Section Editor
Michael H. Brooke, MD

Reflections for November

Vesper Fe Marie Llaneza
Ramos, MD

Address correspondence and
reprint requests to Dr. Vesper Fe
Marie Llaneza Ramos, University
of Nebraska Medical Center—
Creighton University Medical
Center, Omaha, NE
vesper.ramos@yahoo.com

LOVE IN THE TIME OF CORTICOBASAL DEGENERATION

I am holding your hand.

I am.

I hold your hand.

Your hand

In mine.

I am holding your hand.

I do not understand

What is going on with you

I mean it this time.

The doctors explain

But they cannot do so

Enough.

You are the strong man

In my life

My wall, my life

The love, the light

Of my life.

We built our home.

We made our family.

With both our arms.

Both our arms.

And hopes and hearts.

The doctor tells me

It is exhausting

To care for

Someone like you.

I am tired

Weary

Afraid.

But what do I do?

What can I do?

You deny your illness

And it is not you

Just being my stubborn man.

I wish I could

Have this

“Anosognosia” too.

How can that loving arm,

An arm whose embrace

I know too well

Ever be alien to me

As it is now to you?

You carried me

With that arm,

You drove me

Wild—to the hospital

You clapped

At the sight of our firstborn

And at her first step

And at her graduation,

You clapped.

Now you cannot write

After all those love letters

You cannot write.

Nor copy

Intersecting pentagons.

When you made

Our daughter’s dollhouse

With the most perfect measure

And love, and warmth.

I remember.

The doctors say

There is nothing—

Nothing wrong

With that arm.

Remains warm.

But your brain

Does not know

It is there.

How can you not know?

I am terrified

Of seeing

The panic in your eyes

“Where is my arm?”

“Where is my arm?”

The doctor holds your hand

And tells you she is holding it

You ask her

“Is that my arm or yours?”

The student is amazed

A grown man

Cannot tell

His arm is there.

That young doctor
Wrote a number on your palm
And you could not
Say what it was.
She could not know
That was exactly
How many years ago
I first said
I love you so.
And you said it back
Back to me—exactly
How I wrote it.

Neglect is a word
They often utter.
It is seen in the way
You move.
You cannot find
The door in the room
Or the chair
If it is on

Your bad side.
I never knew.
You had a bad side.
You never
Neglected me.

I will not neglect you.

You have forgotten
Your arm,
Yet you still look
To me
And you say my name.
You have not neglected
Me.

I am holding your hand.
I am.
I hold your hand.
Your hand
In mine.
I am holding your hand.

Neurology®

Reflections for November: Love in the time of corticobasal degeneration

Vesper Fe Marie Llaneza Ramos

Neurology 2010;75;1750-1751

DOI 10.1212/WNL.0b013e3181fc27bf

This information is current as of November 8, 2010

Updated Information & Services

including high resolution figures, can be found at:
<http://n.neurology.org/content/75/19/1750.full>

Subspecialty Collections

This article, along with others on similar topics, appears in the following collection(s):

Agnosia

<http://n.neurology.org/cgi/collection/agnosia>

All Neuropsychology/Behavior

http://n.neurology.org/cgi/collection/all_neuropsychology_behavior

Apraxia

<http://n.neurology.org/cgi/collection/apraxia>

Corticobasal degeneration

http://n.neurology.org/cgi/collection/corticobasal_degeneration

Neglect

<http://n.neurology.org/cgi/collection/neglect>

Permissions & Licensing

Information about reproducing this article in parts (figures, tables) or in its entirety can be found online at:

http://www.neurology.org/about/about_the_journal#permissions

Reprints

Information about ordering reprints can be found online:

<http://n.neurology.org/subscribers/advertise>

Neurology® is the official journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Published continuously since 1951, it is now a weekly with 48 issues per year. Copyright Copyright © 2010 by AAN Enterprises, Inc.. All rights reserved. Print ISSN: 0028-3878. Online ISSN: 1526-632X.