"His Mind Will Remain Clear Until the End!"

by Tessa Nelson-Humphries

Man in white coat monitors his watch as if taking its systole and diastole.
Scans me. Delivers with professional panache
data that the Myelogram reveals. Your time, my love, is fractured.
My mind fibrillates. Disjointedly I chart my watch, an Omega.
Omega! Curious twenty-fourth letter of the Greek alphabet
    symbolizing the last of a series. Meaning the end.
It was in Athens that you first suddenly stumbled and fell,
    looking at plinths dangerously weakened by . . . time.
"Time?" My query is pure Librium. Befits one schooled not to show
anguish in public. I fight the scream engendered by the fiat on the desk.
At the window a willow, not tranquilized, heaves hysterically,
Convulsing feathered fronds with all its might.
    "Might . . . ," he pauses. "Might be four years, might be two.
Extremely rare. Extremely. Not seen a case in years."
    His watch ticks on against his white sleeve. "Advise not telling him . . . yet . . .
no need for him to know . . . for a time."
Time! Yours, my love. Ticking away. Only the doctor and I and our watches
                will know.
I nod dumbly, a spastic specimen. One, two, three, four . . .
St. Vitus-like my mind jerks. Sanity bends under its weight.
I am disjointed again. What about the pathology of lying.
                Smiling. Lying. Lying.
Lying beside you, doomed one, watching you waste. While the pitiless Omega
    pulses, pulses. Our time will not be paralyzed.
Man in white coat is still monitoring his watch as I rise, monitoring mine.
    "His sight will not be affected and his mind will remain clear until the end!"
The end! Remain . . . clear . . . unti   l . . . the end! Omega!
Omega! Omega! Om . . . .