



SO MUCH OF THIS IS RANDOM

by Daniel J. Bressler, MD, FACP

A WISE WOMAN recently told me of the great tragedy of her life. Years before, her only child, a son, was stricken with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis as a young man. Before his illness, he had been handsome and successful. He traveled broadly, exercised fanatically, and kept the company of beautiful women.

During the first few years of his illness, he grew increasingly angry at his fate. He became sullen and spiteful with his family, friends, and doctors. Finally, just before he died, as she was cleaning his atrophied body, she asked how he answered the question, “Why me?” As she tells it, something happened to him at that moment. He turned his face to her, smiled, and answered with

a question of his own: “Who else but me?” From that moment until he died a month later, he was a different person. His body continued to deteriorate, but his mind, his heart, and his spirit had become peaceful.

This poem is dedicated to him, his parents, and to everyone to whom life has doled out a bitter, undeserving portion. **SDP**



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*The quip says troubles come in threes
They also come in tandem
Your parents felled by rare disease
So much of this is random.*

*Rewarded with the perfect job
And then the boss just canned him
Dismissed by a malicious slob
So much of this is random.*

*She climbed the slippery pole of fame
And gloated in her fandom
She slid to jealousy and blame
So much of this is random.*

*Please catch the last train from Berlin
They missed that memorandum
Their swirl of acrid smoke rose thin
So much of this is random.*

*Promoted to the privileged clique
To learn she couldn't stand 'em
Break me out of this place quick
So much of this is random.*

*The patterns of your cancer genes
Someday we'll understand 'em
We don't yet fathom what they mean
So much of this is random.*

*She took his silence for goodbye
His notes she only scanned 'em
Leaving him to wonder why
So much of this is random.*

*Helo, fixed wing, water bird
He could fly and land 'em
The freakish fire you must have heard
So much of this is random.*

*Angry words and bitter breath
Despite what we would hand him
He finally smiled before his death
So much of this is random.*