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Quantitative Literacy

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Quantitative Literacy

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“Your system of blood vessels (arteries, veins, and capillaries) is more than 60,000 miles long. That’s more than enough to go around the world twice.” (filler from the Des Moines Register, April 27, 2011)

So, who was it thought to measure?
Did they do it from clear scientific demands?
Or did they find themselves with time on their hands,
and do the task simply for pleasure?

Did the person whose innards they used,
have a prior consent form to sign?
Were the vessels conveniently laid in a line?
Did the vessel ends have to be fused?

And that round-the-world path I find hard to intuit:
Could the blood vessels stand the strain,
of ocean currents, wind and rain?
Would the project require conduit?

Or was all of this done by some wiz with a Cray,
with estimates, formulas, a needed assumption—
the tools of math modeling—and plenty of gumption,
deriving the answer that way?

Whatever the case, just imagine the byplay!
Of countries and kingdoms all beating the drum,
to be next to—or at least not very far from—
a blood vessel super highway