

The **Red Thread** Poetry Project

Voices of Connection, Hope, Resilience & Community

*A Collection of Poetry Inspired by the
Global Parkinson's Community*

World Parkinson Congress 2026



Dedicated to the Global Parkinson's Community

This collection is dedicated to every individual who shared their voice through the Red Thread Project.

To the people living with Parkinson's, care partners, family members, clinicians, researchers, advocates, artists, volunteers, and friends—thank you for reminding us that while every journey is unique, we are forever connected through compassion, creativity, hope, and community.

May these poems continue to inspire understanding, encourage connection, and remind us that even the smallest thread can strengthen the fabric of our global Parkinson's community.

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A Thread That Connects Us

The Red Thread Project invited members of the global Parkinson's community to share original poetry inspired by connection, resilience, hope, and the invisible threads that bind us together.

Inspired by the ancient legend of the red thread—a symbol of enduring connection that transcends time, distance, and circumstance—this project celebrates the relationships that sustain us through every stage of the Parkinson's journey.

These poems represent voices from around the world—people living with Parkinson's, care partners, family members, clinicians, researchers, advocates, and friends.

While every journey is unique, together these works tell a story of courage, compassion, creativity, and community.

Originally displayed as part of the Red Thread exhibit during the 7th World Parkinson Congress in Phoenix, Arizona, this collection invited delegates to pause, reflect, and connect through the universal language of poetry.

The World Parkinson Coalition is honored to present this collection as a celebration of the many voices that make up our global Parkinson's community. May these poems inspire reflection, spark conversation, offer comfort, and remind each reader that the threads connecting us are often stronger than those that divide us.

Thank you to everyone who shared their creativity and their voice through the WPC 2026 Red Thread Poetry Project. Your words have become part of the lasting story of our global Parkinson's community.

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The Poetry Collection

Voices from Around the World

Each poem in this collection reflects a unique experience of living with, caring for, researching, treating, or walking beside Parkinson's.

Together, these voices form a tapestry of hope, resilience, compassion, creativity, and connection.

May you find comfort, inspiration, and perhaps even a piece of your own story within these pages.

Inside the home that you once knew

by Angela L. Neff

I will no longer be able to walk without focusing on swinging *both arms*.
I will no longer be able to run fearlessly down a hill.
I will no longer be able to eat voraciously *without the fear of choking*.
I will no longer be able to reliably sing on key.
I will no longer be able to dance on beat with wild abandon *unless somebody offers me a chair*.
I will no longer be able to assume *I will complete my to-do list*.
I will no longer be able to take anything for granted.
I will no longer be able to say “My family only has mental illness”.
I will no longer be able to easily read — my own writing?
I will no longer be able to be confident *I can smell that gas leak, freshly baked bread or my B.O.*
I will no longer be able to successfully be red thread cocky.
I will no longer be able to forget to smile in social situations lest people think I don’t like them.
I will no longer be able to say “I’m perfectly healthy.”
I will no longer be able to know what part of my body will fail me next.
I will no longer be able to assume friends and family understand *what it’s like to live in my body*.
I will no longer be able to attend a *new location* without scouting bathroom locations first.
Then I will no longer be able to not plan what I wear so I can undress in time to make it to the damn bathroom.
I will no longer be able to miss the compassion and kindness of my fellow PD-sters.
I will no longer be able to assume my future partner will love me as my disease progresses.
I will no longer be able to count on my body not to betray me.
I will no longer be able to know — I won’t forget — what I’m saying mid-sentence. I will no longer be able to say “Dysphagia? What’s that?” I will no longer be able to fake anything.
I will no longer be able to be heard without speaking with intent.
I will no longer be able to assume I will have the ability to safely carry my future grandchild.
I will no longer be able to believe — I am invincible.

Solstice Pause

by Anthony Hyatt

Seasons of our lives
Can pass us by as we fly
Busy in our hives

Sometimes change gives pause
Reflection on direction
Yields a dangling clause

Where are we going?
Had to ask to set next task
Without much knowing

Change seems to be fast
But with repeats and retreats Questions
forever last.

Our growth is more slow
In phases leaving traces
While we strive to know

Instead, enjoy stop
Confusion be illusion
Yield us a new crop

Artpark Moment

by Anthony Hyatt

Listening by the river's bank
Heron and Egrets squawk
Leaves rustle in the breeze
An insect visits me

What do I notice, see and hear?
Thoughts inside, Sounds far and near
Sounds of a flute and of a friend's delight
Rising water touches my feet

I'm glad I'm here
I'm glad I got up
To my heart it's clear
Nature filleth my cup.

Ephemeral Cadence

by Anthony Hyatt and Cynthia Pegado

Rhythms merge and flow
Sun shadows pause to savor
Exhilaration

Red Heartstrings

by Anthony Q. Rabang

parkinson tremors
finger-combing
her hair red threads aglow

red thread promise
embroidering
love on children's
sweater

Age 90
weaving blankets
for her grandkids wool
of red threads

floating on clouds each
held by a red thread
1000 paper cranes

Making Art Together - at Artpark!

by B.K.

People-to-people connections
strengthening Vibrant communal enjoyment.
Meaningful social gathering
Expressions of Self
Music, dancing, revelry.
Contagious lifting of spirits for all

THE RED THREAD

by Bradford Billings

Tremors start to stir/small waves on a quiet lake/morning
calm is gone
Hands that used to hold/now they dance a restless beat/rhythm out of
time
Every step is slow/heavy feet upon the floor/weight of iron shoes
Reaching for the cup/concentrating on the grip/focus is my strength
Echoes in the mind/whispers of what used to be/fading into mist
Darkness tries to settle/but a light begins to glow/hope refuses rest
Together we stand/bound by more than just a
name/woven heart to heart
Holding on to you/when my balance starts to fail/steady is your hand
Resilience takes root/in the garden of our souls/blooming through the
storm

Every word you share/lifts the burden from my chest/I am not alone
All across the world/pulsing through this crimson line/strength returns
to me
Down this path we tread/connected by this **red thread**/braver than
the fear

RESOLUTE WE ARE

by Bradford Billings

A shadow falls across our common land amidst a heavy mist that stole the breath of all.

As strangers we stood, shaking hand in hand. Awaiting where the silent blows may fall.

Yet in the dark a glimmer started bright, a *red thread* woven through the tearful crowd.

It pulled us close against the night and raised our voices determined and loud.

No longer to walk the path alone, for every pulse beats rhythmic with the rest.

The seeds of shared resistance have now been sow- To put this age to the test.

The thread may yet pull. but it can never break.

As from the ashes, a stronger soul we wake.

Nine “sisters”

by Carol Mcclenhan

Nine “sisters”
Multiply globally
Inform and Reform
Red Threads of Impact

THE PARKINSONS MARCHING BAND

by Carol McClenhan

Parkinsons Marching Band struts into town.

Their annoying presence makes me feel down.

They try to march in my Symptom Parade,

Where odd manifestations of PD are made.

The Symptom Parade changed my appearance

In spite of my careful medicinal adherence.

This fest gives no prizes, no confetti, nor win.

Yet the price for the entry is steep and locked in.

Look! I see Tremor leading the band.

He directs marching music with one shaking hand.

Next come the flag girls, strutting their stuff,

But their lousy coordination is just not enough.

The row of trombones really can't march,

And 5 trumpet players move stiffly as starch.

Their breath is so soft, their horns can't be blown.

Instead they must play "Taps" on their phone.

Now come the drummers with symptoms of fear,

Fatigue and plain tiredness bring up the rear.

Last in line are kazoos used for humming,

Their feet frozen solid, no steps are forthcoming.

This Parkinsons band is annoying as Hell

When it arrives at my street, I always can tell.

A PD band sponsor tries hard to recruit me.

He offers a tuba or says he could flute me.

I make an agreement for joining the band.

No symptoms permitted to get out of hand.

And new rules for playing an instrument badly.

Do the best you can do. Do not perform sadly!

Those without talent may not whine or pout.

