

PARKINSON'S REVISITED

April 2021

Solemn, you concentrate on keys, focus on the door. I ask you if everything went OK. You look straight at me, big eyes, pools of sadness. You tell me the doctor said you had Parkinsons. You lower your eyes, move to pass me. I grab your wrist, you turn in slow motion. I help you take off your heavy camel coat.

A silent scream sticks in my throat, choking off grace, comfort. I feel my stomach drop, gut empty, my mouth freezing on my unmoving face. Now that your wavy hair is gray, you remind me of the huge silver backed gorillas, who fight for their territory until their final loss. You open your arms and we rock.

"I thought you'd be upset with me," you say. I keep looking at him, trying to feed him love with my eyes. I ask him why. "Because I can't keep up with you, because I fall further and further behind, because without you, I am lost."

That night we huddle on the bed. You roll toward me, I cradle you. You tell me you don't want to burden me. I tell you that you are a gift to me. That night you take the medication, the same medication my father took. I wake up to your grin.

"Watch!" you say, walking through the house, "Shuffling gone, shortness of breath gone, clenched hand gone, weakness gone!"

I feel a surge of happiness, pumped up with adrenalin. I say, "Bobby, we're going to take this ride out, stuff it with joy, happiness, speed, power. We didn't sign up for this ride, but we're on it to the end."

We dance with darkness, wild and electric, in the deepening twilight. We are sparklers, sizzling in every flicker, tiny white bulbs strung all around us.

Angie Cardin

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