

## Pinball Machine

The pinball machine is ready.

Waiting for Life to grab a ball and pull  
the trigger.

Life always does.

Sometimes Life only fires one pinball.

“Percin, the boss criticized you today.”

Boom.

The pinball bounces around a few times,

“You are as worthless as you ever were.”

“Percin, you will always be a helpless child.”

“You are a failure.”

Rolls down the gutter.

Life has many pinballs to choose from, many different colors.

Death in the family,

Bad day at work,

fight with a loved one.

The bounces inside the machine amplify the same way.

“Percin, you really don’t belong here.”

“Your parents should have aborted you.”

“Percin, the world would be a better place without you.”

There’s one pinball.

Down the gutter.

Life just fired two more.

Obstacles may get in the way

and slow the pinball down.

*“Percin, your coworkers do not hate you.”*

*“They knew you were in a hard situation.”*

*“Percin, the look was full of empathy and support.”*

The pinball keeps bouncing.

“Percin, did you see the look on your co-workers’ faces?”

“The same look for all.”

“Percin, they hate your guts, and no one can blame them.”

The machine cannot be stopped.

The pinballs will bounce up and down

and side to side.

No one knows when they will roll down the gutter.

Each pinball must run its course.

Must keep calm and wait for the pinball to stop bouncing.

The way a boxer covers head and midsection

While punches hit all around

Like storm waves against a ship.

Before the bell, before relief.

Distractions are shields.

Exercise is a preferred distraction.

Work hard, breathe heavy.

Lunge! Jump! Run!

The faster the movement, the more the body

Can release Pinball energy.

The way a ventilated area

can release toxic fumes.

Good! Keep Going!

The lungs burn and hurt

Expelling carbon dioxide.

It's ok!

They expel pinball energy too.

But Exercise does not work all the time.

When it does not,

Music and comedy distract.

The pinballs cannot be heard over rhythm and dialogue.

The way a person cannot hear a bystander

chewing food with mouth open and smacked lips

if the ears are distracted by more pleasant audio.

And there are more distractions, by searching.

The pinballs roll down the gutter.

The machine is quiet now.

It will not be quiet forever.

Life will grab another pinball and pull

The trigger.

The pinball machine will start up again,

Sooner or later.

Sooner or later,

the pinballs will roll down the gutter.

The testing time lies in the game itself,

As the balls ricochet inside the machine.