

## And Then There's Laughter: By Way of Introduction

By: Leslie A. Davidson

My husband and I are in a relationship that has lasted over 40 years. I love him still. I believe he would say the same, if only he could.

We are not alone, however. We have company. We go one better than a triangle — we are a foursome. Sadly, there is nothing even remotely kinky about our living situation. We share our beds with his and hers neurodegenerative diseases. Parkinson's Disease and Lewy-Body Dementia packed their suitcases full of misfolded proteins and dying brain cells and, without invitation, just moved in. They initially contributed nothing but sorrow and despair to our lives but I have come to understand that, like Pandora's, their boxes do contain some powerful, beautiful stuff.

Pandora got hope and yes, we have that, too, but it is a flighty, feathered thing that comes and goes by whim. It is enough to get us through, most of the time. And for the rest we have laughter, laughter that is robust, and abundant, and often (I suspect) inappropriate.

You might say that the laughter is all mine, that my husband has no share in the humour that sustains me, that my "we" is magical thinking at best... or delusion. I would understand your thinking so, but I know this — Lincoln would laugh, too, if only he could. And the thing is, he always did. He still does.

Yesterday I read him a text message from a friend.

She wrote: Tonight is a meteor shower. C was remembering going up to the dacha (a public-use cabin in our local mountain x-country ski area) with Lincoln and D to watch that year's winter star-shower. They smoked their brains out and couldn't stay awake for the show!

I couldn't read it out loud without cracking up, though at the time, my friend and I would have cheerfully knocked their knuckle-heads together. I read it once to no response other than a sense that he was listening. I read it again and he laughed. We both did.

When I think about the last 5 years, and when I write about them, I don't plan to find the humour or to talk about the laughter but it is, almost inevitably, what emerges. I take it as a gift. So be it.