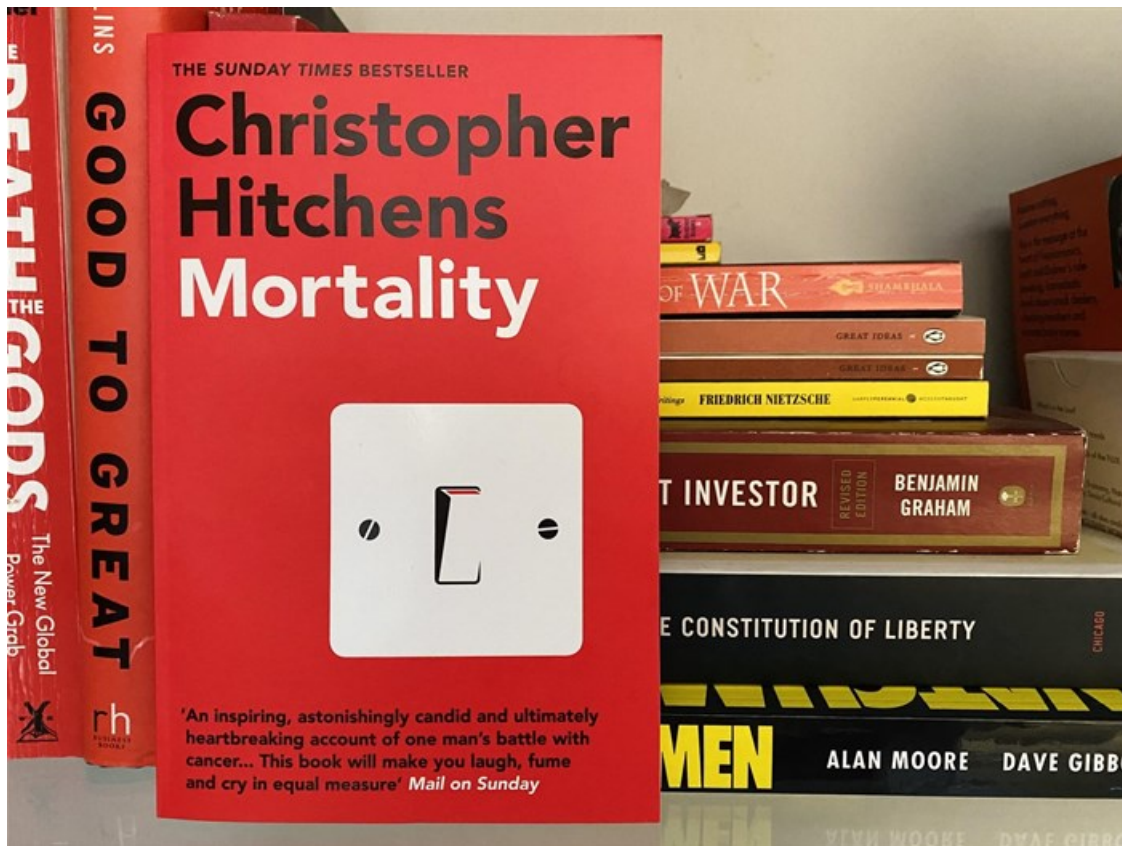


Nothing lasts forever

 By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

19 Jul 2021

Every society is three meals away from chaos - Vladimir Lenin



This week has been a miserable one for South Africa - and much of the world. As the Covid-19 pandemic raged on, KwaZulu-Natal burned amidst socioeconomic breakdown, and Germany flooded amidst environmental change. In chaotic times like these, it is worth reflecting on the *fragility* of our existence.

It is worth taking a good hard look at the fragility of our lives, our livelihoods and our social contracts; and the even more uncomfortable fact that nothing lasts forever.

Not nations, not businesses, and certainly, not us.

Memento mori

With this in mind, I picked up Christopher Hitchens short book, *Mortality*, which he wrote as a series of essays after he was diagnosed with what turned out to be terminal cancer.

Of course, as with everything Christopher Hitchens wrote, the prose is about as close to perfect as prose can get. However, what really stood out in the book is how *uplifting* it is. You would think that a book about impending, undignified, death would be depressing. Far from it. The portrait of a man staring death in the face, raging against what is left of the light, unafraid, can only be *inspiring* to those of us still lucky enough to be living, right here, right now to make the most of whatever time we have left.

Similarly, one of my favourite Twitter accounts to follow is @death_reminder. If you want to be reminded of your fleeting place in the cosmos, I do recommend the daily jolt back to reality.

Ends and beginnings

Knowing that nothing lasts forever can give us a sense of urgency and purpose. We must do what we can, with what we have right here, right now.

And, when things end, however sad and sudden those ends are, there is always an opportunity for a new beginning. Death gives way to life and gives way to death, as is our existence's circular nature.

So, we must be prepared to accept loss; and be prepared to *accept the challenge of rebuilding* after we have experienced loss. Whether that loss is a business failure in the wake of economic or environmental disaster, the loss of a loved one, or the breakdown of a nation. We must rise to the challenge of starting over again, and again.

And right now there is a lot of rebuilding to do.

ABOUT BRONWYN WILLIAMS

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