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## Poems

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### BASELINE OF THE SOUL

The brain men have convened in San Diego,  
wunderkindt from venerable ivory towers,  
who perform  
on Powerpoint when the lights go dim.  
Western blots, schematics  
of programmed cell death, little proteins  
with names like *Caspase*, *Bax* and *Bim*  
flash across the screen, enough  
to make a neocortex blush  
with the intimacy of it all, as if  
the smartest really believe  
they will get to the bottom of our heads  
with knockout mice and missense nucleotides,  
putting their probes into the most secret  
corners of our delight, enraptured  
by nomenclature, obsessed  
with undressing mystery's manikin  
down to her wire and linen.

No wonder I flinch at coffee break  
when these bow-tied voyeurs partake  
of petite sandwiches and savories,  
then spec out name tags  
before pontification.  
Creation draws her divine cloak tighter  
with each yelp of the onion skin,  
every probe and assay, until  
the pilgrimage collapses into itself,  
and the baseline of the soul remains  
vibrating like a shadow on snow,  
indivisible as absolute zero.

### CROSSING OVER

In her white paddock  
the woman dreams a mare,  
flanks churning  
to stay afloat. Unaware  
the distance is too great.  
Ten to twenty knots  
on the inland waves  
but a hard wind  
fractures the surface  
everyday. Some shining water  
streaming in rivulets  
across her back  
lathered like a face,  
and the withers bunched  
in one surge  
beneath all the swift torrents  
of felicity and faith,  
her mane fanned  
like a wedding train  
for steerage,  
and overhead  
the relentless sun,  
insolent  
to the bit,  
bulging eyes, frothing lips,  
the mallard she passes  
smoldering like an emerald  
around the water's neck  
that seals now  
in quiet lap  
this struggle  
under tungsten lamps,  
the monitor's  
vicious hum that marks  
the end of her run  
in a ripple.

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