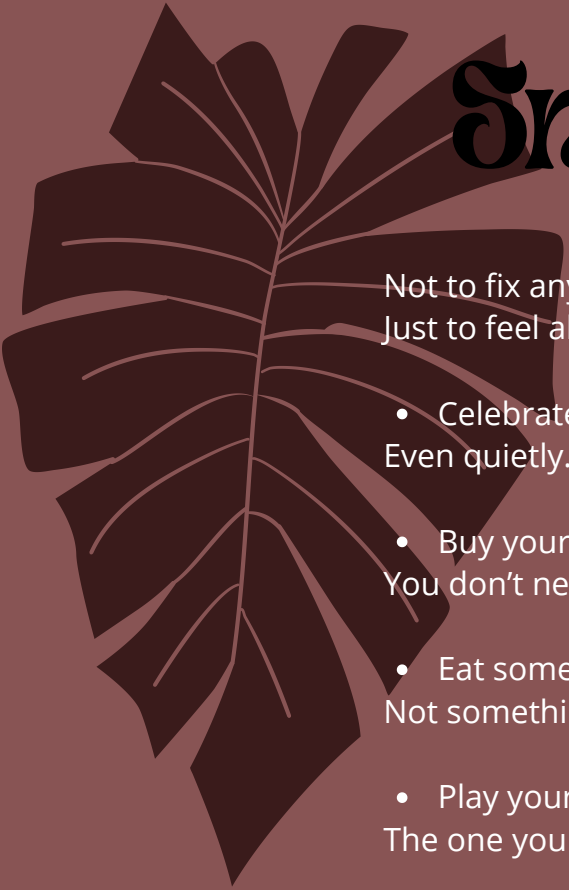
Soon,
I no longer recognize myself.
What am I now,
an object or a being,
human or debris?
I no longer have the strength to name it,
even less to feel it.
I know only o
ne thing:
I am getting lost.

A ship passes by,
filled with singing people.
They do not see me,
and I am not waiting for them.
Still,
I am here,
just beneath the blue.
With them,
the sea grows restless,
and life resumes its course.

But there is a stain,
in the middle of it all,
too dark for the scenery.
So the sea presses me lower,
slowly,
pushing me further down,
to a place where I will not disturb the picture.

The pressure begins to build,
and oxygen grows scarce.
And then something awakens inside me.
A choice imposes itself,
to let myself float,
or to die.
But I no longer remember why.

