Design Notes: Phoning it In & The Practice of Writing Through Inspiration Highs and Lows

By my standards, for the past month, I’ve been writing/working without inspiration and found myself barely able to meet my minimums. As far as Salt in Wounds goes; a couple posts snuck just barely below the weekly deadline I keep for myself, I have a long list of todos I \*thought\* I’d be done with last month, I’m behind on Patreon rewards, and so on. That wonderful feeling of the ‘winds being behind my sails’ hasn’t been with me. I think I know what it is (insofar as it’s anything); namely, the deep fear (following a trip to the emergency room) that my wife’s health was breaking down and I wasn’t doing enough to help in the care of our daughter and the running of our household. (She’s fine by the way, she had ‘face tingles’ that they did a gamut of tests on and couldn’t find anything wrong nor has she experienced symptoms since).

I didn’t talk about this fear and hence denied myself the opportunity to make all of this an \*overt\* problem that could be dealt with and –instead- I left it gnawing at the back of my mind where the worry became a significant cognitive tax. My work (creative and otherwise) suffered; and this compounded by the fact that I had scheduled out August as a sprint to prep for the Salt in Wounds Kickstarter. I failed to achieve so many of the benchmarks I set for myself, and wasted time getting into cycles of self-recrimination about these missed marks that only \*further\* diminished my output.

Even so, I still worked. I still wrote. I still prepped for the Kickstarter. I still promoted my work. Perhaps not my best work, but enough. And that’s only because I set up the habit of writing Salt in Wounds.

Inspiration is a fickle thing, and while it’s something to be enjoyed when I have it, it inevitably flees... usually when I think I need it most. Sometimes it leaves because I doubt myself, sometimes it leaves because I’m not taking care of myself in some critical way, sometimes it leaves because life intrudes and \*sometimes\* it leaves for no discernable reason at all. But it is my experience that it always departs. Part of the reason that a regular practice is so important is because it keeps me making progress in spite of myself; I don’t need to ‘feel’ like creating because I don’t work based on how I feel, I work based on habit, on practice, on mental ‘muscle memory.’

I’m feeling better now, that ineffable \_ is back and the work flows so much better, more joyfully. But that will fade, someday, again; but when it does I’ll be able to rely on the thickening lines of habit I lay down each to guide me through.