

Giving Them What They Asked For

I opened my chest cavity,
removed one pulsing cell
which I placed in a glass box
and gave to them.

They poked the cell with gentle fingers,
made impressions of texture and tremor,
took infrared pictures,
did blow ups, captured stillness.

When the cell still survived
they took it home, put it in a fish bowl,
and after initial amusement
mostly didn't notice.

Meanwhile I leave my chest open,
and, whenever asked, offer cells
to others who do the same
or different studies.

My job is to be lucky enough
to guess what can be spared
and what can not,
to give and not to die.

— Batista Horton