

# Forces

---

Volume 2023

Article 17

---

4-10-2023

## Butterfly and Pink Flower

Ann Tilger

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces>

---

### Recommended Citation

Tilger, Ann (2023) "Butterfly and Pink Flower," *Forces*: Vol. 2023, Article 17.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2023/iss1/17>

This Photograph is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Collin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forces by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Collin. For more information, please contact [mtomlin@collin.edu](mailto:mtomlin@collin.edu).



**Butterfly and Pink Flower**

Ann Tilger

It became clear very quickly that,  
whatever I had, it was rare.

our interaction with a disclaimer that I had tics. Eventually, however, I learned that it was best to simply let people be confused. When I stopped explaining myself and started presenting myself confidently, I found that the frequency of the questions decreased significantly. At the same time, I developed a very laid-back personality and sense of humor, which is often necessary for survival when you have such a potentially isolating condition. In response to this, people seemed less worried about walking on eggshells around me, and the previously concerned questions turned to curious ones. Just as I began to feel really comfortable in my skin, it was time to move on to step four.

#### **Step Four: Wait, what was that thing about breathing?**

In mid-December of 2021, following a period of stress and sleeplessness, I experienced another attack, this time significantly more severe than the last. I quickly became extremely lightheaded and weak. I simply had to lie down and focus on trying to breathe, eventually being hooked up to an oxygen machine. For days, I was completely incapacitated. It took me months to feel somewhat normal again, but I don't think I ever truly recovered.

At this point, I knew something was very wrong. I had heard of extreme cases of Tourette's, but this felt different somehow. So, I began researching. For hours, I scoured medical journals describing dozens of different movement disorders. Only a few sounded anything like what I had been experiencing. Hours turned into days which turned into weeks. My brain was constantly rotating through a list of potential leads and keywords: myoclonus, dystonia, myokymia, dyskinesia, ataxia. It became clear very quickly that, whatever I had, it was rare.