

**All I hope for is to be a bit of warmth for you when there's not a lot of warmth left (to go around)**

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# All I hope for is to be a bit of warmth for you when there's not a lot of warmth left (to go around)

by [Mx\\_Artemis](#)

## Summary

Zam is exhaustingly familiar with the cold. It has always been part of him, it seems. It is a slow burn, and no matter how hard he tries, it does not go away.

OR, Zam, his castle, the cold, and a bit of projection from the author about chronic conditions.

## Notes

this is very specific to my personal experience - POTS, reynaud's syndrome, asthma, and other general body fuckery.

highly inspired by gravity by [immolxtion\\_stxtion](#). i've read that fic many times and suddenly felt an inspiration. title from Boreas by The Oh Hellos.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

- Inspired by [Restricted Work] by [immolxtion\\_stxtion](#)

Zam is exhaustingly familiar with the cold. It has always been part of him, it seems. It is a slow but painful burn, and no matter how hard he tries, it does not go away.

Zam has always been cold, and he assumes, then, that he always will be. He has tried for so long to be warm, and he has always failed. Some days are worse than others, but every day, without fail, he is cold.

His hands, usually. Most of the time his hands refuse to be warm. Zam does everything he can - heating packs, compression gloves, normal gloves, any hot surface (*hot*, relatively to his hands, at least). No matter what he tries, it is futile. It's almost purposefully spiteful, Zam thinks.

When Zam presses his fingers to the metal back of his sun pendant necklace, he feels heat, warmth that burns through the tips of his fingers like it was the real sun against his hand. When that same metal grazes his chest, it feels like ice. Is that because of his fingers, or not? Zam doesn't know. It doesn't matter. What matters is that metal exposed to frigid mountain air is warmer than his fingers. That itself feels like a mockery of life.

It is specifically Zam's fingers that hate him. He has seen his fingers turn various colors - pale white, so pale they might as well not have blood at all (which is certainly how it feels sometimes), blue, *many* shades of red, and on a few occasions purple. Zam swears he could dip his hands in lava and it would barely be enough to warm them.

It would be fascinating if it wasn't so damn painful.

Maybe Zam brought this upon himself, living in the mountains. It's cold up here. Snow is constantly layering the ground, and Zam had known that it would *always* be cold here. And yet he went ahead and built here anyways despite it. It had hurt then, too - his hands burning with cold as he built up the walls of his home. His home that, even still, cannot ease the burning in his hands. Is it even a home, then, if it cannot bring warmth? Zam stopped calling his castle home a long time ago.

Then again, it doesn't matter where Zam goes. He has been huddled up in a far more tropical home, on a summer day, with two blankets on top of him, one underneath him, wearing winter clothes, and he still shivered.

If only his hands were the only things that were cold. Maybe then he could learn to live with it. Unfortunately for Zam, it seems the gods (not just Mapic and Ro) have a vendetta against him personally. His shoulders are cold, along with his upper arms. His elbows down to just above his wrists are fine - but above or below there, it seems that his blood has decided those areas are simply not where they want to be, at any point in time, for whatever reason.

And also his legs. Holy hell, his legs are *cold*. There is no area of reprieve. His thighs feel like ice most days. His knees hurt from the cold - and various other things that he thinks he needs to deal with, but that will happen at some point in the future. His calves and shins may as well be chopped off, because he can barely feel anything from them other than pain, day in and day out. And his feet may as well already be gone, because he straight-up can't feel them.

When he curls up at night and they accidentally touch some other part of his body, it's like a shock of ice. Yeah, maybe there was a reason Mapic and Ro *hated* cuddling with him, and it wasn't just his clinginess.

Being near another person is nearly the only remedy for his constant coldness. Another person generates warmth, warmth that Zam's body can absorb, and unlike his own, the other person's body will keep generating warmth. Zam's paranoia is not the only reason he hates being alone.

Speaking of his paranoia. It makes his body worse. Stress weakens the immune system, keeps him from sleeping, makes him exhausted and has him looking over his shoulder, sure, but that's not all, because the gods fucking hate Prince Zam. Stress makes his body colder, freezes his hands to the point he can't move them, makes it impossible to do anything.

And Prince Zam is always stressed.

If it was *just* that, maybe he could still learn to live with it. If it was just that, he could still find ways to cope and exist despite it. But nothing comes easy to Prince Zam (except for maybe pain), and that includes life.

The gods may as well have made Zam their personal entertainment - *how much pain can a body withstand before complete inability to function?* That seems to be the question they're asking. Zam knows it could be worse, could be a lot worse, but living this way is exhausting and constantly has him second-guessing if he has the energy to do the most basic of tasks.

In short, Zam's entire cardiorespiratory system seems to hate him.

In the not-so-short, Zam has trouble moving. His body refuses to let him stand up easily, because most times he gets up, he passes out. And if he doesn't, there's a few routes his body takes.

