

# Now I have MS



by Dana Harrison

I used to be a writer and an artist. Now it's hard to hold a pencil. Now I have MS. I used to be a great conversationalist. Now I can't find the words. Now I have MS. I used to be energetic. Now I'm tired. Now I have MS. I used to feel rested and refreshed and revitalized. Now I don't sleep. Now I have MS. People think I don't listen to them. I do—I just don't remember. Now I have MS. I used to be a violinist. Now my left side is too weak. Now I have MS. I used to be fearless, when things were more predictable. Now I'm afraid. Now I have MS. I used to be in control of my emotions. Now my emotions control me. Now I have MS. I used to make plans and look forward to those plans. Now I don't know how I'll be feeling. Now I have MS. It took a lifetime for me to "find myself." Now I live with a foreign brain. Now I have MS. When I used to get sick I knew exactly what I had and how long it would last. Now I have MS. In 2011, I followed my dream when I fell in love. I was finally excited about my future. In 2012, I found out I have MS. Now I don't know what the future holds for me. Now I have MS. I always gave my best. I still do, but my "new best" is my new normal, not what it used to be. Now I have MS. I'm still a wonderful person with a good heart. People still see my beauty within. Now I have MS, but I am not nor will I ever **be** MS.

**Editor's note:** Many people associate poetry with meter, rhyme and line breaks. However, Dana Harrison's piece is what's known as a "prose poem," a poetic form usually written as a block of text. With its rhythmic repetition of the line, "Now I have MS" in response to all the activities in her life that MS has affected, Harrison powerfully conveys the emotional impact of her disease.

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