

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/1

Cleo Griffith

The Long Embrace

(Parkinson's Disease)

An intimate earthquake
tremors through your body
ripples muscles beyond your control,

a slow-motion tsunami
licks against you,
dissolves your foundation,

standing against gradual disintegration
you brush off, hide,
the chips and pebbles.

Shaken, weakened from the tiny collapses,
you kick aside the too-obvious flakings
from your chiseled exterior,

keep the silhouette stable as long as possible,
deny dust drifting downward,
sluffing-off of old earth old stone.

The unhurried meter of decay
holds you in a long casual embrace,
its lover's fingers
tapping a message only for you,
which you accept
with your usual quiet grace.