

An Unforgiving Minute

How my Life-Altering Almost Ending Became a New Beginning



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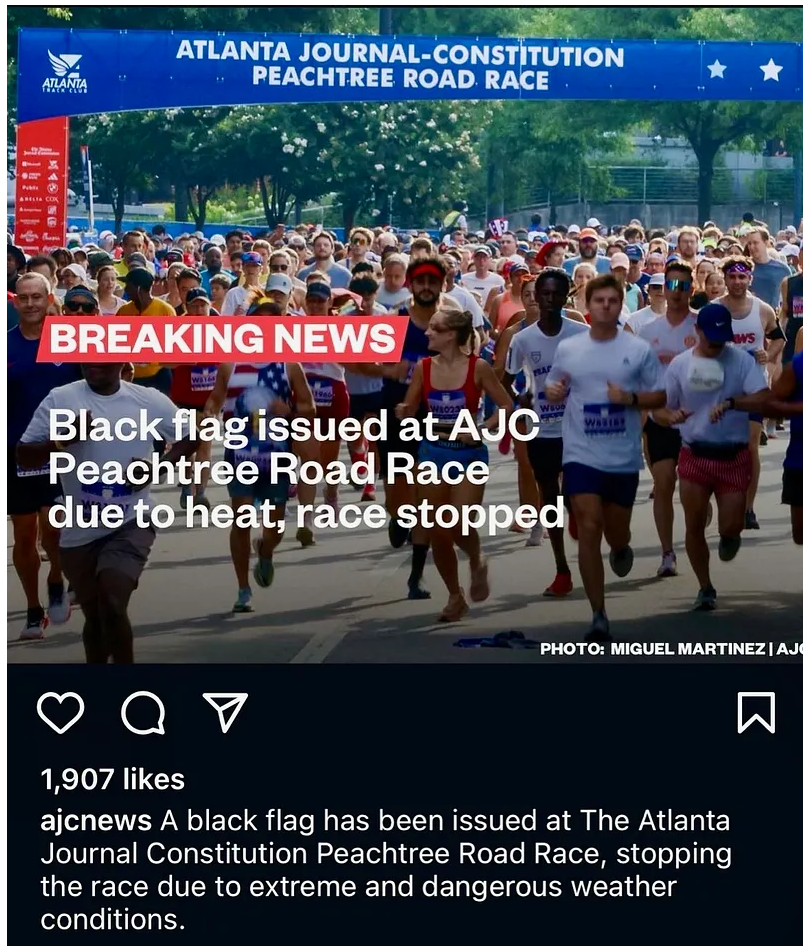
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Happy Sunday! And welcome back to the Writer's Block Party.

First, a moment of sincere gratitude: In just over two weeks, I've gained 21 precious subscribers. And many more on IG (@malaikarsimmons) and Bluesky (<https://bsky.app/profile/malaikarsimmons.bsky.social>). Each set of eyes is much needed encouragement when so much of life feels uncertain. **In an era of competing priorities, limitless options, and infinite demands, I don't take lightly what it means for you to support me and read my work. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!**

At its core, the Writer's Block Party is intended to be *a literary "party" where craft, content, community, and culture collide.*



Of the four categories I've committed to sharing with you, three excite me and one terrifies the hell out of me: Content. My own content. My writing. My art. Ugh.

But a life-altering accident earlier this year helped put it all into perspective. On the Fourth of July, while competing in the Peachtree 10K road race, I suffered **heatstroke, which resulted in a massive seizure, a traumatic brain injury, and several other complex complications.** When I woke up in an ambulance with near-complete memory loss, I feared I was facing the harsh consequences of ignoring my calling. And on the long road to recovery, I vowed if I was lucky enough to make a comeback, I'd commit to making a change.

And here we are.

I'll be honest. I still don't love the process of sharing my work. In fact, it pains me. But the pangs of self-doubt pale in comparison to the haunting memories of where I was

mere months ago. And to the reality of how my story almost ended.