Members are upbeat or promptly kicked out

Symptom Parades are out of the question.

Taking care of oneself brought to attention.

If your current PD issue is bad fallen arches,

Become the drum major of Parkinsons marches

Hold your baton however you choose,

March at your own speed with John Phillip Sous.

The Parkinson's Band has now
changed its tune.
It no longer features deep gloom and
doom.

All types of symptoms attended to
"Stat"
Or partly resolved with a DBS Hat.

Parkinson's Marchers have
increased their ranks,
Parading in countries like Sweden
and France.

Band members proudly wear a Red
Thread
Tied onto their wrist,
their ankle or head.

Red Threads denote universal
connection
Symbolize unity, grit and protection.
Together worldwide, we step proud
and tall.
Marching with courage, marching for
ALL.

THE PARKINSONS MARCHING BAND

by Carol Mcclenhan

Meditation Mantra in Red

by Cynthia Pegado

*Red thread whispering
be here now, be here we
are connected*

The Welcome Swallow's Song

by Danielle McCarthy

The silent assassin, already present
nervously awaits; hidden,
like woven and knotted
connecting red threads
destined for what
only time will reveal-
truth already in flight.

All swallows fly high, casting shadows
while dopamine-fuelled,
will soon be cheated by time-
progressively forced to land as
puppets left at rest.

Sometimes like stone
unable to spread their wings wide
can't aerially feed without effort
evolve to nest more often
migrate in song to known places that remain
safe, warm, rusty-red and communal.

Little yellow stones become a reliable avenue
for the birds to sing, acrobat and dance.
When their melodies dim and stumble; when
wings wobble, feathers flutter, clicks of stress.
A series of stringed chirps to the flock is delivered.

The coloured flocks of swallows
have changed behaviour,
suffering, tangled, no longer agile.
Will they leave the nest?
Fly strong and sing?
With the sounds of the invisible assassin
binding **red thread** tightly at ankles
loud and deafening now.

With chorused effort to remain aggressive,
using a collective strength routine to migrate,
guarding time with tricks and movement
Advancing with electricity and care,
they continue to act territorially,
silent in suffering-
These welcoming Songbirds of Hope

Threads of belonging

by Danielle McCarthy

Some people just can't settle right-
Too loud, too different, a bit lost
Never sure where to stand, sit or be in a crowd
Or at a party.
Watching fellow people fit
Together like pieces of a puzzle or
The tightly bound *red threads of a ribbon*
Timing their laughs to synchronic perfection.
Knowing instinctively when to nod,
When to blend in and connect.
But some of us only mimic
With half- formed ideas and thoughts
Show up too early, or late
All forget the rules of belonging.
Still, In a far- off corner of the crowd
someone else stays close
and laughs in a way
that feels homely.
Looking down, a new red thread has formed
Uniting with shared power
That indication of a YES!
Helps us to feel we might belong
After all.

Fight Uncertainty *by Danielle McCarthy*

Like a gang of thieves after midnight,
It looms;
Dubious whispers and silent footsteps
Echo in my mind.
Where light once danced,
Now shadows lurk along the path;
Misty and creepy
Like the sense of shadowy men
With hot breath on your neck.
Prickles rise but are ignored.
I turn around, 360 ° or more,
Fists clenched with the might of a warrior,
Ready to challenge
Regrets, failures, and learned truths.
Only fear resides here.

With my compass of wisdom facing North,
Years of hardened armour
Shielding the depth of my resilience,
Fists clenched in preparation to once again
Fight for the Red Thread to stay strong.
As the darkened haze begins to clear
I find myself again
Standing at the crossroads
I dance amidst the chaos
Embracing the hard-earned truth in the darkness
Gazing forward
Taking each step out of the misty cloud
Into shimmering light,
Each movement shatteringly loud
And daring to ignite
Newfound sparks of clarity.

An illuminated unfamiliar path evolves
As my whispers of fears
And distant echoes of regret
Are replaced
By the deafening roar of confidence:
Rising trust in the frayed and worn strings
I'm joined by my old friend:
Resilience.

Immediately she morphs like lightning
Warning uncertainty
That it stands no chance against
The heat of my fierce self- determination.
As each step taken strengthens me
The fires ignite to my left and right-
Truth prevails and unfolds
Has no limits
Power teaches from within
To once again
Punch through doubts, chaos, pain and troubles,
To hold tight to the strained red threads.

With the grace of a knight
Armed with relentless spirit,
Past lessons fuel today's evolution of clarity-
Anything is possible
When you are certain of who you are
The path you want to walk
And the values you behold.

Danielle McCarthy
Australia

Haikus

by Dawn Tucksmith

Renewal

Red threads light the sky
Phoenixes soar through the flames
To rise from ashes

Stronger

We hold our **red threads**
Each one woven to the next
Now a tapestry

Joy Sniffing Red Thread

by Dr. Paulette Mehta

**Joy Milne was a lady so fair,
She could diagnose P.D. in the air.
She could tell who had it,
and who didn't have it,
just by sniffing behind their ear.**

Life Sentence Tied with a Red Thread

by Dr. Paulette Mehta

**The symptoms —can't smell, constipation, walking into walls,
sleep attacks, brain fog**

**The signs — walks slowly, doesn't swing arms,
no expression on face, hypophonic.**

**X-rays—DAT scan demonstrates dopamine depletion
Accomplices — sister had the same problems, died young,
The crime — Parkinson's disease**

**The punishment — death through slow progressive neurodegeneration
of the central nervous system,
with no time for parole, no bail,
no leniency for good behavior,
and no exit.**

The Salvation-- red thread binding us together in love forever.

THE LONG RED THREAD TIE

by Dr. Paulette Mehta

Why me? I wonder, and then I remember others have it too
some got it younger; some got it older
some got it easy; some got it hard
some died so quickly, some suffered so much
some were so famous, but most were not.
All of us part of a **long red thread**
binding us to each other
in love and peace and harmony.

Remembering

Janet Reno
Andy Grove
Billy Graham
Johnny Cash
Ray Kennedy
Michael J. Fox
Robin Williams
Linda Ronstadt
Muhammad Ali
Alan Alda
George W Bush
Billy Connolly
Ozzy Osbourne

Neil Diamond
Brian Grant
Ian Holm
Bob Haskins
Jesse Jackson
Dave Jennings
Richard Lewis
Leonard Malton
Pope John Paul, the 2nd
Davis Phinney
Glen Tipton
Robin Williams

I AM RESILIENT

by Ed Smith

Neurological disease hitting my brain, how long can I sustain?

I AM RESILIENT!

Movements slow, pain and
stiffness grow

I AM RESILIENT!

Tremors galore, smell and
taste no more

I AM RESILIENT!

Learning to create from works of art, a good
place to start

I AM RESILIENT!

ART MOVES ME is the scene, my sixth year
on Halloween

I AM RESILIENT!

I work on getting ahead, bonding with others on
the RED THREAD I AM RESILIENT!

Whatever life throws at me I can take, I will bend
but never break

I AM RESILIENT!

The Caregiver

by Ed Smith

I'm here to take care of you and your needs
All your requirements, just my good
deeds I will assist and support
every step of the way, Be it a week,
a month, or every day.
Illness, disability, injury,
I'll take my time, not be in a hurry.
Helping you out of bed,
We're bound together by the **RED THREAD**.
Helping you bathe and getting
dressed- That way you won't be
stressed.
Giving you your medications,
Exercise and daily meditation.
Depending on the weather,
We'll shop together
Household chores, paying bills, just
us two, I'll always be here for you.
Doctors, groceries, maybe even a movie
And a Parkinson's class called ART MOVES ME!
Family or friend,
I'll stay with you until the end
There's something else importantly,
I need to be sure to take care of me.

The Red Thread Project Mental Health Acrostic

by Ed Smith

Bringing people together with:

T timing and thoroughness
H holding
E entering a fellowship

R road to spiritual awakening
E entering closed homes
D dependency

T trusting each other
H hope
R revealed truth
E eternal
A always accepting
D divine guidance

M mending empathy
N never giving up
T telling someone you hurt
A advocating for the cause
L love them unconditionally

H hope for all
E encouraging
A action
L leading the way to care
T trailblazing
H healing

My Fears

by Ghazaly Imam

Sometimes I lie awake afraid of the future.

