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The Night I Considered Suicide

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When the future looks more horrifying than death, death appears more appealing than life.

Terror of the Flames

David Foster Wallace said it this way:

> *Make no mistake about people who leap from burning windows. Their terror of falling from a great height is still just as great as it would be for you or me standing speculatively at the same window just checking out the view; i.e. the fear of falling remains a constant. The variable here is the other terror, the fire's flames: when the flames get close enough, falling to death becomes the slightly less terrible of two terrors. It's not desiring the fall; it's terror of the flames. And yet nobody down on the sidewalk, looking up and yelling 'Don't!' and 'Hang on!', can understand the jump. Not really. You'd have to have personally been trapped and felt flames to really understand a terror way beyond falling.*

The Vortex

I once lived with such terror. A dark vortex, its ink-black walls spinning clockwise, threatened to pull me into its mouth. Like an approaching tornado it terrified and mesmerized me. The vortex, of course, existed in my mind, formed by fears of failure and loss. The logic of depression concluded that suicide would best serve my family. My death would secure their financial future and rescue me from the torment of despair.

Robin Williams

All of this came back to me yesterday when I heard of the death of Robin Williams. Those who knew him said he had deep battles with depression. He saw his success and wealth fading. And though I never met him, I'm saddened by his loss. I'm saddened that humor and laughter became the shell he hid in. The shell that shielded the world from the pain of his inner person.

I think the words of the Apostle Paul were written for such moments: "Weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15).