Sonata in NF

Farrah Mateen, MD

Address correspondence and
reprint requests to Dr. Farrah
Mateen, Mayo Clinic,
Department of Neurology,
Rochester, MN, #7-11th Avenue
Northwest, Unit 1, Rochester,
MN 55901
farrah_mateen@hotmail.com

“The next patient is an interesting one.”
The attending makes a wide, sweeping gesture. *Apassionato*.
“As you will find, she has a classic presentation.”
Behind the curtain sits a girl with naked legs in a poofy gown.
“Talk Julie” sings mom.
“She *can* talk” mom assures, more for Julie’s benefit than mine.
Sweet, shy, *pianissimo*,
Julie looks at me with her one eye.
“She was diagnosed at birth”
20 years ago
Mom smiles with frustration. Sang her story more than 20 times
Seen one too many medical student – *eroico* -
Accept applause for finding axillary freckling.
I report my findings to the conductor.
We discuss *Lisch* nodules,
Take an intermission
To debate RAS, ponder RAF-MAP.
Maestro Mom waits. *Solo*. What image will they demand of Julie now?
Tumors? Shadows? Funny spots?
We *are* inside out – can’t you hear?
Julie cries. *Lacrimoso*. Tie someone else down to a big machine
She would like to say.
Mom paces—*gustoso*—you try it out, she screams with her clicking heels.
The white coats huddle.
Tutti! Vivace! Forte!
The mumbling, cacophonous crescendo rises.
The orderly, oblivious, yawns.
Poco a poco sotta voce.
The musicians study their sheets.
“No. No operation. Can’t be operated.”
Piangevole. Lamentoso.
Who let the score end so soon, just when the orchestra was warming up?
Was this in the programme?
I open the door to the waiting room.
“What’s the next movement?” Mom demands.
“What do you mean they can’t operate?”
The key of NF isn’t well-known, I try to explain.
The great composers didn’t know about it.
fine
In the uncomfortable silence, between the last cadence
And the audience’s response,
Even the most skilled musicians must rest their instruments.

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