

</Recursion>

Let's talk about nature. Why does she exist? Over what seas and lakes does she hold sway, and to whom does she act as a mere plaything, a trifling curiosity to be cast away as soon as the next new and exciting thing comes along? A few – nay, many – would argue that she is the mistress over all things; more yet would cast their gaze to the heavens and proclaim the benevolent dictatorship of some gods or overseers, and that nature exists to be a primary point of contact to focus connections to those above.

So rather be in awe at what it provides, than contemplate its excuses for existence – it is well worth the time to sit outside and observe the fantasy of life. Have you ever wondered how crazy it is that colonies of ants are powerhouse machines where each individual merely follows its own pheromone-crazed dance? Or that there are chameleons out there that colour themselves based on not only their background, but also based on the predator hunting them? It is incredible to think that each individual species of eukaryote and prokaryote has carved out a fiefdom where it has specialised, where there is simply no other that could compete.

Position yourself on a country lane, trees and berries and bushes and birds all around. That cooing you hear is from a rock dove, or as you might know it, a pigeon. Many thousands of years of domestication has fabricated a myriad of different plumages and patterns, and through breeding and escapes the wild pigeon has nowadays also a extravagant range of guises. They are able to precisely navigate back home from long distances without visual cues, with elegant gliding interspersed by powerful wing thrusts. Laugh not at its clumsy departure, for the frenzied beating of wings on takeoff signifies the presence of danger to its peers.

Look below the branch it took off from, and observe the sulfur-yellow layering of gnarled, protruding fungal growths there. That is a chicken of the woods mushroom, which substitutes well for chicken in the culinary

Let's talk about humanity. Why do we exist? Over what mountains and fields do we hold sway, and to whom do we act as a mere plaything, a trifling curiosity to be cast away as soon as the next new and exciting thing comes along? A few – a few, indeed – would argue that we are the lords over all tangible things; more would cast their gaze to the heavens and proclaim the benevolent dictatorship of some gods or overseers, and that we are simply the most important or interesting of all animal creation.

So rather be in awe at what we are, than contemplate our excuses for existence – it is well worth the time to close your eyes and feel the fantasy of life. Have you ever wondered how crazy it is that mitochondria are powerhouses with their own separate genome, working for the benefit of its host cell? Or that each B cell in the immune system lies dormant, and springs into action only when the one specific antibody it produces is needed? It is incredible to think that each individual type of cell and organelle within your body has carved out a fiefdom where it has specialised, where there is simply no other that could compete.

Imagine the interior of an artery in the human body, filled with rushing plasma and blood cells. That one just there was a platelet, a thrombocyte - most often manifesting itself to us in the form of a blood clot. Cytoplasm fragments only in humans, they manifest as living cells in all animals bar mammals. For us, they fall between the living cells of the body and the inanimate, yet still powerful, proteins – containing much of the latter, yet not quite the former. If unused after its prolonged week of existence, a thrombocyte is destroyed much as the body destroys bacteria, as a cell envelops and consumes matter in the process known as phagocytosis.

The mechanism of platelet aggregation, the gathering of platelets to form a clot, is governed by a number of agonists including the molecule known as ADP. ADP causes platelets to morph and gel. More well known

world and, owing to its – relative – scarcity, is considered a delicacy in many a place around the world.

The tree it grows on is a yew, in this case. Harbinger of death, yet multi-centenarians themselves, it bears sweet red berries – the only part of the tree that is not acutely toxic. The yew is steeped in history and tradition, so much so that York derives part of its old name – *Eboracum* – from it.

Moving on, we have a great valley, steep cliffs and barren slopes... this is less a valley, and more of a in the ground, a place in the world which is devoid of nature. Nature tries here, but few of her are – great thundering machinery envelops and erases any fresh growths, dust and noise expunges dissuades any visitors – exsanguination of the earth.

A leech, a leech! Her own creation, her own beloved, one built on her flesh and her blood; one fattened on the fruits of her labour, one consuming the crops of her harvest. Grateful it should be for her efforts, and grateful it is not. An evolutionary masterpiece it is, the pinnacle – the epitome! – of efficiency and survival of the fittest, and all it seeks to do is to stone the thing that wrought it?

forming, holes devoid of all, forming, earth-wide and The spreads, unchecked. has contained previous on her domain, but this new breed of is too wise, too efficient to yet the fever has just started. Sacrifices need to be made. Many will not , but is too great for to be made. it may not be enough. The keep , the keep growing. This cannot be allowed to . It must not.

perhaps is its role in fuelling the body, as the conversion from its cousin in ATP to itself is used for energy in every known life form.

Lining the artery walls is a single sheet of endothelial cells. These act as border security when deciding what gets into the bloodstream and what doesn't. When new blood vessels are required, the membrane keeping them in place is dissolved and the endothelial cells proliferate and migrate.

Here we see it in action... triggered by the greed of a malignant tumour, less of a cell cluster and more of a hole in the body, a place which is of function. The body tries here, but few of its efforts are visible – grasping unordered growths and any ordered cell structure with hostile cells threatening asphyxiation, any growth – of man.

Holes forming, barren devoid of , forming, , shoulder to shoulder. The spreads, unchecked. The immune system has controlled previous infringements territory, but this malignant is , too sneaky, too to . The body burns, Sacrifices need to be made. Many will not , but this is a threat for to be made. Even still, it may be . The keep spreading, the keep . This cannot continue. .

Such a comparison paints a naïve and incomplete depiction of our position.

*A conflagration may be tempered down,
So long the thought and will remains to fight.
Feel nature's crown, toppled and left to drown
Mankind ensnared, a slave to devil's plight.*

*What plight? but that which we ourselves create
Those flames abruptly through inaction flare
The cornerstone to make the fire abate
To realise we have agency. Despair*

*For agency exhibited is few
And far between. Yet we must realise that
We are not cancer; we strike our own path
We are not blind; we have a choice, a voice*

*To recognise our bane, our shadow, stalks!
Turn fast upon it, strike it and subdue,
Confine it to the hells before it talks –
With understanding: knowing what we do.*

*So grasp the will, cast iron the will
See that we control destiny
No railroad, nothing foretold
Above high nature we do stand
With heads poking above the clouds.
Come back down to reality
By sunlight glare be blinded not
By tunnel vision, guided not –
For*

*Cancer is an evil thing. Cells
Following their twisted, malformed, code, seeking
An elixir to reach immortality
With no consideration that their hubris and greed shall be
Their undoing.*

*We are not cancer. We strike our own path.
Blinded we may have been
Following our own agenda, with
No consideration that our hubris and greed could have been
Our undoing. Now
We have started to open our eyes.*