

Title: *Who do You Think You are!?!: Revelations in Miroslav Holub's Medical Poems*
Author: Marta M. Napiorkowska, University of Chicago

This paper will discuss particular instances of the Czech immunologist Miroslav Holub's more general poetic project of exploring and challenging our myopic and often incorrect assumptions and conclusions about phenomenal experience.

In general, Holub's poems construct and then shift the frame of observations or questions in order to create contradictions that in turn reveal our biases, presumptions, and inconsistent conclusions about philosophy, politics, science, literature and social life. The poems this paper discusses are representations of contradictions that are experienced by, rather than are made by, the poet. The paper assumes they are non-fictional poems. However, these poems do not fall into the category of witness poems. Rather, they are inter-textual philosophical explorations of lived paradoxes that, in these cases, are caused by technology interacting with the human body. These poems do not attempt to dialectically resolve experienced contradictions but rather explore and challenge the reader to make sense of what the contradictions mean or signify. Naturally, where the human body and inner life of the person are concerned, such contradictions rupture notions of wholeness, identity, self, and personhood as well as beg some kind of recovery. This paper examines, among others, the poems "Heart Transplant," "Crush Syndrome," and "Ancephaly" with the intention of interpreting the recovery Holub offers.

The paper's interpretation draws on the theoretical tradition of the sublime, including the writings of Kant, Lyotard, Lacan and Žižek, as well as on Holub's own essays and commentary. It contends that Holub correctly and effectively dispenses with false notions of what we are, but as he approaches the theoretical nothingness within his poems that testify to the revelation of a radically asocial but nevertheless universal remainder that one could hazard to call the human soul.