

Still I Rise in Color

By Katie Haynes

I don't wake to silence—I wake to alarms,
To heartbeats that race and limbs that disarm.
My body moves on rules of its own,
But I've built a life from the strength I've grown.

Chronic illness doesn't define me whole,
It fuels my mission, my fire, my role.
With every flare and every fall,
I rise, I lead—I answer the call.

AGG is rare, dysautonomia too,
But rare is not weak—it's simply a view
From a different place, where I've learned to see
That strength wears braces, and grace has a fee.

I've built something real through the struggle I know,
Smiling While Sending Hope continues to grow.
Care packages, crafts, events that connect—
This isn't just service, it's earned respect.

They may see tubes, or a mobility aid,
But I see the impact of the hope I've made.
Through every barrier, every door,
I turn the "can't" into "there's more."

I'm not a story of pity or pain—
I'm the architect of joy that remains.
So let the world stare—I've got a voice,
And I've made surviving my choice.

Because rising isn't just what I do,
It's the legacy I build and give to you.
In color, in truth, in every stride—
I live with power. And I rise with pride.