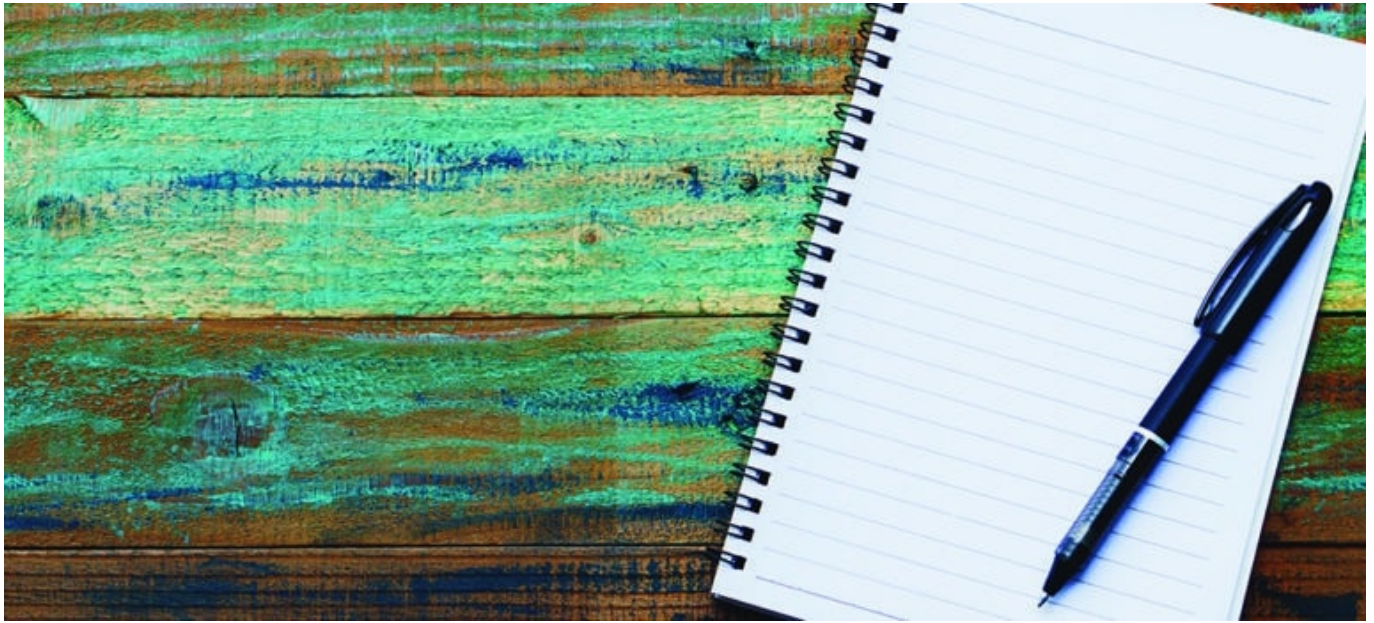


Blessings in miles and meters



The support of my family and friends keeps me going.

by Carolyn Fisher



Carolyn Fisher, diagnosed with MS in 1999, shares her MS journey and appreciation for the support of her family.

My story is like that of many others who live with multiple sclerosis. It was 1999, and I was getting ready for work. My makeup was the last thing to do. But when I looked in the mirror, I felt like I was looking into a kaleidoscope. I realized it was my vision. I was frightened — I didn't know what was happening, and now I couldn't see.

I found my way to the phone and called my husband, Jerry, who was at work. "Honey, please come home. I need you. I can't see. Please come," I said.

"I'm on my way. Be there as quick as I can. I love you," Jerry said. That was exactly what I needed to hear.

When he got home a few minutes later, he led me to the car, and we were on our way to the hospital. They took me in immediately, and I had an MRI and a spinal tap. What the doctor told us was something I never expected to hear: multiple sclerosis.

It felt like a death sentence. Jerry would not want to live with an invalid, and my kids would never understand.

But I found a support group and learned much more about MS. I learned that my eyes had to be trained to see again. I wore a black patch, switching it from eye to eye. My youngest daughter and her friends were having a ball with me. My new name became the "One-eyed Mom'ster," complete with a poem she wrote.

The One-Eyed "Mom'ster" by Jill Fisher Butler

Just call her "Patch Fisher," they jokingly say.

"What's on her eye? Is it here to stay?"

It appeared one day, big, bold and black.

Now it's just fun to give her some flack.

It really is a serious phenomenon.

Which eye should she wear the patch on?

An eyeball and lashes is all that needs to be

To surprise the tie off our Pastor Anthony.

It goes back and forth; one eye to the other.

The retina sees it coming, thinking, "Oh, brother."

Little ones see her coming, they all run and hide.

They only see a one-eyed lady, not the sweet lady inside.

We really do know it is attention she seeks.

Enough is enough! All these hours, days and weeks!

A swashbuckling pirate, her childhood dream.

But she's gone too far, at least that's how it seems.

Winking is prohibited, as is peek-a-boo.

So, what is this "on-the-go" woman to do?

Not allowed to drive, to compute or read a book,

The only thing left is her favorite thing. Cook!

This thrills Dad's tummy, but a warning he must heed.

What happens when the recipe she can't read?

But we know this never slowed her down.
If she donned the patch on her nose, she could be a clown.
But in the realms of reality, we know she's in pain.
The mystery of health is all she wants to attain.
So, if you're up there listening, God,
There's a favor we'd like to foster.
Please give Mom back her eyesight.
So, she can resign from being
Our "One-Eyed Mom'ster."

Fortunately, my sight returned within a few months. My husband learned to administer my disease-modifying therapy (DMT) injections weekly. He did that for 21 years and never complained. MS put me in a wheelchair for a year or so. I walked with a cane for two years. And although at 78, I have reached "elderly" now — as my daughter so eloquently reminds me — I have a very active life, and I wouldn't want it any other way.



Carolyn Fisher's daughter, Jill Fisher Butler, penned the poem, "The One-Eyed Mom'ster."

Six years ago, my husband was diagnosed with incurable brain cancer and given three to six months to live. Along with everything else, I wondered how I would get my injections. A nurse tried unsuccessfully to teach me.

Then, about a month before my husband went to heaven, I had an MRI. My doctor said my MS was stable and that it would be safe for now to stop the injections. This was God taking care of me, as he always had.

Although my precious husband has gone on to be with Jesus, and I miss him terribly, I've been blessed with a great family, many friends, a wonderful church family, and yes, I still

depend on God.

My oldest daughter, Janie Morton, participates in the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's Bike MS with her team Big Banana. She trains hard for these rides, and she puts a lot into them. I know asking for donations is not an easy task. So to all those who ride, and especially to Janie, I want to thank you. My prayer is that someday a cure will be found, so MS can be eradicated. For everyone who donates or who rides, you can look back and say you were part of it.

Carolyn Fisher lives in an apartment overlooking a lake in Winter Park, Florida, where she spends hours writing every day.