

## Symptoms (Multiple Sclerosis)

By Andrew Hincapie

### Symptom: Hemoglobular Introversion

Patient may refuse to observe prep work. Needle and skin, tape, tube, and bandage. Possible fascination with circulatory functions marked with a notable desire to keep one's self internalized. Avoid the isolation of waiting rooms whenever possible. Ask for additional seating during treatment, if only as a secondary witness. Patient may squint at the first stab, turn away at the second, or become frustrated with the third attempt. Good veins on the other arm. You may see an opening up, a pouring out, a mixing with other colors, other chemicals. Trust those other chemicals, for now.

### Symptom: Aggravated Exploratory Momentum

Patient should be allowed ample time to sort out any decision when prompted. This may provide unintended benefits of preferred seating and priority in security lines, but patient will often refuse these considerations for the support of a railing or the bend in your arm. If walking up a rock face in a national park, consider that it will take longer than it did in your early twenties. Refrain from asking for status updates, as your own limbs look tired too, and anyway, you came here for the scenery. Enjoy the slower pace.

### Symptom: Fatigued Promiximitosis

Patient will experience prolonged exhaustion, often after performing common tasks such as walking up front porch steps or shopping for a new bedside table in a crowded consignment shop. Sit down, rest often. Allow patient to place their head on your shoulder. Stay as long as needed, unless they maneuver in such a way as to stretch out the rest of their upper body across your lap. This proves difficult in summer months, if only for the accumulating heat between two bodies. Try your best not to move. This may require you to replay scenes in TV shows as they will often miss important dialogue, especially during garden walks when conversations become quieter and lead to spells of sleeping through entire episodes. Leave a lamp on for when you need to wake them after noticing how late it's gotten.

### Symptom: Acute Tactile Response

Glimpses of impending mortality may incite a number of responses as patient adapts to new conditions. Patient may repeatedly reach out to someone caught in a coastal storm surge or closely monitor the swelling in a dog's ear, fully intending to drive straight into the floods or to

drain the ruptured blood vessel with their own hands. This can grow to encompass the challenges of a global indifference that may dwarf the particulars of an illness, and may often completely overshadow a poor swimming record or a lightheaded reaction to veins. Patient may feel overwhelmed. Patient may wish for more.

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**Andrew Hincapie received an MFA from Texas State University, where he was co-editor of Front Porch Journal and Southwestern American Literature. His work has been featured or is forthcoming in Yes Yes Books' Vinyl Poetry, The New Guard Review, Opossum, and The Written River, and he was a finalist for the 2017 Knightville Poetry Prize. He lives in Colorado with his wife and his dog, Rocko.**

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