2. Inevitability

Hello and welcome. Thank you for clicking and thank you for listening. I'm Renée Valentina and this is *Musing Interruptus*, a podcast meant for sharing thoughts, stories, enjoying idiomatic phrases and words in general. You can read along, the transcription is in the description of this episode. The idiomatic phrases are in italics. Try to get the meaning from the context and then look them up to see if you were right. If you like it, share it, but more importantly, continue the conversation.

There is a fly on the white wall. I think it *crapped out* or maybe died, the evidence is the two spots next to the static fly. I don't know if that's what happens when flies die. What I do know is that flies live from 45 to 50 days. As time goes by I am reminded of mortality. Everything reminds me of mortality. I'm going to be forty, shortly. Imminently. Thoughts of morality have been my life since I was a child. Sometimes scared of death, petrified of losing my parents in some freak accident or an everyday accident or to lung cancer. Kindergarten was fun. A great launching pad into existentialism. I learned you are not supposed to reference baby making, there is a right and wrong way to draw the letters M and W (they are symmetrical Mrs. Miller, it still doesn't matter if I draw them from right to left!), I was scolded when using an opera voice during group sing-alongs, reprimanded from moving my hips during group dance---- all preparing me for the inevitability of the rape culture and institutionalized violence I would experience in all the countries I would live out my life.

Me being me, happiness has always been attainable in the face of sadness and loss. It is a way of life, anarchically enjoying what I have, a rebel against angst and optional suffering. The system would have me ignorant and complacent, content with whatever was easiest. I know full well pain is not optional. My personal rebellion to suck the most delicious parts out of life has marked the past 39 years. I have failed, no doubt. *Fallen of the wagon*, gone into prolonged eras of darkness and felt terrible pains. I've fought and lost against staying in bed, crippled by emotional pain. So far, I've always been able to rescue myself, with professional help, and sometimes, with help from my friends. In my experience, life happens in a moment, one event can instigate the greatest most earth shattering, life altering changes. It might be perceptible like a catastrophe, it might be imperceptible and incremental, gentle.

I started doing yoga in 2013 because I needed to get out of bed. I was struggling. I made it to the floor next to my bed and started. That one decision was transformative. Until now, I had never thought of how transformative one action has been in my life. An emotional, existential, depressive crisis, rendering me a quivering blob of helplessness, I only had my laptop and a little initiative in my index finger. I typed in yoga… and found Yoga with Dr. Melissa West. I woke up every day to do a little with her. Other things happened, I decided I would reevaluate my personal and professional choices. I imagined new projects and let myself dream, from rebuilding happiness to a career, I have always started small. I don't know how to do it any other way. My happiness starts in my imagination tied to reality with a burgundy satin ribbon. Probably from the description I read as a child, of a dress with a satin sash. When I've been confronted with scary moments, I have two gears… go gently, you can get through this gently or *balls to the*

*wal*l run through the fire. They both work for me. I am so grateful for the strangers, some of them professional helpers, that have put out tools useful to figuring life out enough to get back on track to what I want, or discovering what I want. Wanting to feel better, get better, eventually took me to the different specialists I needed, a psychotherapist, a nutritionist, a general physician… All of that has worked in a struggle against an ever oxidizing body. Eventually,my brain might crap out, I might get hit by a car as I smile at the sun and think about you or my biological cycle will just come to a natural end. Remembering there is an end has meant making decisions count. Forty seems more *middle of the road* now. I can take a moment to *look back*. Laugh at myself, enjoy what I've done, the love I've made and look forward, because oh what dreams will come, what friends will be made, what laughter will be had, what losses will shatter me? I will need a reminder that I can rebuild.

Sometimes we can foster change, gently, softly, others, change just happens and we have to go with it, adjust, maybe mourn, and rebuild, but never forget to celebrate the good stuff. I'm turning 40, I've had to rebuild a couple of times, I bet that will be a constant. I'm excited about what is to come. Maybe in the next ten years I'll be able to stand on my head without knocking the lamps off the tables. One can dream, and with God and that fly on the wall as my witness, and now you, I'll say that I'll keep trying, because, this will be over, it is inevitable. It is up to each of us to make it as spectacular, loving, intense, or whatever you want it to be. Life happens to us, but we also happen to life. By the way, my little fly friend just flew away. Not dead. Thank you for the inspiration Mr. Fly and for listening to me reflect on what today became relevant as I think about turning forty. Thank *you*, on the other side of this microphone. It is your turn… tell me:

How do you work through change? What about you are you most proud of? Can you trace the biggest changes back to a single decision? What works for you? How would you celebrate 40? Am I deluded to be happy about it? *I'm listening.*