

Sad little patriarch, rubbing his gloved hands together

by [Brett Foster](#) in the [August 5, 2015](#) issue

*"I have been even as a man that hath no strength, free among the dead . . . Shall thy loving-kindness be showed in the grave?"*

—Psalm 88

Some days I feel as old as father Abraham,  
doddering father of a teen-aged daughter  
who last week attended her first "real" concert,  
at the crowded Aragon Ballroom in Uptown.  
When will my own days feel real again,  
the frozen clock hands begin to turn again?  
When will this chemical burning in the veins  
stop, and hope, perhaps, be recompensed?  
I wear this long wool coat against the cold  
that hurts me, covered with two scarves,  
my face covered to avoid any feeling  
of cobwebs, with their every thread feeling  
like a tiny razor blade slicing the skin.  
There is no ounce of benignity in this feeling.  
Maybe that is why the winter mask,  
last week found at Target, most accurately  
resembles a terrorist accessory, all black-  
hooded with eye slits. Were I to wear it,  
I would appear on campus like an ISIS  
recruit, no doubt a proud servant  
in his mind, clouded by the violence  
of the mission and sentence he honors.  
O the necessary horrors, those airstrikes  
occurring in the body's battleground, leveled  
at the cells. If I were to wear the black hood,  
guise of a hangman (not the one hanged),  
I fear that campus security would target me,  
bucolic space locked down in emergency

protocol. That's all I would be: self-terrorist,  
strapped with the various wires of my sickness.