

## Corners

By: Leslie A. Davidson

Sorrow is a constant in my life, as in so many lives. I give her huge respect but sometimes she gets greedy and takes over more than her share of heart space, squeezing gratitude and resilience into tight little corners. When that happens, a yammering internal critic launches into a relentless harangue.

How dare you feel this way! she accuses. You have so much!

She makes me feel diminished and fraudulent.

What if this sorrow and this critical voice is the intimation of a darkness with which I will have to contend, one day?

Parkinson's depletes my dopamine stores, ambushes my neurons and strangles my synapses. Depression is a clinical symptom, a very common manifestation of the disease.

Carpe diem! she orders. Attitude is everything!

It is the end of Parkinson's Awareness Month. I have read a thousand good new stories... the research is promising.

Hope for a cure! she insists. Box! Dance! Bike! Sing! Move!

She's right, of course. And I read the books and I watch the video-lectures and I do the things I need to do, most of the time. And I am hopeful, most of the time.

Not good enough! she scolds.

And then I visit Lincoln.

One of the care-aides, pulls me aside as I enter the cottage.

"Oh, Leslie," she says, her eyes crinkling with mirth. "I have to tell you..."

He woke late and when she had last checked, he was still in bed. She sat at a small workstation near his room and worked on paperwork, listening for him, one eye on the open door. Her partner went into Lincoln's room, came out immediately and asked where he was.

Isn't he in his bed? she asked.

No! And not in the bathroom either, her coworker replied

They both went into his room, puzzled, already a little anxious.

And then they heard him. He was behind the door convulsed with laughter, fully aware that they were looking for him.

I've never heard him laugh like that! she said, laughing herself as she told me.

I thought I was going to wet my pants.

We had to hold him up he was laughing so hard. The three of us were laughing so hard. It was so great. It was amazing.

I often go in and find him standing in a corner, his always-bent head almost resting on the wall. Sometimes he seems asleep on his feet, his eyes closed, his body frozen. Other times he appears to be watching the world at his feet, the one only he can see.

I think that is what happened that morning. He crawled out of bed and found himself in the corner, behind the door. To his delight, his caregivers showed up and he got to give them a little moment of anxiety.

Wonderfully, perfectly Lincoln-esque, that moment.

Lewy-Body Dementia and Parkinson's have much in common and our journeys may resolve in ironically similar ways but right now his takes him into actual corners and mine into metaphorical ones.

The difference is that he laughs from his.