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The Parkinsonian Poems

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Reflections on Parkinson's

At first, before I knew much about the disease,
I thought of Colonel Parker,
Elvis' longtime manager,
which then made me think
of Colonel Sanders,
the chicken magnate,
or, stretching a bit,
Colonel Tom Thumb,
Barnum's diminutive character.
But wait, he was a general, yes?
These military men.
So, for clarity I googled it
only to find there was a real Parkinson.
A Brit, no Colonel,
who discovered the disease,
and though there's no definitive blood test,
we can blame him for lumping the symptoms—
stooping, limping, shaking, dragging—
into one diagnosis that made him famous,
the Elvis-chicken-dwarf disease.

Demise in the Under-Ten-Items Line

Scratching my crusty lesions,
I wonder about the days to come
and my unattractive demise.
Will it include the shaking palsy,
a protruding tongue, and slurred speech,
tumbling down stairs and losing teeth,
or painful organs and a thundering heart?
How about something less dramatic,
like collapsing at Whole Foods
in the under-ten-items line
and being worked on
by store security
to no avail.

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