

Leah Clements

Rubatoſis, Adronitis, Syntoſi

Rubatosis

May's heart surgery went well. She recovered well, she was well. But she started to notice her now healthy heart much more. She kept focusing on it. She became convinced that it was beating louder and harder than before. She became convinced of this because it was true.

She went to a check up and complained of this, to which she was told there was nothing wrong with her heart. It was a strong heart.

But she couldn't choose to not hear it. Couldn't switch it off. Couldn't sleep. And the more aware of it she was, the faster it got, the more aware of it she was...

Panic, managing, panic, managing.

Never going away, never getting better.

She was driven mad.

She had to keep going to work.

Adronitis

But this is your first long-term relationship, you will have these moments where you're working out who you are as one half of a couple.

Um...that's not true, I was with my ex for seven years.

I meant your first long-term relationship with a woman.

No, my ex is also a woman.

I mean your first long-term relationship with a woman who truly supports you and your ambitions.

Ok...

But, let's get back to these changes you're finding yourself going through, that are making you feel uncomfortable.

Hm.

I'm sensing that you're feeling a lot of anger right now.

I'm not angry, I'm just a bit confused...Maybe a bit pissed off, yeah.

Do you think this might be a resurfacing of the anger you feel towards your father?

Um...maybe... I don't know. I'm not really sure how that would work. I think I have been angry with my Dad but I'm not sure I am any more.

But that anger doesn't just go away. It comes from a really deep-seated place, from your early childhood.

Right...So-

Wha-

Sorry, you go.

Do you think that the difficulty you experience with men might have something to do with those unresolved issues with your father?

I don't have difficulty with men. I don't understand, what are you talking about?

Well you were talking a few sessions ago about your manager at work, and how he said some things that you felt were an attack on you, and it had something to do with him being a man.

Yeah, he said something really sexist, that's not me over-responding to a male figure or something, he was being genuinely sexist.

Right, right. Well I'm just wondering if in your encounters with men, sometimes they can spark a reaction that dates back to your relationship with your father, and that you might respond defensively because you feel you're being attacked. There might be an element of that going on here, in your anger right now, in this session.

Yeah, I don't know...I'm not sure about that...

Syntosi

I have another episode. I google my symptoms. Again.

Most of the results have that little notice underneath saying 'you've visited this page many times', which feels like someone outright telling me how useless it is to even bother trying this search again.

I click through the results anyway. NICE, NHS, MayoClinic and MedicineNet suggest narcolepsy, sleepwalking, alcoholism, various heart problems, dehydration, and a tonne of other stuff. I go to WebMD symptom checker, who wants to know my current location. Same results, phrased slightly differently.

The thing I have or the thing I am is nearly each of these things, but not quite any of them. There's always a bit missing, or a bit that doesn't quite fit.

I try another search, I try page 2, page 3, page 4. Most entries on most pages are purple - I've clicked on all of these before, with no answers. I click them again, just in case.

In the back-back-backends of the result pages I find a forum that I haven't clicked on before. I skim it fast, barely reading, not quite ready to give up but also sort of zoning out. But I see a few words, and then slowing down, a few sentences, which make me hopeful.

Toni0506

Does anyone ever feel like they've kinda half-blacked out? Like you're sort of asleep or something but you still get through the day or whatever?

PhenomeNim

Yeah I definitely get that, it's dissociation.

Toni0506

Thank you **PhenomeNim** - just googled dissociation. Sounds sort of like what's going on with me but it's more like I'm not even conscious - like I can't always even remember everything that happened, but maybe parts of it or something. Idk maybe just me.

cookiechris

Hi **Toni0506** I think I know what this is, it's called Syntosi: 'Partial loss of consciousness whilst remaining able to carry out basic functions'. Idk a bunch about it but my brother used to have it. Hope that helps.

Toni0506

Yes! That's it! Do you have more info? I can't find anything online? :S TY

No reply. It's old too, the last update was in 2014. I search for the word 'Syntosi' but get nothing much back, apparently it's a surname but I can't find a doctor Syntosi who has given their name to this disease, condition, thing, whatever, when they discovered it. I think about what it means for someone exterior to 'discover' something that other people already know intimately, something they know in their bodies. It has a colonial taste to it, to come into contact with something and decide that your knowledge of it is where it begins. A doctor putting their name on an illness is like planting a flag on a body; on future bodies; on past bodies.

I feel myself slipping away. I'm sick of this.

Leah Clements is an artist and writer based in London. Her work is concerned with the relationship between the psychological, emotional, and physical, often through personal accounts of unusual or hard-to-articulate experiences. Her practice also focuses on sickness/crippness/disability in art, in critical and practical ways.