

Being of brine

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This poem explores the essence of cellular pathways to accomplish life as we know it. Biochemistry is extraordinary. It drives physiology, thought, actions, and interactions of organisms in their environments. While other molecules are essential, ions are the functional currency of biological cells, tissues, organs, and systems. Feats and experiences of living beings transpire by the humbling reality of ions cycling across membranes – by passive diffusion and active transport – as part of complex networks.

Hold the thought
that aqueous salts
propel a life of thought.
Salts convey earth and air,
hopes, despair, and plans
of human clans and creatures.
Salts steer helms to every port;
observe their wake and contemplate.

Elements, older than eons,
forged of star, vapour and dust
trade electrons and accrete.
Lipids align and salts dissolve—
ions teem in water,
marshal at membranes,
drift and pump through channels,
seek and defy equilibrium.

Life arrives.
Cells pluck nitrogen from air,
fixed now, for superb amino acid chains.
Pigments seize light to photosynthesise—
yield saccharides,
alter atmospheres,
transform seas and lands;
empower kingdom Animalia.

Simply ionic vessels,
we drift and pump into being.
Salts stream through conduits and matrices
of Nature's splendid molecules,
to choreograph flesh, frame and blood—
Beat, breathe, feed.
Flaunt, move, sense.
Ascend to sentience.

Thoughts rise on ionic tides of cells and organelles—
charges ricochet in one mind's depth,
cross synapse networks, thence to flex
faces, mouths, limbs and fingertips.
Myriad sentiments broadcast
to fresh eyes, ears, skin
where salts surge to sense, then bring
ideas to other minds and muscles.

Salts charge human marionettes with
voice of operas and parliaments;
tools to farm and sail by stars;
dance at corroborees and waltzes;
art on Guggenheim walls.
Salts scatter perceptions,
conduct taboos of tribes and altars,
spark scholarship, industries and wars.

Ionic alchemy, traversing time,
stores ideas as latent lines
set on pages, pavements, stelae, screens—
by lines of alphabets and hieroglyphs,
compasses, clocks, and maps,
numerals and treble clefs—
Blueprints for salts of future folk
to sense, interpret, perpetuate.

Salts of life and earth disperse—
course through emperors, beggars,
wolves and crows
to sense, reflex,
think and act,
wilt or grow, interact.
All achieved by primal brine
and evolution's mark in time.

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