# Ch 3 - Talking to Myself

Anxiety, in the traditional sense, is often understood as dread for the future: I am anxious to finish this rough draft and send it to friends for review. Within the ideals of existentialism, anxiety is a tool used for understanding the meaning of *being*. The “phenomena” of being—of existing and whatever that implies—is something many existentialists have dedicated their lives to trying to understand. This piece is indeed a work of existentialism, for it aims to question who we are, why we are here, and what our lives truly mean.

For most animals on this planet, their lives are a sequence of moments unconnected to the grand conception of time and of impermanence. Humans, of course, have this “special” combination of traits and genes and other sciencey-stuff that allows us to contextualize our memories with the present in order to prepare us for our future. The primary consequence of this ability is the understanding and acknowledgment that everything that lives will one day die. We often understand this consequence far *too much*, spending most of our lives doing whatever it takes to escape its ultimate inevitability. But all things die. All things end. And endings are sad. But they are also so beautiful.

From the moment you begin to grasp the concept of death, which is usually sometime in your early life, you begin to feel a twinge of angst in your heart. This is unfair. Life is so fragile. To live and to love—that’s something everyone should be owed, yes? But beings are not *owed* life—life just *happens*. Beings will cease to be, and then…they're gone.

To a lot of us, there is relief in hope. Hope that the people they love stay with them even after they're gone here on Earth. A promise of life after death, given by the powerful men who sit upon marble thrones inherited by blood and deceit, who call themselves holy, who espouse virtue and acceptance—yet the ones who alienate and dehumanize their fellow “neighbors”—are denying the fundamental understanding of life. This understanding is, I think, what gives it any meaning at all. Death, insofar that it is known to be the inescapable eventuality of life, is simultaneously absurd and beautiful. It is absurd because it makes no sense and it is beautiful because despite this, here we are. An ultimate meaning to life is not assigned to *all* beings, for that constitutes a life of predetermined action. If you are afforded no real choices in life, how is it worth living? How is that meaningful? Is there meaning in life as a meat puppet? I think not.