He ends up on the floor, hunched over himself, lungs begging for air that should just *be there* but for some reason isn't, because those also seem to resent him for existing. More on that later though.

Or he barely remains standing, vision deciding to short out for a moment while his body tries to restabilize.

Usually, though, he just ends up collapsing on the floor.

Which *sucks*. It generally fucks him up - messing with his vision, heart, lungs, head, and blood pressure all at once! Which really fucking sucks, because his body takes a billion years to recuperate for whatever reason. Zam knows the reason, actually, it's that his body is stupid and doesn't like him and therefore won't work right. At least that's the only explanation Zam can come up with.

But back to his lungs. His lungs hate him too, constantly feeling too small and too empty and simply incapable of working right. And if he bends over, when he stands back up, his ribs and lungs and his spine decide he's personally offended all of them. It's pure agony when he

stands back up. It feels like his ribs are stabbing into his lungs, all of them at once, puncturing the flesh as vengeance while his spine attacks elsewhere.

Gods forbid Zam ever pick up something heavy, because that makes it a million times worse. If he dares to pick up anything heavy, his bones try to tear him apart. His sternum tries to crush his heart - which hardly works anyways - and again his ribs and spine come together to destroy his lungs.

Zam has also unfortunately learned the hard way that inhalers are not the route to take, not for him at least. He'd tried, recently. And dear gods it was one of the worst experiences Zam has ever had in his entire life. He would rather fight Ro and Mapic until the end of time than go through that again.

His hands shook worse than usual, and it honestly felt like his entire body was shaking. Instead of his inhaler helping him breathe, it actually made it worse - his breathing got all panicky and shaky and terrified, because of none other than his heart.

Which was beating at a totally normal, leisurely, not-at-all-terrifying-and-make-Zam-think-he-was-going-into-cardiac-arrest pace of 180 beats per minute. Zam felt like he was fucking dying. He decided not to use his inhaler after that.

And that's just in his chest. His other bones have other things to say.

His joints *always* have something to say, because they always hurt, and Zam hears something pop every time he moves, without fail. Sometimes it's his ankles, and they ache and make it impossible for him to walk without a limp. Sometimes it's his knees, and they make him drag his feet and wince with every step, because every step feels like someone is trying to pick his body apart and put it back together right then and there while he's moving. Sometimes, for whatever reason, it's his hips - like, okay, what the fuck? What the hell did Zam do to deserve *that*? It's painful as hell, and makes him do some sort of awful mix of limping, shuffling, and trying to properly walk.

Always, it's his shoulders. His shoulders are arguably the worst, most annoying, loudest of his joints. His right shoulder in particular complains against every movement. Especially in the early morning, when popping it sounds more like a horrible crack than a normal joint popping noise. For all Zam knows, it's relocating; the flash of pure agony followed by instant relief seems more like fixing a dislocation than anything.

Oh, and back to his chest - sometimes Zam feels his bones move in ways he thinks they shouldn't. He can feel his sternum pop like it has joints of its own, and when he shifts a bit when he's laying wrong there's a striking sense of pain and a horrible feeling that his bones are *moving*. Last time Zam checked, they usually don't do that.

Then again, what does Zam know? All he has is his cold, aching body, his paranoid brain, his dysfunctional and overemotional heart, and lungs that seem to think his existence is supposed to be a fight. Warring with his own body, Zam really doesn't need to fight anyone else; but Lifesteal has never cared about that.

Zam doesn't know when the war with his own body started, but he has no control over it. He also knows that it's not a war he'll win - Zam is not immortal, and one day his body will stop working. Though, sometimes he thinks it's shutting down far too soon; winning this war far too fast. He's too young to have these aches and pains all over his body, too young for it to betray him like this. It's what everyone says, and Zam agrees. His body does not hear his complaints, nor does it acknowledge them.

Mapic and Ro don't seem to care either. If anything, they take advantage of it, use it to score an easy win. Zam is dead weight in a fight against them, but he has no choice. He lost the ability to choose a long time ago, it seems.

So Zam picks up his sword and limps to the front of his base as his joints click in uncomfortable ways. He heaves in cold air, feels it burn in his chest, not enough and too much all at once. He ignores the burn all over his body - his hands, legs, face, that scream he needs to get warm, *now*. He forces himself to stand and digs his heels into the ground to keep himself upright. He ignores the way his body fails him like a dysfunctional machine, because there are no repairs for things like these.

There is no cure for his hands being so cold all the time that he's nearly in tears. There is no cure for the way his joints creak and click in and out of place like magnets grating against each other the wrong way. There is no cure for his ribs clawing their way into his lungs again and again, keeping him from breathing. There is no cure for the way his heart fails him when he moves too suddenly. There is no cure for his failing body, especially not on a server like Lifesteal. Zam will just have to make do.

## End Notes

i might do another chapter focusing on more mental aspects or an elaboration of the whole reynauds issue but ft eclipse federation, but i wrote this over the span of like 3 hours and im very tired now. zzz time

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