

Ode to Parkinson's

They told me I have Parkinson's,
and all they know for sure,
it will get worse every year,
'til someone finds a cure.

I felt so alone and frightened
I'd become some sort of freak;
bent over and shaky,
unsteady on my feet.

So I began preparing
to hide myself away,
then thought of Muhammad Ali,
once known as Cassius Clay.

A proud and mighty fighter,
knocked down by this disease,
then stood and lit the Olympic flame
so all the world could see.

And then I thought of Michael J. Fox,
he does not hide away,
but leads the charge to find a cure
for Parkinson's today.

And so I make this promise,
I will never hide,
but live life to the fullest
and set my fear aside.

And though I may be shuffling,
as you pass me by,

I'll hold my head high as I can
and greet you eye to eye.

And if that makes you uneasy,
look closer and you'll see,
I'm the same person I've always been,
just packaged differently.

So when someone is struggling,
be as kind as you can be;
it's not some freak you're looking at,
it's just Muhammad, Michael and me.

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John Tripp
trippemail@hotmail.com



Ode to Parkinson's was written by John Tripp who was diagnosed with PD in 2006 at age 63. The poem was written to help inspire PD sufferers by reminding them that they are not alone, but rather are among a well-known group of fellow travelers including Mohammad Ali and Michael J. Fox who have "made it OK to have this disease."

Feel free to pass this poem on to others who you think might benefit from it. Please get the approval of John Tripp before posting on bulletin board, newsletter, blog, Internet, etc.