

# What Am I Truly Feeling?

By: Regis Kleiss

What am I truly feeling?  
the loss of the muscles  
from my neck down to my toes  
my grip weakening day by day  
as my dexterity  
slowly starts to slip away  
the struggling to breathe  
when even the smallest odors wander by  
the voice that now fights  
just to be heard or understood  
my mammoth legs  
that once lifted the back end of a car  
have now been reduced  
to barely being able  
to lift my own weight  
using a walker or worse the wheelchair  
where ever I want to go  
hearing day in and day out  
that someone should take my car keys  
and strip my last form of independence away  
the knowing I can no longer be the strong friend  
at least in the physical state  
but I never truly understood  
what being a strong person really means  
I have people look at me  
and in the truest deepest most meaningful way possible  
tell me I'm the strongest person they know  
how can I be?  
Inside I'm breaking and falling deeper  
deeper into myself  
I feel the pain of my pride,  
slowly drifting away from me  
The life I am now forced to lead,  
Seeing my world in a different light,  
how do I ever overcome this endless night?  
knowing I now have to fight just to live,  
a fight in which I can never stop swinging  
hitting as hard as I can to prolong the inevitable  
and when I'm around friends and family  
It is a battle I never fear I'll lose  
but yet when I'm alone  
as I sit and think to myself  
before I drift off to dream  
I always look down on my life  
and it is in this moment  
I find I am at my weakest  
It's when my tears truly start to fall  
I can't fully bring myself to believe  
that this is the life I have been dealt  
all the good I've done  
and all the people I've helped  
It's truly unreal to sit here and think  
that a year ago I was completely untouchable  
ready for anything and everything  
knowing I had the world in my hands  
and now I have to plan my every move  
where I'm going  
who I'm meeting



Regis Kleiss and  
his niece Elizabeth

*Regis Kleiss lives in Royal Oak, MI. A self-taught poet, Regis has written more than 200 poems that touch on a myriad of topics. This poem expresses his feelings about being diagnosed with ALS this year at age 25.*

*Regis is a 2003 graduate from Dondero High School. While at Dondero he was Captain of the Track Team and a star team member. Additionally, Regis is an Eagle Scout from Troop 1707, and is currently an adult member of the Troop and a member with Venture Crew 1769. For the past six years Regis has coached track as well.*

what I'm doing  
will I be able to even participate in what we do  
wheelchair or walker  
will I even be able to get into the building  
what will I sit on  
the stress I go through worrying  
makes me rethink most of my life and what I do  
And no one can truly understand the way I feel,  
or what I'm dealing with  
and the friends I keep losin,  
I really haven't forgotten,  
the love I have lost and the love that's still there,  
but in all this sadness  
and all the pain I am now faced with  
I do have many people  
that are standing firmly by my side  
people that I'm so lucky to have,  
the people I really do love and trust,  
They give me the strength to carry on,  
and bring me back when my mind is gone.  
they pull me up whenever I'm down,  
and give me a place when I'm truly turned around.  
The world has shown me where I need to stand,  
and the road I must now walk down  
but I now know down deep in my heart  
that I can't handle everything with just my one hand.  
So I thank God for all the love in my life,  
And I can only pray  
for the people I need,  
the many people who love and treasure my friendship,  
to always hold me and keep me strong  
My thoughts and prayers always turn to them,  
for they have life just as hard as I do  
to stand by and watch me fight  
knowing there is little they can do  
to ease my pain and my strife  
No longer do I feel all alone on my sinking ship.  
I feel love loving hands  
the hands that hold my heavy head up  
the hands that are there with the light touch  
not to help to much  
but to give me ability to stare this right In the face  
and making me see  
the happiness that my world still holds  
and that my life is not ending  
but more starting a new beginning  
another whole new chapter  
for me to learn and adapt to  
and slow down  
to take in the beauty of the world  
and make the most  
of all the time that I have left.



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