

Bored

To be bored is to be stuck in a neutral mood, where you lack direction, desire, or interest. It is natural to be bored sometimes. You may be feeling low physically, or perhaps you are quietly recharging your batteries. Boredom is often associated with a vague restlessness, in which you are tickled by the sense that you would like to be engaged in something, but can't find your way there. Boredom is distinct from depression.

1

I am often bored in airports, especially when I have time on my hands, and don't know anyone. I find the airport atmosphere sterile and artificial, not connected to the places or sights that support my normal life. (No familiar books, no TV except CNN, and no refrigerator with orange juice and crackers.) There is a sense of huge planes taking off and landing, but the motion of these massive machines becomes abstract to the waiting individual, as does the endless coming and going of carts, fellow humans rushing to make their gates; while the profusion of shiny fast food shops, offering the generic output of a greedy industry, very shortly erases from me any desire or interest.

2

Although I like children, and like to travel, I am bored by people's photographs of their children or their travels. Such photographs seem to me lifeless, although the person who took them, and is showing them to me, is likely to be animated and expectant. That mismatch, between the viewer's attitude and my own response, makes the boredom created by the pictures even more difficult to deal with. I return to the pictures. Mary on Pike's Peak. Little Jennie riding a pony and smiling. The more the photo shows off its colorful setting, its artful construction, the more deeply I yawn. Photos are not paintings. They are not made by imagination, but by machinery. I have come close to death, trapped in mandatory responses to a family photo album.