My fear is for myself.

My fear is for my wife. My fear is for my family, and the family I want.
But only sometimes do I want it.

Somewhere in the dark a red thread hums between us— quiet,
unbreakable, even when my thoughts fray.

My fear is also of myself, and of my wife, and of my family, the one I
have and the one I might have.

Still the red thread runs— through what is, through what could
be, through the versions of me I am still learning to carry.

The fear flows with distraction.
the big easy redux, still without levees to alleviate. It brings voices.
Banshees of pain, of grief with its own event horizon. The voice of who I
used to be, before I lost myself.

Sometimes I think the red thread runs through him too— the man I
was— not severed, just rewoven.

But maybe the who I am now is the me who needed to be found.
Maybe the voice of who I was needed to be lost.

Maybe the red thread was never pulling me backward— only forward
through the dark I had to cross.

Maybe I am right where I think I am.

Maybe I am the perfect me for where I am going.

Caregiver, how deep is your well?

by Ghazaly Imam

This morning you saw my rogue. care-free and
laughing as I moved quicker, lighter showing off,
sneaking a glance to see if you're watching.
(*men's health says I workout 18% harder when
you're there*) at least, that's what I was trying to
show you.

But there was a **red thread**
there too— quiet, almost
invisible, running from my
tremor to your steady
hands.

I was both excited and scared to share my
new world. I forgot that you got me into
this universe one where we don't give up.
one where optimism is our sword. one
where our courage is the only armor we
need.
one where the red thread pulls us
forward even on the days my
body pulls back.

I was afraid to let you watch me struggle. trapped
in my body, and your future trapped in there with
me. The red thread tightened in those moments—
not breaking, just reminding me you were still
holding the other end.

Would you eventually give up on me?
Would you grow tired of tirelessly being
my support?
How can I be both husband and
patient can you be both wife and
caretaker

Caregiver, how deep is your well?

Borrowed lives

by Gillian Lacey-Solymar

This illness gives and takes, it seems to me,
But not with fairness nor with equal measure;
Though most who're here accept its tyranny,
Replacing trembling pain with former pleasure.

It waits till all the tumbling grains of time
Sink to the hourglass's lower half;
Then with Machiavellian schemes sublime,
It starts its hideously hollow laugh.

The symptoms in their multitudes arrive,
Each one surprising when it first makes land;
They come together, none alone survive,
Tormenting legs and arms and feet and hand.

Yet bound by silk-spun threads, we choose to strive
To change our borrowed time, our borrowed lives.

My tribe

by Gillian Lacey-Solymar

**As a 14 year Parky I've found
that this illness can make you feel down
but now deep inside
I think I've found my tribe
The *red thread* idea is profound**

Threadbare

by Gillian Lacey-Solymar

He wore a thread of deepest red
And when I asked him why, he said
“Because it binds us til we die
“What a lovely thought” said I
“No, you’re wrong” came his reply.

He looks at me. Too long a stare.
I feel undressed, unclothed, quite bare.
I look again unsure he’s there
Or was he conjured from the air
The hallucination’s gone, bereft
A single thread is all that’s left

It's Bob who said eht

by Ian Esson -I Yan Ayson

Woke up this morning
And I heard them singing
Don't worry be happy
Come on and Smile

Sit and rest awhile
Because everything is going to be Alright

Wake up and you will see
Your dreams did not remain a fleeting illusion
But are realty in this creation

Do not become that dog who barks at the flying bird
Nor the Man who shakes his head- Because he does not
overstand- The power the Red Thread.

No buffalo fighting
Redemption Song is in chorus

Clay could not in the future runaway
And the Fox is punching to end of day

Get up, stand up
With intent
Speak out loud

This the might of the Red Thread eliminating doubt and fear
From my head
(a homage to Bob Marley)

Separately Connected

by Ian Esson -I Yan Ayson

I am alone
Yet I am not lonely

I walk the single laned path
No steps to follow and none do I leave

This journey so individualistic
Yet it feels so crowded

I am often discombobulated
Yet clear minded

I am hungry yet Fed
Separately Connected

By my **Red Thread**

The Mirrored Me

by Ian Esson-I Yan Ayson

The frenzied look in your eyes
That forced smile with the stiff jawline

That glimmer of hope
That grin of acknowledgement

The hollowed stare into the empty void
The heavy heart filled with uncertainty

That focused eye becoming the window to the soul
That fervent expectation of hope

Externally looking into the refracted image of self
Searching for the unnamed Kindred

Holding on to the Continuum
By the strength of the **Red Thread**

The Brilliance of the Mind

by Janie Purvis

I thought I saw a light in the window,
but I must have been confused...

Shutters drooped in the uncut brush as flecks of memories peeled away in the breeze. The foundation, once strong and supportive, groaned as it sagged under the weight of decay.

I thought I saw a glimmer in the window, but I must have misremembered...

As nature whipped hard against the shrinking frame, old boards shook like a coatless beggar in the snow. The empty expression of times forgotten whispered unheard in the obscurity of night.

I thought I saw a glow in the window,
but it must have been an illusion...

No awareness resides in that tattered shack; though it was once a refuge where intellect abounded, where joyful words and steady hands offered love. Today, dreadful dreams and anguish haunt shadowy halls.

As I sadly turned to go a spark caught my eye - A small pile of twigs placed to kindle a fire!

The distressed appearance of the dwelling had concealed the warmth and radiance emanating from within.

Yes! I knew I had seen a light in the window, so I moved closer to get a glimpse...

A striking red thread laced the luminous den; connected room to room and strengthened souls within. Outside, the snow had veiled the same robust support embracing the foundation and extending next door.

Impenetrable traces of the **red thread** lined the roads as new communities wrapped up in its crimson caress. Pooling power and resilience along the way, its force glowed visibly to those yearning to unite!

I knew there was significance to that light in the window,

and I began to comprehend...

I looked back at the house once perceived deserted and dark and realized I had missed the most profound discovery- The thread had ignited the inherent glow from afflicted souls
and the brilliance of their bonded lives outshone despair!

Grateful anyway

by Janie Purvis

red thread

inspires us to
stop and (not)
smell roses- but
we can pretend!

An “On-sloth” of PD

by Janie Purvis

When I’m having one of those days

The red thread helps fight my malaise,

When meds wearing off

Turn me into a sloth,

Friends move at my leisurely pace.

Haikus

by Jerome Berglund

Moving Away

moving away
red shifted stars
needle and thread

Red Arowana

red arowana
its cage beside a window
in the long winter

High Thread Count

high thread count
the hen's talons
polished red

Rebirth

by Jim Eagan

Nature awakens

Dry leaves form a warm carpet

Hepaticas rise

CEREBRAL PALSY

by Joseph Ikhenoba

I have no gold or silver to give.

No diamonds or jaspers.

But this Olive leaf.

Fate has it.

Our Red Thread has crossed.

Like estuaries.

We can write our love stories

On the sand of time.

Well, I heard from the wind

You have been long

On this cross.

Cerebral palsy.

Stiffened neck.

Curved bones.

Groans.

What a peg?

Now, I am here

To cross your lips

To whisper to your ears.

Sweet melodies.

When the bittern

And nightingale calls.

I will still be there

Breathing your air.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

by Joseph Ikhenoba

My tower couldn't get up by himself

Twinkling eyes.

Breathless balloons.

A bird in white says

It's Parkinson's Disease.

Tangles in his brain shelf.

Ruffled feathers.

But in the 1980s.

He was a Robin.

All smiles.

And lay corn

In pigeonholes.

The aura has gone.

Cyclones.

Sometimes, alone with his thoughts.

Now, I am his **Red Thread**.

His solemn bred.

THE RED THREAD

by Joseph Ikhenoba

I do not come to you by chance.

