

Parkinson's is no gift, Jim
(response to Jim Atwell in *Friends Journal*, 2/10)

no gift jim
suffering is just a fact of
indifferent nature
another hardship to bypass if not one to bear

not yet three score i heard god gasp
when my doctor diagnosed "parkinson's"
(i could tell she had practiced) it wasn't me
or some part of me headed for shock or denial

god was really stunned didn't see it coming at all

i was just acting in another play the curtain would soon end
playing out the scene "i'm sorry" she said
medical school had little more to offer either of us
but pharmaceuticals i won't take

my parkinson's did not come from god

god hates p.d. as much as i do although god
does not seem to fear it as much

yes jim the disease will inevitably "mature" will progress
"i can't presume good health ever again" you said

yeh
me neither

i'm not a "christian quaker"
p.d. will not lead to "new service new ministry" it will stop
my ministry *cold*
i'm a teacher

we have more losses ahead of course
that doesn't make us unique or even very special

one day
we will give up comforting to be comforted
one day
we will go more silent than the most silent meeting for worship

the silence will engulf us completely

the silence will be a gift

parkinson's is the terrible way it will happen
no gift
a damn nuisance
a cruel brutal enemy
no gift

parkinson's has made me aware
i'm a body made me care
for my body

i think of my body as a dying friend
and it's a damn shame not a gift

god would change it if he could but he can't

my god helps me walk sleep talk eat

my god taught me to take a stool to class
when i could no longer stand
for the entire period

my god sits with me

my god cries with me

my god would never pass out deadly incurable diseases killer disasters
like some evil santa claus

i know you spoke from your heart friend and
i love your "wordless communion" but
it will also be *wordless*
i'm already practicing a little each day

parkinson's is no gift jim
especially not from god jim
i mean no disrespect jim
not from my god jim
parkinson's is no gift

still
i know
how we
feel
jim