

Finalist, Poetry

Life with MS  
By John Grey

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Another day older -  
walled, manacles around my hands and legs,  
afloat in the universe of nightmares -  
clang, clang, clang,  
I'm one of many prisoners who want out.

And let's not forget  
a breach in that wall,  
eyes peering back at me -  
it's some guy handing out pamphlets  
and then the hole closes,  
I retreat back into my face.

My body has stayed the same.  
A bed has grown up around me.  
I run the word "quisling" by my tongue.  
No, it doesn't mean "a duck asking questions."  
It's these arms, these legs.  
They defected and yet - they stayed behind.

Everyone I know is a nurse these days.  
Even the remnants of family.  
Hands feed me like teats.  
Voices can't hold conversations, can only console.

Another month older -  
battened down like lawn furniture  
with a hurricane approaching -  
why don't they tape my eyes while they're at it -  
clang, clang, clang -  
that's my heart banging a coffee cup on the bars to my cage.

People see me as sentient being  
but with all of my time for contemplation.  
No possible distractions,  
I'm a thinking machine.  
They figure, that when a life has no meaning,  
the meaning of life takes over.  
Clang, clang, clang -  
that's my understanding.