Excerpt: Malingerers

I’ve got this thing about malingerers. Something terrible happens in their lives: a car accident that puts them in the hospital for a week, the death of someone they love, a mugging, a break-up, or an assault. They are victims at first, but then they need to see themselves as survivors and take active steps to change their status of victimhood. Because identifying as a victim over the long term is like psychological agoraphobia: you’re locked yourself in self-pity and don’t even try to get out. So you go nowhere. So preoccupied with being a victim, you can’t see the opportunities popping up all over the place.

But if you say to yourself: this terrible thing that happened to me has sucked the life and light out of my life, but I will do whatever it takes, use all my strength, all my resources to get the hell out of the dark. I am a survivor. A superhero who is saving herself from the void and who will win.

Okay, that extended metaphor overextended itself a bit too much, but it is how I feel and I wish I had the perfect words to express it. Bottom line is: I will not be a malingerer. I am better than that.