



So I Believed, by Lance Armstrong

"The night before brain surgery, I thought about death. I searched out my larger values, and I asked myself, if I was going to die, did I want to do it fighting and clawing or in peaceful surrender? What sort of character did I hope to show? Was I content with myself and what I had done with my life so far? I decided that I was essentially a good person, although I could have been better - but at the same time I understood that the cancer didn't care." "I asked myself what I believed. [...] Quite simply, I believed I had the responsibility to be a good person, and that meant fair, honest, hardworking and honorable. If I did that, if I was good to my family, true to my friends, if I gave back to my community or to some cause, if I wasn't a liar, a cheat, or a thief, then I believed that should be enough." "Beyond that, I had no idea where to draw the line between spiritual belief and science. But I knew this much: I believed in belief, for its own shining sake. To believe in the face of utter hopelessness, every article of evidence to the contrary, to ignore apparent catastrophe - what other choice was there? We do it everyday, I realized. We are so much stronger than we imagine, and belief is one of the most valiant and long-lived human characteristics. To believe, when all along we humans know that nothing can cure the briefness of this life, that there is no remedy for our basic mortality, that is a form of bravery." "Without belief, we would be left with nothing but an overwhelming doom, every single day. And it will beat you. I didn't fully see, until the cancer, how we fight every day against the creeping negatives of the world, how we struggle daily against the slow lapping of cynicism. Dispiritedness and disappointment, these were the real perils of life, not some sudden illness or cataclysmic millenium doomsday. I knew now why people fear cancer: because it is a slow and inevitable death, it is the very definition of cynicism and loss of spirit. So, I believed." --Lance Armstrong, a legendary bicyclist who beat all odds to recover from cancer. From his autobiography, *It's Not About The Bike*.