Our *Red Thread* is a symbol of knots.

That bond our wretched palms.

I know your stiffness.

Endless nights,

Staring at owls.

Yet no figment to behold.

The tremors on your groin.

Restless roots.

Slurred whispers.

But you were not always like this.

Fate has its ways.

Sometimes, we are in haze.

So, cry no more.

Beloved.

I am here to dry those tears.

To give you bouquet of roses

Peonies and lilies.

Your breathe in mine,

Mine in yours.

Lynxes crystal balls.

Haikus

by Joyce Monson

Code Words

When were you diagnosed?

Who is your neurologist?

Red thread code for welcome

Daily Practice

Focus intention

Stretch flex stretch flex count the reps

A *red thread* morning

Translation

When were you diagnosed?

In **red thread** dialect means

We meet at last my friend

Black

by Kadeem Golebourne

Black on the attack, black on the rise.

Black is a prize.

Watch me turn black into the element of surprise.

Black was suppressed, black was oppressed,

Black is the power that I possess.

My black I will share with those who care.

My black is so rare although I have shed so much tear.

Have no fear for my black is prepared for those who come near.

Black has found the light to stand for what is right.

Black is the race that came in first place.

Black is beauty, black is strength, black is power, all power to the people.

Black is beauty, black is strength, all power to the people.

Black !! black black black.

Beauty

by Kadeem Golebourne

There is just so much beauty in the air.

It's in the smoothness of an avocado pear.

Do you see it when ants are running up your sleeves?

Do we see it when lizards and bugs are crawling on leaves?

I find peace of my mind dwelling in nature's most divine.

The fruit of our labor looks so refine and the taste is just one of a kind.

There is just so much beauty in the air.

Does anyone care?

No replanting of trees after cutting down.

Then sustainable development has gone straight to the ground.

**We see water running in the stream mix with the wonderful sunlight
beam.**

There is so much beauty to behold. Let us watch as nature unfolds.

**There is just so much beauty in the air. **

Better Days

by Kadeem Golebourne

I look back that laugh at me, and I forgave them.
For when I sow in my distress, I will reap success.
We that were scorned, will labor on one accord,
because the fruit of our success will bring us a great reward.
No longer will we eat from the tree of sorrow and drink from the stream of
sadness.
For we will feast of the vine of gladness and
drink from the river called a brighter
tomorrow.
Never again will we climb the mountain of strife,
because we have found the valley of life.
We use to walk the street of boredom, now we have found the pathway
called freedom.
I have sought the jungle of advice,
so there is no reason to sojourn into the gully called sacrifice.
For this vehicle I have a spear because the hill of appointment is near.
We are going to see better days, for we have reached the plateau of praise.

The Crimson Connection

by Kathleen Featherston

*Destiny is a funny thing a
phone call, a fork in the
road, a simple red string.*

*Unseen, it loops and lingers,
stretching through space and time.
It draws one heart toward another
just like yours, just like mine.*

*Sooner or later, we'll
find the way not by
chance, but by
design.*

*It may tangle.
It may tighten.
It will pull us through the years; the
red thread, never breaking, never
disappears.*

The Coats We Wear

by Kathleen Featherston

*This coat is
heavy, I
wear it all
the time -
every day... every night... every
season... It hangs low,
dragging just above the ground;
its collar cinched tight around
my neck, its red thread woven
tight. I did not ask for this coat,
yet I am cloaked in its weight,
wrapped in what won't let go.*

*When dawn breaks, my day begins.
My coat is loose, unbuttoned, not yet cumbersome.
For a moment, I hesitate
feet hovering just above
the floor; each first step a
challenge. But I must
move forward, so I
march, a quiet soldier
stepping into battle one
step, two steps, three
steps... I take my coat
with me. I wear it all the
time.*

*Hidden pockets, once
empty, now hold small
treasures collected
along the way of each
day:
a seashell from the
beach, a penny
found and kept for
luck, a new friend's
number scribbled on
the back of a ticket
stub.*

*A new friend who wears the same
heavy coat with the same red
thread.*

His coat is a thick tapestry -

*faded woven fibers, once colorful
crimson, now dulled with time.
Bullet holes from silent battles; tattered
hems, frayed from jumping over broken
fences. His coat is older than mine, and
he wears it all the time.*

*Our coats tell their
own stories of
seasons that come
and go, of tempests
that tear the fabric,
split the seams, rip
our souls.*

*And of starless winter nights.
Nothing but dark.
Nothing but fear.
Nothing but questions.
These coats cover our
bodies, yet we still
shiver -
our tremors shaking us to the core.*

*With spring's arrival, we notice the
winds softening while daffodils
emerge from the melting ground. My
new friend and I are hopeful for a
thaw to surround us.
Hopeful for warmth to break the lingering chill.
Hopeful for a
moment These
coats might come
off.*

*Still, we carry our coats into the
summer sun, crushing us in the heat.
A summer of days long, but never lazy.
No rest. No break.
No pause between seasons.*

*Then autumn returns in a splash of color,
bold and vibrant, but we feel the lie
beneath its beauty. Our coats, an
extension now of who we are and always
will be.*

The nights are cooler

*but it is still too soon to
fasten buttons or pull
zippers tight.*

*It is in these gold and
copper days of falling
leaves and change
that we notice a glow
from inside our coats!
Shining.*

*Unexpected
. Defiant.*

*This gift of silver light captures
our attention, lighting the way,
inviting us to walk this road
together. Side by side we are
stronger.*

*The burden of our coats
remarkably lighter as laughter
slips in between us like
sunlight through a crack.*

*And there, beneath the silver,
a single red thread unravels a
crimson stitch from my sleeve
to his. What a twist of fate to
find each other here, bound by
a cord we didn't know we
shared. It's not too late
to see how far my new friend
and I can travel together, in
these coats
we wear all the time.*

The Coats We Wear, by Kathleen Featherston

Beyond the Fracture

by Kathleen Featherston

*Her reflection was fractured.
The mirror broken, jagged,
cracked. She cannot see what
I can the light still shining from
the shards, revealing her
beauty.*

*A drop of crimson spreads
upon the shattered pieces at
her feet.
Her hand trembles.
She notices my
reflection smiling,
ready to comfort
her.*

*I've been gazing into this same
mirror for many years. Our
hearts now tethered, our lives
quietly bound by that single
red thread.*

Remember Every Day

by Kenneth Camell

Remember

Every

Day

To

Hear

Resilience

Even

Against

Dismay

Taught to Fight

by Kenneth Camell

Taught to fight it
The **Red Thread**
Which is blood
Within
us All
united

So that you can

by Kirsti Peterson

so that you can
let winter
be winter

winter is my favorite season
or, at least the time from november thru january

it is when all the birthdays happen . . .

Haakon

Me

Erik

Tania

Lauren

(Max)

Erik

Elliott/Pop

it is within this season that I chose to get married
(and there were lovely soft snow on that day 30 years ago)
and, that the skiing I've chosen to glide through,
and pass that joy along to my boys

it is also the season of my diagnosis
and, the anniversary of my reconnect with a boy I knew since
before most of the birthdays above were first celebrated

it is the season of my favorite holidays – one to give thanks and gratitude
the other to celebrate family, traditions, yet this year will not be the same

i could never live anywhere that didn't have "winter" –
snow, chill, blankets, sweaters

it might be in my dna, in the core of my being,

as I am 100% Scandinavian, well, maybe 98% with a little neanderthal
thrown in

spring is too windy; summer too hot
fall is a preview

to winter, to the mountains, to my home, to my love of getting ready for
the season . . .

Play: What, When, Why

I wake up each morning, somewhat groggily, and then open my eyes to the
reality that is my life, or is it really?

I feel like an actor in a play most days, if I shut my eyes, and fall back
asleep, will I wake up to some new scene, with familiar characters, and a
plot line that is more in line with “what I thought my life would be.”

It is not.

Instead, I am in a “wtf?” kind of world, a parallel universe from the one I
grew up in, or the life I expected, or others had plotted out for me.

