

Virtual Mentor

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IMAGES OF HEALING AND LEARNING

One Millimeter

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Eyes pull across glass
landscapes of hematoxylin & eosin:
hollow corridor of vessel within
foreign sea of blood,
horizon of starry lymph node sky.
Just one cell with its small
blue nuclear heart may
go awry.

What glimpse did van Leeuwenhoek
have with his golden glass eye?
We cannot pretend we saw the usual
three-layered curve of the cerebellum
folding over itself—a clean cloth.
Deeper the brave Purkinje cells
with their pink eyes and long lashes
are lost.

At day's end the sky is understated,
but familiar: Castor & Pollux at right,
Auriga—invisible, but always there.
The dark holds the already gone
and the yet to come.
Even Pleiades will fall into itself,
the burning cell with its cytoplasm
falling apart.

I once held a flask of cardiac myocytes,
small stars in their wet pink plastic galaxy.
I used to think of the heart as one.
But that's the thing: *each one* of these cells
was beating.

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