

Pedestrian and Derivative

Sometimes I have stressful thoughts. They creep up slowly and cling to anything they can. They tell me to act when I don't, and they berate me when I fail. When I consider these thoughts and examine them, they say that they're not genuine. They tell me that I've made them up and that my anxiety is derivative. Copied. Fake. They tell that it's not real anxiety, that it's an entity of my own making and that I am to blame. They sow seeds of doubt and then they criticize me for describing it in a clichéd metaphor. It's an endless, cyclical pattern that batters down self-esteem and any sense of certainty. This doubt trickles down into all aspects of life and leaks through the pipes in the basement of my mind.

The basement is now flooded, and the water is eroding the foundation. But everything continues; nothing stops to fix problems that aren't visible. I keep waking up, going to school, going to work, coming home. How can I fix problems if they're not real? If I doubt their existence. If they tell me they're not there. If they seem unauthentic. If the pipes keep leaking and the flood gets worse, will I drown? Or am I catastrophizing? Isn't this just something I wrote? It is, but I can't help but feel like it's artificial, and damp.

By Cameron MacDonald



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