Natural Philosophy

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Natural Philosophy

Abstract
In this poem, I reflect on the close connection between life science and the arts from the perspective of a student undertaking liberal studies.

Author/Artist Bio
Dr. Michael J. Leach is a health researcher, number cruncher, and wordsmith. In addition to holding tertiary qualifications in pharmacy, applied statistics, biostatistics, and pharmacoepidemiology, Michael has studied a range of arts and humanities courses through Open Yale (http://oyc.yale.edu/). Michael writes poetry to convey the poignancy and beauty that he perceives in life. His poetry is published or forthcoming in the Medical Journal of Australia, Medical Humanities, The Galway Review, A New Ulster, The Haiku Journal, Pulse – Voices from the Heart of Medicine, and Survive & Thrive: A Journal for Medical Humanities and Narrative as Medicine. He lives in his birthplace of Bendigo, Australia.

Keywords
Liberal studies, medical humanities, life sciences, physics, poetry

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I barely understand the intertwining systems of mostly-empty atoms that form the intricate anatomy of this temporary body.

In each priceless little particle that the cosmos loaned me, I feel the ever-present pull of an entire planet’s gravity.

These guided streams of electricity that pulse swiftly through me compel my clockwork heart to pump ten pints of ancient blood through many a branching tree. This walled city of a brain is a place of divided psychology where resident artists and scientists yearn to find truth and beauty. As my cells keep dividing into imperfect copies, I vainly try to forget that one day I’ll be history.

When my time bomb of a heart ticks its last and starves my body, all my cells will implode slowly to repay atoms to the cosmos.

Will I be somewhere or nowhere once the nucleus of my life passes beyond this Byzantine biology into a veiled realm of philosophy?

This wax model from about 1890 demonstrates the circulatory system. It is held in the Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology at the University of Melbourne. The photograph of this wax model was taken by Chris Hopkins and originally appeared in 3010 Magazine for Melbourne University Alumni (permission granted).