Hepatitis C: I Saw the Figure Five in Gold

September 2, 2015 By Grace Campbell

I've been part of a countdown for a fellow Viekiran in an Australian hepatitis C forum. We've posted songs, poems, artworks and images for each day.

It's given me time to think of how I have seen each day that has passed. The passing days didn't mean much to me for a long time. Hours rolled into days rolled into weeks rolled into months. I rolled along with them. The last two weeks of treatment however have been different. For once I have felt the passing of time - and it's not been nearly fast enough! It seems a common emotion for many who are reaching the end of treatment.

So, back to my original story. Each day I would go hunting for something that summed up that particular remaining day of treatment for my Australian treatment buddy. Some days I really struggled to come up with something, other days I was batting the ideas away.

The fifth day was a case in point. So many options!

Kenneth Slessor's *Five Bells*. Perhaps too morose, but oh, that opening:

"*Time that is moved by little fidget wheels*
Is not my time, the flood that does not flow.
Between the double and the single bell
Of a ship's hour, between a round of bells
From the dark warship riding there below,
I have lived many lives, and this one life
Of Joe, long dead, who lives between five bells.

Deep and dissolving verticals of light
Ferry the falls of moonshine down. Five bells
Coldly rung out in a machine's voice. Night and water
Pour to one rip of darkness, the Harbour floats
In the air, the Cross hangs upside-down in water.

- "Deep and dissolving verticals of light ferry the falls of moonshine down..."

Can't you just see it?

Then I thought "OOOH! Nick Drake's *"Five Leaves Left"*. Great album, great singer/songwriter. He was

one of the forgotten ones, but is now having a well-deserved renaissance. Sadly, he died young, so I thought - perhaps not that to celebrate treatment!

And then I thought, I'm overthinking this. I'm just going to whack up a painting I have loved since forever: Charles Demuth's "*I Saw the Figure Five in Gold*".

To me, it represents energy and action. It is vibrant. The swirling movement, the blood-red layers of colour, the gold bright and glowing. It is arresting and somewhat discordant - looking at it is like hearing jazz for the first time.

It is everything I feel I have lost through having hep C and everything I want back again.

Bright blood red for good fortune and joy. Gold for hope and completeness.

It's just what I have been looking for.

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