
POETRY | SPRING 2021

Cardioneurological Cataclysm

By Marc Perlman

Enter: Brain and heart

Brain:

I am the most cerebral warden, the most regal organ
You against this noggin, my victory is certain
This logician hones movement, thought, volition
The opposition is imprudent wrought with rhetoric, diction

My contribution is the execution
Of movement, sensation, our constitution
You pump like a chump and your channels are funny
Admire my myelin while you gallop like a bunny

Heart:

Time to finish this debate since the brain did start
Cardiological over logical, emotion comes from the heart
I make it all happen - pump one, pump two
Pump seven thousand liters from hand to shoe

You're merely the preload, you spongy encephalopathy
My systole is dastardly and your synaptic clefts are sloppy
Follow your heart, emotion and passion
Nerves are nery, but red will never go out of fashion

Brain:

I traverse the homunculus with my nexus of plexuses
I decussate down the spine before you wake for breakfasts'
I could see you're scared, for your rate is tachy
Don't get angina, you over-perfused hacky-sacky

Pure passion is distraction, you're not in the know
Get back to contracting, you tetralogy of Fallot
My projections are glorious, well-insulated, and ivory
Yours are riddled with plaques and fibrinoid, precisely

Your mitral's regurgitant and your aorta is stenotic
You're parvus et tardus and your complexity is prokaryotic
One must calculate, strategize, and hypothesize
Taking leaps of faith will only lead you to self-jeopardize

Heart:

Tachycardic is right, and that's not all
Inotropic gains from a beta agonist call
I'm only just begun, I have only stuck my toes in
Your confidence has seized, where's the phenytoin?

Structure conserved for years, you're past your prime old timer
You forgot who's the best, have you been tested for Alzheimer's?
Do you even hear yourself, you schwannoma
You logic lacks heart and I don't see a diploma

Atrophied, gray, and you don't matter
Without emotion and ardor, your plans will shatter
Think hard then think again
While you're at it, I'll already have achieved my Zen

Enter (suddenly): the Gut

Heart pipe down, brain you're giving me a headache
You're both half right, cry me a lake
The heart needs sympathetic innervation
The brain needs unempathetic vascularization

Think before you act but don't think too long
Paralysis by analysis, the brain is partially wrong
Blinded by emotion and faith, just as fallacious
I expect more from the heart, aren't you morally sagacious?

Train your intuition with experience, the art of the gut
Thinking and emoting intertwined, no ifs ands or butts
The truth is out, let us be less adversarial
Be advised though, I may just be full of fecal material

Abstract

When confronted with difficult decisions in life, people tend to find difficulty choosing to side with their logic or their passion. The immortalized battle between one's brain and heart is the subject of much cultural reflection, be it in cinema, literature, or various other art forms. This poem provides a fresh take on this age-old conflict by metaphorizing the logical side of the argument as the brain and the passionate side of the argument with the heart. This slam poetry-style debate between the two organs is emblazoned with whimsical insults and self-reverences that are rooted in neurological and cardiological physiology and pathology. Through this medical lens, the greater medical community may better appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of logical versus instinctual action.

Marc Perlman is a second-year medical student at Albany Medical College in Albany, New York in the Class of 2023. In 2019, he graduated from Union College as Salutatorian with a Bachelor of Science in economics and biology. He also holds an MBA in Healthcare Management from Clarkson University. Perlman enjoys reading, writing poetry, and exploring local restaurants. In the future, Perlman hopes to intertwine his medical training with his business experiences to improve the management of chronic diseases.

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