

Anxious

Anxiety is a state of nervous anticipation. Will it rain before we get home? Will the Dodgers find a suitable relief pitcher? Did we remember to leave milk with the cat? When we are anxious we are out beyond ourselves, in some other place where the concern of action is. We are not militant/happy as when we march proudly to war. We are not muscular/adrenaline as when we go out to fight the world welterweight challenger. We are on our edge, not at our best, without margin for recalculating our moves.

Examples

1 When my wife and my ex wife meet I am anxious. I don't think they are anxious; they may be wary of one another—not sure about that—but they are sure of their status: one the possessor, the other the been there done that. My anxiety renders me mute and nervous. I say stupid things. I long to be by myself.

2 When I travel to Nigeria in the winter I usually leave Iowa when the snowstorms are starting to blanket the U.S.A. No sooner do I get to my local airport than I see screens announcing delays. I pull out my itinerary and see that the time allotted for Detroit is barely going to be enough. I wonder whether I will make the plane for Amsterdam, and if I don't what will happen then. Nor is my anxiety unfounded. Sometimes it is an accurate forewarning.