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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.

Keywords

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

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Natural Philosophy

Michael Leach

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).