# Twitter Thread by Jim OShaughnessy



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## 1/ I enjoy rereading books that provided me a lot of insights and ideas on the first go around.

## just reread this, and I highly recommend reading it if you haven't

2/ The author, Paul Kalanithi, was a neurosurgeon and writer who got a stage IV lung cancer diagnosis when only in his mid-30s. He died at age 37 in 2015, but not before writing "When Breath Becomes Air."

It's filled with insights that perhaps only a dying man could see clearly

3/ “There is a moment, a cusp, when the sum of gathered experience is worn down by the details of living. We are never so wise as when we live in this moment.”

And

“If the unexamined life was not worth living, was the unlived life worth examining?”

4/ But, as I remembered from my first reading, it was his last passage that took my breath away. Here it is:

"Everyone succumbs to finitude. I suspect I am not the only one who reaches this pluperfect state. Most ambitions are either achieved or abandoned; either way,

5/ they belong to the past. The future, instead of the ladder toward the goals of life, flattens out into a perpetual present. Money, status, all the vanities the preacher of Ecclesiastes described hold so little interest: a chasing after wind, indeed."

6/ "Yet one thing cannot be robbed of her futurity: our daughter, Cady. I hope I’ll live long enough that she has some memory of me. Words have a longevity I do not. I had thought I could leave her a series of letters—but what would they say?

7/ I don’t know what this girl will be like when she is fifteen; I don’t even know if she’ll take to the nickname we’ve given her. There is perhaps only one thing to say to this infant, who is all future, overlapping briefly with me, whose life, barring the improbable,

8/ is all but past. That message is simple: When you come to one of the many moments in life where you must give an account of yourself, provide a ledger of what you have been, and done, and meant to the world, do not, I pray,

9/ discount that you filled a dying man’s days with a sated joy, a joy unknown to me in all my prior years, a joy that does not hunger for more and more but rests, satisfied. In this time, right now, that is an enormous thing."

Wow! NOW is the time to live; NOW is the time to

10/ tell people that you love them; NOW is the time to tell people how much they mean to you and your life and NOW may be the last chance you have to say and do those things.

Let the power of NOW imbue your thoughts, words and actions, because NOW is all we can be certain

11/ that we have.

His wife, Lucy, quoted Emily Dickinson in her epilogue, written after Paul's death:

12/

"You left me, sweet, two legacies,— A legacy of love A Heavenly Father would content, Had he the offer of; You left me boundaries of pain Capacious as the sea, Between eternity and time, Your consciousness and me."