I sometimes picture my life as a tree, with the roots familial, the trunk
my steady and strong and sure, and then there is a split, about to coincide
with my diagnosis of YOPD.

That is the when everything EVERYTHING changed. And I felt like the leaves
fell, and I was adrift. Spring and summer came and went; came and went.

Why am I on this life’s path? Why did I take the branch of PD, the branch of
this diseased brain? Did I choose this, somehow?

In describing at dinner the sh** show that was our home just a few years
ago, my son told a group at our last dinner in Barcelona (a group he felt
comfortable with), I wouldn’t choose it any other way . . . I guess I feel the
same, I guess I believe.

by Kirsti Peterson

Why Not Me

by Kirsti Peterson

"I never ask myself that question, why me?" so I told my dad when he inquired.

I have talked within myself, over and over, "why not me?" And, I don't inquire in this way because I feel like I did anything wrong or shameful, that I deserve it in some sort of cosmic karmic backlash.

I would be lying if I asserted that I haven't felt a tad bit of pity for my situation; and I would be telling you the truth when I say I feel gratitude for my Parkinson's disease. I've shared this feeling of gratitude with people over the years- the seven years since my diagnosis- and some of them, mostly the normies, look at me, incredulous.

Why not me? I'm glad it is not my sister, whose dozen-plus years of education post-high school and her surgical skills on the tiniest of patients, would have been for naught, had she acquired this neurological apocalypse, and all of the physical and cognitive ailments betrayed her gifted abilities. She would no longer be able to practice as a pediatric ENT MD.

I'm glad it is not my ex-husband. I would have grabbed hold of his medications, his appointments, his treatment, his involvement in the PD community, as I have with my own diagnosis, and been his strongest advocate, just as I had been with him through 11 knee surgeries, over 30 years, but that is not him. And, as I told him again and again, he can walk away from this dopamine-killer, as if he had never heard of it. Go and live his life to the fullest. I let him go.

I'm glad it is not my parents, as the older-onset version of PD progresses more quickly, and is less adroit to the wonders of some of the good medications on the market. I would not like to witness them suffer, my mom to give up her hiking due to gait issues and balance; my dad to give up his golf game and bowling, as hand/eye coordination failed him. In their 80's, they still have a lot of life to live and give.

And, not my brother, my sweet brother - he is a father, and a provider, and younger than me. No, not him, either.

Why not me? I can and have handled it. The things I have been through, tragically comical on the back side, I have emerged from, into the lightness that is the antithesis of the swirling darkest vortex that has been my experience since 2016. Disease, divorce, the dole, all places of shame and hurt. M1 hold, grand mal, and medical malpractice are all part of my story. Feeling judged, and lousy, and betrayed; losing friends who said they couldn't handle it, and for a time, my family.

As I denigrated, suicidal thoughts, impulsiveness, hallucinations, nightmares, panic attacks, cognitive dissonance, anxiety, even running away, to get away from everything . . . downward, downward spiral.

I felt abandoned, and completely on my own, besides my cats and my son. Lonely.

Then, Covid; not leaving my house for 9-months, unable to walk to the mailbox, a walker, a cane. Physical pain, dyskinesias, getting off a lot of the big Pharma drugs and experimentations with my brain, prompted and encouraged by my older son, home from college unexpectedly, due to the pandemic. Swirling. Grateful for my two boys. Stop!!!

In 2021, I had elective brain surgery - - double and awake each time. Thank goodness this invasive procedure is in the treatment reservoir for people like me, to be able to have a surgeon implant devices that will not cure the relentless progression of neurotransmitters' death, but a reprieve, a respite.

In a pandemic, living just with my younger son, with help from so many, I had three procedures over three weeks; a couple months of healing to let the swelling subside, and then the neurologist turned on the device, and adjusted the electrical stimulators, one on the left and the other on the right, deep inside my brain, until it was just right.

Hallelujah! Why not me? I get to be a part of this beautiful, wonderful Art as Action group. I get to write poetry with THE man of parkie poetry. I get

to dance with the most beautiful, graceful instructor. I get to perform with the loveliest of people.

I get to learn about this disease, I get to help others, newly diagnosed and otherwise. I get to use my penchant for making friends and connections. My palliative care neurologist sends people my way, and hopefully I get to be there for a few people, and make a difference.

And, why not me? In 2022, I have found the love of my life, from a man who I've known for 45 years, swirling and passing by each other in ways that you almost can't make up, and who will take care of me, as my disease progresses. He showed me through his words and actions what it means to be all-in. He has taught me true forgiveness and loyalty. He takes love to an art form. And, without PD, we would not have reconnected. I would have not been able to feel this intimacy and romanticism. He loves me for my truest essence.

So, why not me? As I sit on the beach at the end Venice Pier in California, for the full moon, tarot card reader, along with my Sunday sound bath master, Nikola, I feel grounded to the center of the earth. I am right where I need to be, walking every day along the Pacific Ocean, shoes off, 4 miles. Sunshine. Palm trees. Sand. Waves lapping. Breath. Feeling better than perhaps I ever had, even with PD.

This is for me, bee. Just be me. □ *by Kirsti Peterson*

Living Inside with Parkinson's

by Lara Dolphin

a villanelle inspired by the art of Chiharu Shiota

When asphodels are calling you
I'll do my best to help you stay
Inside the home that you once knew

One hundred miles of thread will do
To halt you on your way

When asphodels are calling you

I'll wrap it red without ado
So we can live another day
Inside the home that you once knew

I'll wrap **red thread** round book and shoe
Round dinner plate and serving tray
When asphodels are calling you

Round bed and lamp and box and screw
I'll anchor tight and set belay
Inside the home that you once knew

I'll grab one end and hold it true
With all my might and heart and pray
When asphodels are calling you
Inside the home that you once knew

From each heart

by Laurinda Lin

from each heart to each
green joy in being alive
the **red thread** of pulse

Red thread at sunset

by Laurinda Lin

red thread at sunset
one last edge of the day's light
not the last of us

Stitching the sky

by Melissa Dennison

stitching the sky

red thread...

summer sunrise

And consider the thread

by Michael Koller Nielsen

The thread I am holding
So easy to break it
With a tug it will snap
Such abuse it won't take it
But a dozen threads twisted
And now it's a rope here
And able to lift us
In spirit and hope dear.

And how far can we go?
Much more than we know\

Some say it's a *red thread*
But some say it is clear
Both can be right if
To this truth they adhere
The thread connects me
As it connects me to you
We're tied to each other
Whatever we do

We must live what we wrote
Much more than a quote

So we both can be right
Consider the string
As a mutual benefit thing
Connects me to you
Cause we're historic
In how we do what we do
In who we'll find supports us
Should we run out of string

High tides lift every boat
Assuming they remember to float

So now we are working
Together, a team
Tied to each other
Our hopes and our dreams
Should I need a hand
I'll tug on your thread
If you need a leg up
Just ask me, my friend

Both relying from birth until dead
On the support from this red thread

by Michael Koller Nielsen

Nurse

by Michelle Benjamin

Healing
Helping
Coordinating care.

Asking
Learning
Meeting you there.

Adapting
Shifting
Connecting the dots.

Supporting
Uplifting
Assisting you in calling the shots.

Red thread

Weaving
A net of support for softer landings.

Parky

by Michelle Benjamin

Mask on my face
Body always moving
Want to have fun with my loved ones
Red thread.

