

a found poem

I believed, too, in the doctors
And the medicine and the surgeries,
In translocations, insertions and deletions,
But many spiders were close behind.

Clinically proven—
Injected into mice.
A million different proteins,
Alive and pulsing.

Cultured in mammalian tissues,
Mapped and sequenced.
Purified, analyzed
Genetic machinery.

An orderly system of plastic,
A genetic score written in the statistical norm.
All perfectly healthy and normal,
Like so much meat.

There was a thing called the soul
And a thing called immortality
Denatured by enzymes to
Electrochemical events.

A gene for maturity, for fitting in,
Inserted with a harmless bacterial plasmid,
Euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant—
The perfect drug.

The time has come to ask
Something hard and horrible—
I see it in your eyes:
Possible side effects?

Sources included *Every Second Counts*, by Lance Armstrong, *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley, *The Hobbit*, by J.R.R. Tolkien, and *Campbell Biology, Seventh Edition*.