

toms they spoke about, their list was so long that it became ludicrous to me. How could I possibly live with negative concerns like these? Their semantics were especially bothersome because they conveyed the notion of things stagnant and immobile, and since I had already been wrestling with paralyzing somatic images that flooded my mind—like visions of canes (aluminum or wood?), wheelchairs (motorized or not?), catheters, diapers (?)—the words in the book exaggerated beyond measure the already dropped-dead feeling in my body. As I continued to read, I heard voices in my mind chanting choruses of immobility, stiffness, permanence, irreversibility, and obstinacy. “Yes,” I said, “I already know what MS feels like!” But where was the verse that would change the story and bring relief?

An image formed as I listened, my head spinning. It was as if a scene from a screenplay opened at the following page:

### MS CHANT

#### Chanting MS, An Alien Disease

*(The scene opens with actors dancing around on a stage as if they are waiting for something. Clapping is the joining motif. The Chant begins.)*

CHORUS. Immobility, stiffness.....clap, clap, clap.

*(A woman walks unsteadily on stage supported by a man.)*

CHORUS: Irreversibility.....clap, clap, clap.

*(Someone comes out and puts a gadget on the woman.)*

CHORUS: Permanence.....clap, clap, clap.

*(Woman walks teetering and tottering with the gadget. More gadgets are put on as the song continues. Finally, they say, “Into the wheelchair with her!” and she is solidly weighted down in the chair. She has no control on anything now. She protests from the wheelchair.)*