

## Poetry and Fiction

## Occipital Neuralgia

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I concentrate on the pain, throbbing, radiating, growing like a creeper, spreading, widening its presence, moving pendulously behind my right ear.

And then it stops and I breathe easy, continue with my routine. In the midst of all that chopping, it pulses again. I'm here, it seems to say, acknowledge me.

I tremble and sway, can't move my neck, wait for the spasm to pass.

Gone again.
The painkiller can't subdue it, lying down can't tame it.
Wish I could reach under my scalp and soothe it, stroke the inflamed nerve and calm it.
The pain drops again.
I breathe.

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