

Hope's Last Page



Erica Aitken

"Dear doctor friend
can you say the
time I may have
left?"

"Why, no I can't—
no way to know.
I won't even take
a guess."

"But surely, doctor,
you must've seen
cases just like mine."

"Oh yes, I have
and many have
lived, so I can't
offer you a time."

"But, dear doctor,
won't you help?
I really need to know.
I have a child, a spouse, a boss—
In fact, our house just sold."

"Well, I've seen cases just like
yours live to a ripe old age.
So for me to say
when you will pass
would tear out
hope's last page."

"But, dear friend,
I can say this
because I know
it's true.
The length of time
you do have left
is not up to me,
but you."

Dennis Devereux, MD

Dr. Devereux (AΩA, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, 1986) is a surgical oncologist and director of the St. Francis Cancer Center in Poughkeepsie, New York. His address is: 100 Mountain Road, Pleasant Valley, New York 12569. E-mail: dfdev@aol.com.