So, *I'm gonna share a little something today*. This is a short essay I wrote in the weeks following my accident as I struggled to make sense of my circumstances. With the creative center of my brain blank and the left side of my body limp, I had to rebuild all.

And guess what, I'm so much prouder of this new version of my life.

When I plotted this out, I planned to sit on my work for as long as possible. To keep light, drop in cute quotes, and hope no one would notice. And if I had an assurance of infinite time, I'd do just that. But as my accident and life has taught me, I don't. We don't.

So, here goes:

"An Unforgiving Minute"

by Malaika R. Simmons

This is me trying. Trying to find a new way, recognizing that the old way wasn't working. Leaving behind an old identity. An old set of rules in favor of a new birth, rebirth, aggressively sought after alternative ending. I'm emerging as a new person despite my unrelenting efforts to cling to what was.

Two months ago, I risked it all when I abandoned life as a lawyer, the only life I'd ever known. The life I'd spent decades building at the expense of so many important moments and memories. Since law school orientation, I'd worked overtime trying to orient my mind around the reality that I'd never be like them,

bending and breaking myself to blend into a world that made no effort to accept me. It never fit. Or rather, I never fit.

So, I quit. And left my job to become a writer. I risked a step away from a careful curated career in favor of a move toward an existence that would actually set my soul on fire. I made bold proclamations about not going back and cautiously counted coins and considered logistics, ways I'd support my family in the "in between."

I thought on it. I prayed on it. I cried about it. I built momentum and discovered during daunting days of exploration. I found myself, lost her again, and laughed at the beauty of the journey. I spoke in a loud voice, one that was years in the making and I summoned the confidence to risk it all...again...and burn it to the ground, with the hopes of emerging from the ashes a battle-tested phoenix. And I felt calmer than I expected.

Two months ago, I cut ties with reliable income, pronounced paths, predictable promotions, private planes, and bank-breaking bonuses. Two months ago, I bet on me. And I went to bed at night excited about who I was becoming, eager (for the first time) at the start of each day. I felt fulfilled. Full. Focused. Certain.

Two months ago, I ended it on my terms.

Three days later, I went out for a run and woke up in an ambulance. Brain injured. Memory erased. Creative vision demolished. Dreams crushed. Speech altered. Disoriented and disillusioned, I opened my eyes to the end of my new life. The death of my fresh start. The denial of the woman I'd fought to become.

Three days later, I realized the fight was only just beginning when life brought me to my knees. Three days later, I cried real tears that burned my face and blurred my vision as they exited my weary eyes. Three days later, I realized that the best laid plans are, at times, the ones you must painfully and practically cast to the side.

Three days later, my life changed forever.

But today, I write again. I've picked up the pen to see what I can produce. This is my redemption story. Ending unknown.

This is me, bloody, bruised, but brave. This is me not easily broken. This is me, trying...

Whew! I've ripped off the band-aid, and I'm still alive. What a relief!

We're just getting started. And I have some really exciting projects that I can't wait share. Thank you for reading. Thank you for being my safe space to explore. Thank for supporting me. It means more than you can possibly know.

Now, what are you gonna do to put yourself out there? Got drawings or poetry you've been sitting on? Have you written some songs and been afraid to share? Or, maybe it's the compl act of hiding the realest parts of yourself behind a corporate mask. Trust me, I get it.

Today I challenge you to let the walls down just a bit with a few carefully-selected, worthy folks. It stings for a minute, but then it's a pretty damn magical feeling.



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Comments Restacks



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Susannah Brokl Dec 26, 2024



♥ Liked by Malaika R. Simmons

Wow

♥ LIKED (2)  REPLY

1



KC Woolston Dec 23, 2024

♥ Liked by Malaika R. Simmons

You're such an incredible human. I'm devastated to hear about your accident but proud of your evolution and insistence on carving a new way forward. So much love to you and your family. I'm to know you and excited to see what's to come.

♥ LIKED (2)  REPLY

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1 reply by Malaika R. Simmons

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