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“What a lovely name,” she says to me.
I forget for a moment that the name
Is a disease whose letters conceal
A casualty list of devastated organs.

The letters in her disease are an abstraction,
Beginning words too often inexplicable
To those most afflicted by their meaning:
Acronyms born to dilute out acrimony.

We sprinkle these letters like bland seasoning,
Claiming economy, but delivering obscurity.
Tossing MMN and CIDP, ALS and FTD
In our word salad of neurological neologisms.

Brevity. Now sanctity in the pulpit of medical oration.
Words are sacrificed, beheaded,
Their amputated remains spliced, stitched together
Into a Frankenstein monster: soulless, mindless.

Diseases, treatments, trials: MS, IFN, CHAMPS,
Collegial discourse now a tasteless alphabet soup.
Letters replacing words, terseness replacing thought;
Patients left deciphering our telegraphic speech.

“It sounds lyrical, melodic,” she says - and she should know,
since before her nerves frayed and her spleen swelled,
before her skin grew dusky and her bones sclerosed,
she was a welder of words; she was a poet.

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Poetry in Poems

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