Tapestry of PD

by Michelle Benjamin

Stitch good days and bad
Tapestry of Parkinson's
Held taut with *red thread*

The Phoenix Healers

by Michelle Garratt

Every now and then when embers glow and swirl
A Phoenix takes to flight
Some fly with pure delight
While others with terror and fright
When fear is the theme a phoenix may scream
The cry can be heard from below
The phoenix healers come to the call
Their bucket of water, bandages, blanket and all
Wrapping up this singed feathered soul
Gently whisking it away from the toll
To a more soft and fertile soil
With dexterous fingers they comfort and mend
Giving hope where terror and pain had once been
Many suns and moons circle around
The phoenix flaps its feathers without any sound
With hands rapidly clapping and smiles of glee
The healers say, "It is time to fly... fly and be free."
The night has come to try once again
The healers and phoenix hug like old friends
Its wings stretch out and flap while it's prancing
Rising up from the ashes, it's swirling... ascending

While glancing below... the healers are dancing

by Michelle Garratt

From the author of *The Phoenix Healers*:

I was inspired to write this poem in response to the recent fires. It honors all the “Helpers/Healers” that show up whether it be first responders, neighbors, doctors, nurses, chefs, church leaders and more. These are the Phoenix Healers. Thank God for these unsung heroes who do the right thing.

Broken Records

by Michelle Garratt

Shards of broken records scattered at my feet
a tune once played too many times
worn and cracked in haunted repeat

Hands stiff
fingers tremble
Lines of tears once spent
The hollowed heart once full of dreams beats off rhythm
In one's lonesome lament

Verses of what will be pop
stained rings upon the ground
No song of love but shallow sighs
Pumping life's force without a sound

Lies like nails scratching on a board
a constant verse of deceit and scorn
of once built sandcastle's hopes sucked into wave's swallow
never again to be seen (drift ashore)

What makes one wake to one more dawn
with eyes cast upward in yearning's spawn
as if one dares to write a song worth pressing in vinyl
for mouths that might one day sing along

Magical Red Thread

by Mimi Dollinger

magical **red thread**
unites Parkinson people
both good and bad ways

Red Thread Theory

by Mimi Dollinger

red thread theory:
our destiny is to find
a cure together

Unite or Untie?

by Mimi Dollinger

Does **red thread** unite
or untie? Either way finds
cure for Parkinsons

A hug

by Nethmee Akmeemana

memories long lost
ignited with a grandkid's
hug – **red thread** of love

Hair braids

by Nethmee Akmeemana

my hair braids by
grandmother – a **red thread**
tying us forever

Spring breeze fills the air

by Nethmee Akmeemana

spring breeze fills the air
grandmother cuts fruits for us
it's smell – a **red thread**

El Hilo Rojo

by Paqui Ruiz-Tenerife

En aquella encrucijada, Barcelona, dos mil veintidós, la vida
entrelazó nuestros destinos.

Un Hilo rojo, delicado, persistente, ató su estío a nuestros dedos
meñiques.

Esta conexión ignora fronteras, razas, sexos, divisiones....

Viaja, sin dudar, del norte al sur.

Y con el mismo ímpetu del este al oeste.

Con pasos lentos, cuerpo rígido y manos temblorosas.

Con un juramento grabado en nuestro pulso interno:

Ser feliz, no flaquear, mantener la sonrisa y la ilusión en la mirada Y,
en esta expectación, en el silencio... necesito comprender que su
enlace persiste, vivo.

Cuando cierro los ojos, siento su calor en mi
piel Y al sentirlo, recuerdo nuestra presencia
allí.

Vibrando con fuerza, aunque el miedo me asalte y genere dudas.
Vuestra inspiración y generosidad sentiré al notar el **Hilo** Rojo.

Translation: At that crossroads, in Barcelona, in 2022, life intertwined our destinies.

A red thread—delicate, persistent—tied her summer to our little fingers.

This connection transcends borders, races, genders, divisions....

It travels, without hesitation, from north to south.

And with the same momentum from east to west.

With slow steps, a stiff body, and trembling hands.

With an oath engraved on our inner pulse:

To be happy, not to falter, to keep a smile and hope in our eyes And, in this
anticipation, in the silence... I need to understand that our bond endures, alive.

When I close my eyes, I feel their warmth on my skin And as I feel it, I remember our
presence there.

Vibrating strongly, even as fear assails me and sows doubt. I will feel your inspiration
and generosity as I sense the Red Thread.

Old Father Time

by Paul Dennison

The chill of old Father Time shoots down my neck Like a cold north wind keeping me in
check

My Parkinson's filling me with apathy and woe I can't be bothered and it's starting to show

Fatigue visits, and it's time for a snooze My body jerks like I've blown a fuse

This random body twitch, where the electricity flowed Riding this shock wave, as I deal with
the overload

The goose pimples and the shivers,
Electricity which flows through me like rivers

This **Red Thread** joining up the dots
Increasing the power, and delivered in watts

A lightning conductor trying to find its own earth
So Random an individual like it's just given birth

The aftermath, hoping to find the off switch
Waiting for my mind, to create the next twitch

Nerve endings in series, waiting for the next surge
Tired, Anxious, and waiting for the next pulse to emerge

The energy, the power and a mindset now dated It comes from within, just how is it
created?

My server flickers and is beginning to fade Sparks fly, where ideas used to be made

Cables now intermittently charging my battery
Do I need to reboot my setting back to factory?

My internal server outdated parts now worn
My meds trying to reconnect circuits now frayed and torn

Parkinson's, the rhythm and the rhyme.
I feel the shadow of old father time

Voice Therapy

by Paul Dennison

Nine anxious Parkinson's peeps, please take a seat
There's Clive, Phil, Tony, four David's and a Pete

It's a 5-week course designed to help you speak The toilet is just outside, if you need to take
a leak

It's about communication, which will help your soft dulcet tones Read these pamphlet's and
please turn off your phones

Some of the work is individual and some will be in teams
We also have an interval, Tea, Coffee and custard creams

You're here unfortunately because you talk quietly or whisper
Slow down the delivery rate, your voice will be much crisper

Discuss the speech barriers and why were not heard
Parkinson's is progressive & sometimes the voice is slurred

When we mumble, it's because sometimes we talk too fast
This creates a barrier, then people can't be arsed

Let's start with these tongue twisters, try and give it your all
Peter piper picked a pickled pepper said the parkie poet paul

This exercises your vocal chords; it vibrates down your throat
Try to practice in pairs, we're all in the same boat

Your larynx makes this noise and escapes via the lips
Take a long deep breath, helps delivery and the yips

Project your sound and really work that tongue
Increase the volume, see how far it's flung

Practice these short sentences and increase the pitch
It's great for confidence and the Anxiety you can ditch

Write a verse, then highlight in *Red Thread*
Repeat it out loud and let the noise spread

Feel the vibration resonate across the top of your palate
There are other ways of course, but that involves a mallet!

Any questions, it's important they're voiced
Oh, an hydrate, make sure your throat is nice and moist

Ok, Deep breath, head up, shoulders square, feet firmly on the floor
Your voice once soft, quiet & incoherent, now let's hear it roar

Remember to crank up your voice, but no need to yell
If it starts to disappear again, that should ring a bell

A heartfelt thanks for giving us the choice It's been more than therapy; it's given us a voice!

Voice Therapy by Paul Dennison

Amor Fati

by Pegah Rahmati Nezhad

Amor Fati song
she dances with Parkinson's
swinging the **red thread**

The Dance Class

by Pegah Rahmati Nezhad

Parkinson's disease
the **red thread** ties her to new
best friends in dance class

Felt Christmas stockings

by Randy Brooks

felt Christmas stocking
grandson's name
stitched in red

•

new sock monkey
grandma stitches *I love you*
on the butt

•

Tomato Pin Cushion

by Randy Brooks



tomato pincushion
some needles threaded
by mother

Randy Brooks

Living in the Shadow of Parkinson's

by Rian Julka

Stairs creek, as usual, I strain to hear her speak,
She mutters softly, one two, one two... "Yes, yes, try and you can do..."

Egging herself on, sweaty palms clutch that faded banister tight,
Limping to the kitchen, one two one two, in the midst of the blurry night.

My distraught dream dissolves—water perhaps, she needs water, I think,
Whilst coaxing my tired mind, sleep on, you haven't slept a needy blink.

How selfish of me, I ponder, hiding under freshly laundered sheets,
As I lay limp rather than help, while she snails on distorted, dystonic feet.

Yo, I wake myself up, gruff, scolding my pacing heart,
She's done plenty for you, you wretch—now go do your rightful part.

