

I have SAD. The doctor said it himself. "Shortfall of Attention ~~disorder~~ Disorder, S - A - D." He spoke slowly to me, spelled out all three letters, then did it again. I gave him what I intended to be a sort of non-verbal "um ok, I got it the first time, I'm not retarded" but my raised eyebrows and tightened lips, and slight unidirectional nod seemed only to convey to him blank confusion. Dr. Hell Ham Gherrani, pediatric developmental behavioural specialist, MA, RCC, MEd, PhD, MCP-AT, I'm SMART - ERTHAN u, summa cum laude from University of Harverdmouth College, or something, is a very patient man. Instead of rolling his eyes or getting frustrated at the inattentiveness of his patient like any lesser adolescent neurodevelopmental disorder counsellor, Dr. Height-deficient Gherrani repeated it slower and slower and slower and I just raised my eyebrows and tightened my lips and nodded unidirectionally in slow motion to match his tempo. I lost my patience before Dr. Hell Ham Jerry Anal did as we had gotten to the point where the letter D was taking him twelve seconds so I waited for the precise moment he finished his deeeeeeee and commenced nodding vigorously. He finally smiled in satisfaction. The kind of smile you give when you ~~gift~~ gift a small child a lollipop ~~and they start~~, or something

I do okay in school. I've got lots of friends. I get decent ~~not~~ grades. Teachers tell me that I ought to be doing better. That I'm really capable of being a straight-A student but that I need to show it to her ~~to her~~ through my work and demeanor. I always hand ~~in~~ in my assignments on time though only because I stay up late the night before it's due. As a consequence, I go through school running on three-hours of sleep on average. If I'm not asleep in class then I'm probably gazing out the window or ~~doing~~ doing something with an intensely focused expression ~~not~~

In my notebook that obviously isn't actually taking notes. It's not even so much that I can't pay attention to the teacher's bullshit, it's more that I want to make it very ~~that~~ clear that I don't care to pay attention. Most of the time I'm staring out the window, I'm actually listening and thinking of ~~the~~ every technical grammatical or factual error the teacher makes. When I'm ~~in~~ in my notebook it's either me writing nonsense like this as fast as my fingers can move so that everybody thinks I'm having an existential crisis or, other times, I'm reworking a math problem or calculation or diagram that I'm fairly ~~sure~~ certain the teacher got wrong. When they confront me about it, I just tell them I have SAD and that I'm like, I have a learning disability and I can't, for subjectively neurophysiological reasons beyond my control, can't sit still and focus or whatever. Some teachers go all oh-my-gosh-I-had-no-idea--my-sister's-wife's-cousin's-friend's-hairstylist's-dog-has-that--, - have-a-two-week-extension-on-your-five-hundred-word-essay--on-the-fall-of-the-Roman-Empire. Other teachers don't give a shit and we go on mutually disliking each other. One teacher claimed to also suffer from and be debilitated by SAD and he said all these very relatable things that ~~I~~ I had always thought ~~were~~ unique to me even though I knew ~~SAD~~ almost 1 in 5 youth aged 8 to 18 suffer SAD or SAD-related symptoms. Then I had a sort of epiphany that ~~it~~ maybe it was more like 5 in 5 and that ... ~~yeah~~ something like that. Unfortunately, Ms. Culpa here, presently glaring at me in between explaining that an essay is an intro that presents a thesis (which is the main point of the essay) and three sub-points which you then explain in your three body paragraphs and your conclusion restates the thesis and ~~an essay~~ a good essay is like a ~~hamburger~~ hamburger... Ms. Culpa here ~~said~~ not only ~~that~~ I

insisted that I seek professional help, but she insisted this to my caring parents, both of whom listened ~~to~~ to her insistence with almost parodically ~~an~~ expressive concern but neither of whom listened to my counter-insistence that I was fine and didn't want to see a — and they were already on the phone to book the ~~earliest~~ earliest possible ~~appointment~~ consultation.

I'll admit that at home I often have trouble focusing on stuff I ought to do, not because I can't or don't focus at all though, it's more that I'll have my focus involuntarily diverted to ~~something~~ something else like trying to extract the ball-bearing from my red pen (successful, messily), trying to write with my left hand among other penmanship related yigloofnot (successful, gradually improving), or trying to write an actually good short story (unsuccessful). Then at 3:00 AM on the ~~right~~ morning my ~~assignment~~ assignment is due or my ~~unit~~ exam I haven't studied for is set to happen, I'll somehow ~~have~~ divert all my attention to studying or whatever it is I was supposed to start doing a week ago. It's not just ~~me~~ me either, I call my friends sometimes ~~at~~ at those hours and they're often doing the same thing. Look, I don't think this whole SAD thing is really so unique to me, maybe everybody has SAD but we only bother diagnosing the people ~~like~~ like me who just happen to not give ~~a~~ a fuck about things not worth giving a fuck ~~about~~ about. Yes, even Samantha over there at the ~~front~~ front of the class who finishes everything a week early and taught herself five languages; she just gives a fuck about things that I don't. Or maybe SAD is a real disorder that not ~~every~~ everyone has, that not everyone has my weird neuroses about coloured noise and hyperfocus. But what even is SAD? I swear to god Dr. High Tan Guyana, if you spell H out one more time... Okay, okay, but what if I am so fucking special, at least 1 in 5

4-4

suggest that  
AH is in bro class  
during nervous system test

kinda special, how is this even a disorder? I feel like all the interesting things I've ever done and all the things I'm best at are because of and not in spite of all these tendencies I'm told but refuse to believe are unique to less than approximately 20% of the population. But a disorder implies that something's wrong with me. As if caring more about the engineering of a ballpoint pen than some trite 500 word 5 paragraph garbage ~~is~~ makes me a societal outcast unable to contribute to the greater good of humanity. Caring less about filling out your dumb fucking pre-treatment patient symptom report form "candidly" and more about writing something that fucking means something, means something to someone other than myself, hopefully. Because, I'm not special, if I'm special then everybody else and their own inner thoughts ~~and~~ ~~not~~ constructing hugely complex and evolving worlds informed by unique and personal experiences is special. And if everybody's ~~is~~ special then noone is. I'm not fucking special so stop making me feel ~~that~~ like I am.

Re: Pre-treatment Patient Symptom Report Form AH

Dear Mr. and Mrs. H,

I regret to inform you that based on the preliminary information provided to me in the pre-treatment patient symptom report form, I am of the belief that your child has a more severe disorder than initially suspected. There is evidence to suggest that your child has an abnormal form of Attention Insufficiency Disorder Syndrome. It is imperative that an MRI be taken immediately to identify any aberration in femoral cerebellum size which might allow us to distinguish this case from Shortfall of Attention Disorder which only affects the pre-frontal hippocampus. Depending on the results, either electro-convulsive therapy or lobotomy are in order. In the mean time, I urge that your child be kept in a damp, dark enclosure for your safety and his own.

Regards,  
Dr. Hetherin Gheirian