

Ethan Goffman

A Reply to Richard Dawkins

I refute it thus.

--Samuel Johnson, kicking a stone to refute Bishop Berkeley's theory of the nonexistence of matter.

Perhaps we are
Automatons
that exist only to survive and breed
spewing out
new generations.

Perhaps personality, individuality, consciousness,
is just an accident
a flickering illusion emanating from a collection of impulses
only seeming to cohere.

If you sever one part of the brain
You are not the same person.
You lose speech, memory, the ability to reason.
You are an exquisite corpse.
You are garble.
You are you yet not you.

Perhaps the brain is just a collection of impulses
A sophisticated computer
That has caused us to
become the most successful species on this planet.

At least until we finish our collective suicide

obliterating wondrous multitudes along with ourselves
redwoods and black bears, bees and spiders
fungi and sloths, eagles and robins and worms, aardvarks and ants
The delicate web of life that we are part of
and yet act apart from.

we are the uber species, killing us softly

Monty Python had it right,
the search for meaning is a kind of joke.

Not even a cosmic joke,
but a minor giggle

a hiccup that can't be terrified or drowned away
a byproduct of the struggle to
breed

*a spirit,
a source of pure love,
rubs against me and purrs*