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**MEDIA CONTACT: Tamara Kaye Sellman**  
**206.618.7348**  
**tkswriter@gmail.com**

## **Local Health Columnist Tamara Sellman Releases Debut Medical Memoir**

*What would you do if you woke up to discover you could no longer read? Tamara Sellman of Kingston, WA wrote a book chronicling life five years following her MS diagnosis at age 47.*

KINGSTON, WA (January 2021)—Healthcare columnist Tamara Sellman has released her debut book, *Intention Tremor: A Hybrid Collection*. The popular columnist, who specializes in sleep health and chronic illness topics, wrote the book to bridge a literature gap following diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) in 2013.

“There are lots of books about living with MS,” she said. “But very few which approach it through the lens of creative writing.” As a patient advocate, she strongly supports creative writing to illuminate the realities that people with chronic illnesses face.

Sellman is a career poet and writer who’s published creative work since the mid-1990s. She sought solace in poetry and personal writing about MS, only to discover very few books accomplished this.

“I wrote my book to capture my lived experience to help others deal with the early stresses of diagnosis,” she said. “So much of the human element of living with a chronic illness is lost in the clinical texts and guidebooks.”

Sellman was diagnosed with MS the year she attended an intensive program in polysomnography (sleep technology) at Highline Community College in Des Moines. One morning during finals week, she opened her sleep medicine text to discover she could see, but she could no longer read.

“Having been a lifelong writer with a previous career in editing and publishing, this was terrifying to me,” she said. “Everything I do in life requires reading. It was terrifying, as bad as if I’d lost my ability to walk.”

She sought medical attention immediately. Within two days, she received a preliminary diagnosis of MS. Six weeks later, Dr. Mariko Kita at the Neuroscience Institute at Virginia Mason in Seattle confirmed her diagnosis.

While her vision loss was temporary, Sellman’s MS is not. MS is an incurable progressive neurological disease. Treatments aim to halt progression and ease symptoms due to permanent damage in the brain and spinal cord.

Writing *Intention Tremor* has been empowering, she said. The book gathers formal poetry, free verse, prose poems, flash essays, and other experimental nonfiction to explore her journey. Topics include living with unusual symptoms, unraveling root cause, dealing with ableism, and monitoring research tactics.

Local poet and author Jeannine Hall Gailey writes of *Intention Tremor*: “Sellman’s intelligence and experience as a prose writer comes through (with) poems that bristle with scientific accuracy (and) prose pieces that border on dreamy intensity and longing.” Book sales benefit the Accelerated Cure Project ([www.acceleratedcure.org](http://www.acceleratedcure.org)).

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Washington state native Tamara Kaye Sellman is a sleep health educator (CCSH) and technologist (RPSGT) who has written about sleep disorders, chronic illness, and MS for several columns and websites since 2015.

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**CNT: Tamara Sellman ([tkswriter@gmail.com](mailto:tkswriter@gmail.com) or 206.618.7348) to request a review copy of *Intention Tremor: A Hybrid Collection* (MoonPath Press, 2021) or to schedule an interview or virtual event. Visit [www.tksellman.com](http://www.tksellman.com) or <https://moonpathpress.com/TamaraSellman.htm> for more information.**