In the dark, I carelessly shadow her, down the winding stairs,
Her breathless voice urges, slow down son—despite the pain, she cares.

I hand her that prized glass of water, she trades me a knowing
smile, Gee, I haven't seen one of those, I remark, in a long
desolate while.

A smile that lights her brown eyes, sparkles even in pitch dark,
My memory rings—she wore that smile when toddler-me played in the park.

That warm melting look, when she was feisty, fit, in full mighty charge,
Parkinson's—you've robbed my mum of her form, freedom and fun at large.

And yet, like a lost frozen soldier, I see her march behind wounded pride,
A *red thread* pulling her forward—one two, one two—life's wicked joke in stride.

She would show up—it's my violin recital after all;
She got me this ill-fitted suit, yet I stand shifty and tall...

I'm antsy—everyone's folks and grinning grannies fill the crowd,
Ah well, no biggie, I know Bach's Toccata by heart, I tell myself aloud.

Just play it on, one two one two, like mum—focus on your beat, you'll be fine,
But I want my mum to see Bach, and me shine, in this stupid high-school fest of
mine...

My phone rings. Uneasy me answers, irate tone in tow,
Dad says mum's had a freeze-fall—argh, I hang up with a moan.

Today? Of all days—today? What was she thinking? My eyes well up
unannounced,
Time slips by in a trance, broken as my “exotic” name is mispronounced.
I let go—my fingers waltz, Bach pulsing, that same red thread beating calm
into my heart. A far mum claps, leaning on her make-do crutch— chimerical
fiction, my favorite part.

You can do it, you can, I cheered her on in dismay,
Eight scrawly shuffled steps and her feet just gave away...

She froze, fell, let out a feeble cry—must you see this, kiddo, why?
You can do... one two, one two... a marathon mum, I whispered the lie.

My words outran me, rescued us again, hand in hand with futile fear,
She signed up for the New York Marathon—blind faith in what she’d hear.

And boy, she gave it all—each morn, steps then yards then miles would follow,
Five odd weeks, my “uncool” mum went from freezing to finishing—no
tomorrow.

She handed me her medal, betwixt tears, mouthing a drooly “I love you,”
I held her tight—her tremors spoke of fights, that red thread still holding true.

Parkinson’s can be cruel, nastier than Nero,
But mum has set the score straight, steadier than ever
before— mum one (won), Parkinson’s zero.

Living in the Shadow of Parkinson’s
by Rian Julka

Dopa-Mean

by Russ Parker

Dopamine, dopamine You certainly help, but
sometimes you're mean.
You make me feel like I'm in between.
In between nice and mean.
In between a rock and a hard place.
My mood is sketchy and I need me some airspace.

When my tank is empty, my motor runs slow.
Stiff body, foggy brain. I barely can go.

Increasing meds is a limited solution.
Brain and body slammed with medical confusion.

Disease progression it is hard to slow.
Dyskinesia sways you to and fro.

So what to do? Where does one start?
Seek help and learn. Be PD smart.

Stay positive, be steadfast and thorough.
Coz PD's kickin' like a stubborn burro.

Like a Tasmanian devil, in a washing machine.
This is nuts, not on the level.
It's an act I've never seen.

Now I'm gettng back my strength, feeling lean and mean.
I jump in the mix, get thrown in
the dirt, Yet somehow come out clean.

Now I'm up and realize I was down too long.
Now I'm feeling Dopa-Plenty and I'm staying Dopa-Strong.

You're a fearlessly strong one.
We're even stronger in numbers.
Ready to rock as we awaken from our slumbers.

We're hittin the road on the advocate trail.
A global all-star team. We even win when we fail.
We're workin' hard. We play well together.
We're caring and sharing, birds of feather.

We're entwined and joined on our **red thread**.
Waitng for those words that I dreamt of once in bed.

This PD community, it sure has been great. At last,
news of a cure I'm happy to state. Goodbye tremor
and slowness, no more freezing of gait!

We hope for this soon, if not spring, maybe fall.
Keep on living and caring. Peace and love to you all.

Dopa-Mean - by Russ Parker

Muffle That Shuffle

by Russ Parker

Here's a bit of my mind, my Parkinson' Story.
It's a call to arms, I'm not looking for glory.

To a legion of friends in the PD community.
The message rings true with empathy and unity.

From what we've done, the lessons learned.
We know what to do. The tables have turned.

So, let's get it done, connect our threads of red together.
Join as one. Conquer mountains and stormy weather.

Through the trials, the smiles and transformations, we've become an
awesome, steadfast PD Nation.

Here we go.
Sometimes we awaken and the ground feels like it's quakin'.
We learn to walk steady, to overcome the shakin'.

We're not faking it. No mistaking' it.

PD don't mess with our heart don't mess with our spirit.
You may try to drag us down but we're not gonna hear it.

That's right.
We're not high, we're not crazy, we're not drunk.
A little slow to smile, but we're not in a funk.
We're just unique, like the music of Thelonius Monk.
Gotta muffle that shuffle, smooth our stride.
Gonna calm inflammation, so we stem the tide.
Gonna detox the toxins, unclog the fog.
Gotta stay active, not be a lump on log.

We're moving outta the past into the present.
Turning trials into smiles, gonna make our life pleasant.

Embrace the new world that you live in.
Let go of regrets, maximize what you're given.
Be an optimist, an alchemist, a realist.
Build a team of helpers, that's your A-list.
Failure leads to learning, so go on and fail big.
Learn, adapt and grow, the deeper you dig.
Stay ahead of the game, don't dig yourself a hole.
Leverage your strengths, achieve a daily goal.
Grit is not enough you need focus and smarts.
Heart and ability, puts resilience off the charts.

We're moving outta the past into the present.
Turning trials into smiles, gonna make our life pleasant.

Challenge your body, challenge your mind.
Socialize, connect with people who are kind.
Share your story, don't be afraid to show emotion.
Seek help, help others, put your plan in motion.
Find joy in what you do, spread the joy to others.
Let's smile, have fun with our sisters and brothers
Hear the words I have spoken,
Our spirit won't be broken.
PD You thought you had me, felt me chokin'.
You've gotta be jokin', we're comin' out smokin'.
Get outta the way, the beast... has awoken!

Muffle that Shuffle - by Russ Parker

Red Thread

by Samantha Egan

Red Thread, Red Thread
What's wrong with my head?
I stumble, I shake
Can't get out of my bed
Red Thread, Red Thread
I'd like to be wed
But dating's a chore
When you call them all Fred... or Joe... or Tom
Because, Red Thread,
Can't remember their name Is anything to blame?
For this leg that is lame
And this hand that can't write
Take a careful bite
Swallow
GULP
GASP
Whisper
Red Thread
Red Thread Are we in this together? What is the
solution?
I want to get better
Red Thread
Red Thread
Off feels like dead
I may look like a zombie
But I'm still fighting. Ahead
We forge, battle worn knees
Which hold precious cargo
Each one so unique
Red Thread, Red Thread
Don't wish me dead
I'm not easy to look at
Or live with, you said
But hear my voice now, As my head is held high
Proud standing before you
So tall, I could fly
Hear my voice
Hear it sound free
The Red Thread that connects us
Connect us all
Well, that string at the centre
Is our destiny

Red Thread Stories

by Sheikha A.

pruning memory
retelling only happy
red thread stories

Red Thread Sunset

by Sheikha A.

red thread sunset
the engraved wisdom
in father's each step

Dormant Butterfly

by Sheikha A.

dormant butterfly
a red thread breeze
stirs it into motion

Safe Refuge

by Sheila Thadani

Darkness dims the fading light,
As the ocean's surging waves
Shatter the still of the night.

There, lost and lonely,
Only the weeping wail
Of the wind befriends me.

Those that profess to cherish.
Vanish like the fleeting wind,
Leaving hearts to anguish.

Alone with my thoughts, I hear
from **RED THREADS**, words of
Welcoming whispers in my ear.

Red Threads, now my family,
People who are always there
To love and care for me.

