Traveller's Attack

Still all women starkers on his mind but on his knees and petrified. Watercress overflows as his briefcase breaks open on the pavement. Hear the stone tablets swear at him.

With his heart the organ most fallible—concrete to his loved ones and and now regressed to churning gravel—his mind's eye refuses to unfocus, women pass him in a haze of dust.

The street smells of burnt rubber. His hand grasps the cold comfort of spilled watercress. From ambulance to hospital and flexible attachments, and only women doctors on, by accident.

All women clad in white, hands in gloves and stonily smiling. Stark. Their eyes intent on the waves of his screen. "Those sirens on the rocks," he pants, "it was all in Odysseus' mind."

DAVID WINWOOD