

## 1.11 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