

12-1-2014

Parkinson's

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SUNY Oswego

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Recommended Citation

Carroll, Cassidy (2014) "Parkinson's," *Gandy Dancer Archives*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://knightscholar.geneseo.edu/gandy-dancer/vol3/iss1/10>

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CASSIDY CARROLL

Parkinson's

She doesn't realize she is gripping the armrests of her chair so tightly until she looks down to see her knuckles are white. Her arm twitches and a knot forms in her throat. The man next to her looks relaxed—already has his earbuds in.

"Excuse me, Ma'am," says the flight attendant beside her. "Could you just push your carry-on under the seat in front of you? We're going to take off in a minute."

She kicks her bag forward. It doesn't fit under the seat. When she bends down to make it fit, her arm flails and she hits the man beside her. He takes out his ear buds. He must think she's done it on purpose to get his attention.

"Oh, sorry," she says.

He leans back again and closes his eyes.

She takes a deep breath and keeps her arms stiff, hoping if they're rigid enough she won't tremble.

She imagines the plane going down, crashing into the ocean or a field in some remote town. She imagines a hijacker threatening the pilot with a knife, the passengers pleading with a God she used to believe in. She imagines going back to a time when she was healthy and content, before the tremors began.

And she believes that crashing with the plane would be less painful than dying the way she knows she will.