

2.11 The Western Stock Exchange

As Doctor Thompson of Wisconsin
brushed hands with immortality,
the shares of Geron Corp
(of Menlo Park)
rose sharply in late trading
on the Western Stock Exchange.

And by the way, I learn
there is another absolute
which God has chosen to reveal –
it's two-one-O, not more or less,
the utmost tally of
my cellular expressions,
which differentiate
my members and my parts,
and which suffice (as David
would have put it) to fashion me
behind and before.

But then you have to set apart
the embryonic stem cells
(a mystery which eluded capture
until now) because, like particles,
they scarcely are,
they cannot stop themselves
convert to muscle, skin and bone;
and yet, apparently, they are
the same primordial cells
which take the fast track
to the ovum and the sperm
of my descendants – O well!
You needn't drum it in!
I'm just a seed pod, just
a vehicle on lease to carry genes.

So Dr Thompson breeds
his stem cells from the
inner mass of blastocysts,
(so carelessly bequeathed
by seekers of fertility).
And God observes,
perhaps facilitates,
the culture of these cells
to help alleviate
the shortage of all kinds
of organs and spare parts.

Go to it, Dr Thompson!
Just fiddle, fiddle with the code,
just re-program that DNA:
I cannot really blame you –
since God permits you to proceed –
for knocking at
the central mysteries of life
to leverage your options and
delight the hearts
of Geron Corp's stockholders
on the Western Stock Exchange.

December 1998