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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.

## **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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## 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).*