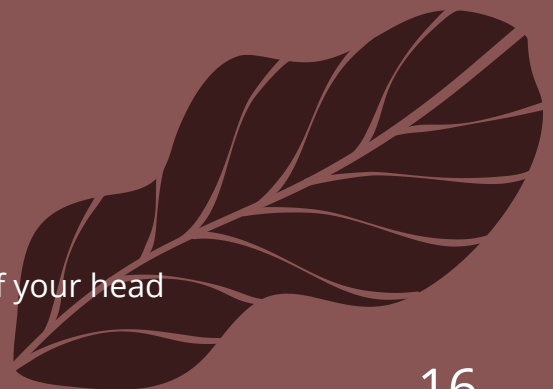


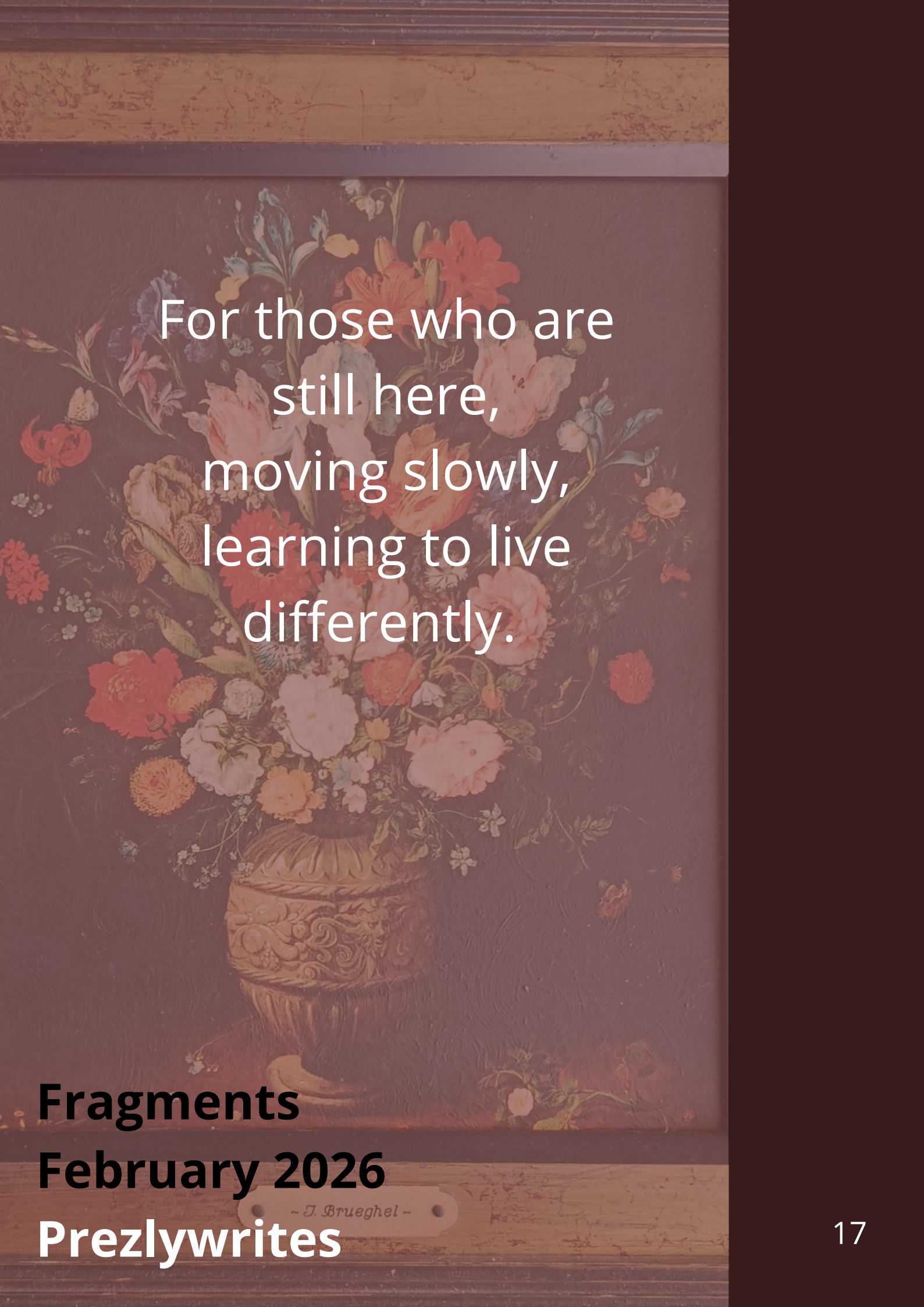


Small tips

Not to fix anything.
Just to feel alive again.

- Celebrate your birthday.
Even quietly. Especially quietly.
- Buy yourself flowers.
You don't need a reason.
- Eat something you genuinely enjoy.
Not something that's "good for you".
- Play your old favorite song.
The one you loved before everything got heavy.
- Watch early internet videos.
The silly ones. The pointless ones.
- Dance in your room.
Badly. Freely.
- Put on makeup just for fun.
Or wear something that makes you feel playful.
- Go to the cinema alone.
Sit in the dark. Let yourself disappear for a while.
- Buy one small, useless thing.
Only because it makes you smile.
- Start journaling.
No structure. No goal.
- Start a blog.
Or a YouTube channel.
Not to succeed. Just to exist.
- Write a book.
Or the first page of one.
- Do anything that helps you get out of your head
and back into the moment.
Some days, this is more than enough.





For those who are
still here,
moving slowly,
learning to live
differently.

Fragments
February 2026
Prezlywrites

~ J. Brueghel ~