

Dear Stress

By Anonymous

Dear stress,

You evolved as a release of chemicals in the brain, as catecholamines and cortisol, all meant to protect me. My heart beating faster, trying to jump out of my chest, is supposed to prepare me to react quickly in situations. My breathing growing rapid and shallow, making me gasp for more and more air when each mouthful leaves me feeling as I have less than I started out with, lets my body take in more oxygen. My throat tightening, a noose that I have created around myself to prevent any of the swirling, half-formed thoughts from racing out into the open – you aren't doing enough, you aren't good enough, you aren't ENOUGH – redirects water to where the body needs it.

I suppose it's alright when I skip breakfast, and lunch, and then dinner, and breakfast again to work on projects, to finish homework, to grasp any feeling I can of doing something useful, as you shut down digestive activity anyways.

I suppose it's alright that I avoid rest, fearing that any break I take is unproductive and without purpose, as you release neuropeptide S, a protein that decreases sleep.

I suppose it's also alright that I have reminders of you all over myself, as you ensure I'll stay alive by flowing blood away from the skin. You reduce blood loss from my wounds even when you were the cause of them.

Dear stress, you evolved to keep me safe – why is everyone telling me that you aren't?

With love . . .