I am now with loving friends,
Enjoying caring arms and
Happy hours to spend.

Woven Fabric

by Sheila Thadani

Oceans do not divide hearts,
Steal liberty and lands, or
Slice bridges of kinship apart.

Thread by thread, each piece
Of the planet, sewn with love,
Unravels with selfish greed.

On this modest piece of earth,
Red Threads have together
Trodden miles since their birth.

We share with varied races
A finite harvest that grows
On the earth's fragile space,

Like the sun that gifts its light,
To share its splendor with all,
Honor everyone's rights.

Only threads of harmony,
Can weave the cloth of life,
To achieve that serenity.

Web of Kinship

by Sheila Thadani

Lilacs awaken to see smiling spring,
They voice their delight for sunny skies.
Mimosa petals wiggle their feelings;
They whisper, do not touch, with silent sighs.

Like nature, humans thirst for empathy;
A cup that brims with mellow kindness,
And comforts wistful souls with sympathy.
A sip of its soft amber soothes distress.

Like vines, empathy bonds and ties
The hearts of **Red Threads** to entwine each;
Without warmth, words are empty and trite;
Add a bouquet of love to blossom speech.

Sow seeds to harvest fruits of warm kinship
And reap the gifts of Red Threads to sip

A Day in the Life

by Susanne Bowen

Quiet as the morning air
It does not knock
Leaving silence in its wake
No pattern, or precision
No give, all take

At first, you do not notice
Life is busy as it is
But then one day it becomes familiar
Catches your attention
And you think...

What is this unusual movement
Never seen before or felt
No longer ignored
It has your attention
It is out of the norm

Life has secretly guided you
Down paths ill-suited to your health
Surreptitiously introducing you to
agents
Robbing you of your biological wealth

Stealth in approach
As would be a preying lion
Clever as it is convincing
Each visit is different
And unique in presentation
Its watermark

Suddenly, it becomes apparent
Fingers and legs move in different ways
And when the scent of the roses
Can no longer be enjoyed
We feel somewhat of a pawn
In a game of chess, when

Controlling the center is no longer a play

Time moves on, and more symptoms
Are revealed

Social engagements become difficult
As what once was normal
One can no longer conceal

Adhering firmly to the *Red Thread*
That runs through us
An unbreakable bond that binds us
Determined in our actions as we forge
ahead

We learn that unlike what was initially
believed
Parkinson's is a collection of disorders
A most unwelcome guest

As the debate continues among
researchers
Regarding the role an assay plays
The drive to eliminate this disease
Gains momentum every day

The urgency for new treatments
Rises in demand
And the total number diagnosed will
double
to 12 million in a 15-year span

And for those most challenged, we do our
best

We eat well, exercise, and get our rest
While we wait for breakthroughs to take
place

We adapt, we twist, we turn
We ask God for grace.

Grace

by Susanne Bowen

When life goes sideways
Distractions are many
You think of home
Where friends and family
Extend a hand
And wink, please join us
Just as you can

The mood is easy
You laugh and applaud
Of feats and accomplishments
Otherwise, awed
No calculation, or return
Grace is the way
It's simple, uncomplicated
Live for the day

A lightness of being
Is felt through the space
Genuine and caring
No motive or race
Life can be challenging
So to have such friendship,

Family, and grace
Is a gift beyond all others
Connected and secure
In time and place

In the circle of life
Giving back to others
Is an understanding
Of all we can share
To lighten a load
And brighten a path
A simple routine
A heartfelt task

We rejoice in the gestures
Of those we unexpectedly meet
They address you by name
There's a reason you meet
It's the **red thread** that connects us
You acknowledge in her smile
And grace that binds you
All the while.

Hope

by Susanne Bowen

When long days
Have a moment
Of unexpected joy
That cause you to pause, reflect

Then a smile unfolds
And your determination
To never give up
You believe, might just be
A turning of the tide
The opening you seek

For the yoke is binding
And the question becomes
Will this stress resolve
If I pray harder, give more
Will this puzzle,
Be solved?

One's burden may be silent
Or present for all to see
But we are connected as a community
Despite the lack of guarantees

Hope may present as a kind gesture
Or independence to a degree
But the that runs through us
Although invisible, it never breaks
It provides support for the hope
That we can be all that we can be

SPARE PARTS FOR MY 1953....

by Tony Hillier

Looking on line for spare parts for my rusty wreck
The list was endless, gear box, lights, switches and brakes.
Pistons and conrods, steering racks, grease and oil
I wondered, can I get spares for me, my pains and aches?

Where do I look? What will I find?
The internet's the place, good old well newish cyberspace
Hopefully will get me the bits I need
Oh, so many questions running through my mind.

Like how do I order? Is there stock on a shelf
Friends have had new joints, hips and knees
Alright in hospital, but I've done my first aid
Mechanically trained, surely I can do it myself.

The search page explodes, everything's there
A brain bank, the body shop, prosthetics galore
Bandages, plasters, but what's this?
Your one stop body parts from Messer's Burke and Hare.
I'll order and make myself better, I'm going to be fine
New eyeballs and ears, be rid of hearing aids and specs
The odd hip and knee, arthritis be gone
To cure the pain in my back I'll order a new spine.

New dopamine cells will cure my Parkinson's Disease
Every page has offers galore. BOGOF, three for two
A loyalty card with each Greys Anatomy bought
To clinch the deal, free delivery in a discounted deep freeze.

I'll keep myself healthy, fit and well
No need to give in and take to my bed
I can simply change falling body parts
All held in place with everlasting **RED THREAD**.

One at a time I'll replace each part
I won't mess this up. I'll do the job proper
Instead of a hip and knee I had a whole leg
Now what to do first, the brain or the heart????

Haikus by Tré

observance of life
our never-ending red threads
stretch beyond the break

a bowerbird nest
stands intricately sculpted
red threads of fate twine

humanity dawns
red threads weave the entire world
in one tapestry

Haikus by Urszula Marciniak

Mom's Parkinson's hands
one heart embroidered with
red thread in winter

queue at the clinic
someone removes a **red thread**
from her coat

cool waiting room
child ties a red thread
between the chairs

UN VISITANTE EN MI CUERPO

by Verónica Laura Torres

Hojas al viento, como manos temblorosas.
Imán roto que no sujeta el cuerpo vacilante.
Lápiz convulso a quién la letra no le obedece.
Orquesta desafinada de palabras que pelean por salir de la boca.

Resistencia Resiliencia Renacer
Osadía Optimismo Ofrenda a la vida
Júbilo ante cada batalla ganada
Oportuna orilla de abrazos a la que arribar Después de navegar a la deriva.

Translation:

Leaves in the wind, like trembling hands.
A broken magnet that cannot hold the faltering body.
A trembling pencil whose handwriting won't obey.
An out-of-tune orchestra of words fighting to escape the mouth.

Resistance Resilience Rebirth
Daring Optimism An offering to life
Joy at every battle won
A welcome shore of embraces to reach After drifting aimlessly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The World Parkinson Coalition extends its heartfelt gratitude to every poet who contributed to the Red Thread Project.

Your willingness to share your creativity, vulnerability, and lived experiences transformed a collection of individual poems into a powerful expression of community.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who helped bring the Red Thread Project to life—from those who envisioned and created the exhibit, to the volunteers who welcomed visitors, and to every delegate who paused to read, reflect, and connect during the 7th World Parkinson Congress.

Together, you created a lasting reminder that while every Parkinson's journey is different, no one walks it alone.

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THANK YOU

Thank you to every poet, artist, volunteer, delegate, and member of the global Parkinson's community who made the Red Thread Project possible.

Your words created more than a poetry collection—they created a place of reflection, understanding, and connection.

May this anthology continue to inspire hope, encourage conversation, and celebrate the remarkable spirit of our global Parkinson's community for years to come.

Every voice added another thread. Together, those threads became something extraordinary.

Learn more about the World Parkinson Coalition and future World Parkinson Congresses at:

www.worldpdcoalition.org

