

## THINKING WITH THE BODY

At home inside your own skin,  
As they say—while  
Shielded by this paper cover  
Lie the slow, tight coils of gut,  
In sinuous unseen glitter  
Of peristalsis, and the heart  
Screaming outrage at the mile too swiftly  
Run or the dismissive syllable.

Skin is the finishing touch, the sky-roof  
Over this strangely autonomous  
Realm and its sly imperfections  
(Arrhythmia, or merely the stray  
Kernel of corn tumbling towards  
Some fecal light, evading alimentation's  
Unrelenting sweep, or the organized  
Ugliness of ear and elbow); skin is all

We see: the creases in the open  
Hand, that spell one's destiny:  
Etched in a darkness the eye's light  
Cannot shape, the fetal fist clutched  
Tight round the last eternal shreds.

Does soul live among the crackling  
Sparkles, synapse to synapse,  
Or in the coral memory,  
Saline and submarine, like some  
Sedentary beast, roiling gently  
In the brain's convolutions—  
Or in the cell's clever spirals,  
Its geometries replicating the codes  
Of immortality?

*By your skins shall ye be known:*  
Life's sentence handed down  
With shovel, brush, or in straining rope's  
Indelible characters, and the paper  
Tautens, wrinkles, glows in the spray of salt  
Wind and the cold of early winter; skin,  
Skin is all

We can know of another's mind, heart.  
Ache and rejoicing, how well we love  
Ourselves: skin is where

Our names are written:  
We write our own lines there.