

# Virtual Mentor

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## IMAGES OF HEALING AND LEARNING

### Ghazal of Algorithms

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*Editor's note: The ghazal, a mainly Middle Eastern poetic form that dates back to the seventh century, traditionally takes up metaphysical questions and evokes longing, love, and loss. It is made up of couplets distinct from each other in theme, tone, and imagery but joined together in their second lines, which end with a rhyme followed by a refrain. The final couplet often references the author, sometimes by name [1].*

We're alive down here no matter what the topography tells.  
Pixels, dewdrops, grains of sand, microscopography of cells.

Scientists categorize chemical pairs, sequencing our genome.  
The ark carried pelicans, their bones carried ink—calligraphy of cells.

I'm sorry for the things I say to hurt you, the things I never say.  
We're still evolving, each revising our autobiography of cells.

At the equator, sloths move so slow their backs grow green with algae.  
We're cousins to sloths and algae both, our shared cartography of cells.

Reversed on film, black mold unfolds into reclining cats  
and plants ungrow. O, to undo death by the photography of cells!

Henrietta's cells did something new. They kept alive and grew.  
Poor and black: even immortal, subject to demography of cells.

It's all about the replications, the ways we grind together.  
Intertwined in heat and viscous fluids, pornography of cells.

A mustard seed becomes a melon. Unborn, stillborn. The moon  
tilts. We communicate by touch, by the sonography of cells.

Jellyfish in the bay, a fleet of cold, diaphanous pleats.  
No brains or hearts, simply luminous choreography of cells.

My eyes have always been blue. My heart's been busted a time or two.  
Who cares about poetry? Who cares about lexicography of cells?

Once the written word was code enough. Now nothing else spells  
Sara but messages in my DNA's cryptography of cells.

## References

1. Academy of American Poets. Poetic form: ghazal.  
<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5781>. Accessed July 19, 2012.

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