

# Soul Searching

Category: Poems

written by Brian T. Maurer | August 23, 2013

**Brian T. Maurer**

Ply the scalpel, crack the vault;  
Peel back the layers, parcel the salt:  
Galeal, subgaleal, arachnoid place,  
Dura mater, subdural space,  
Lobus frontalis, sulcus centralis,  
Corpus callosum, fornix, and rostrum,  
Hippocampus, choroid plexus,  
(Anatomy most sure to vex us)  
Ventricles: first, second, third,  
Cerebellum, stem and cord.

When we've exhausted the entire onion,  
Tell me, what's become of someone?

## **About the poet:**

Brian T. Maurer has practiced pediatric medicine as a physician assistant for the past three decades. As a clinician, he has always gravitated toward the humane aspect of patient care, and for two decades he has explored the illness narrative as a tool to cultivate an appreciation for humane medical care. He has published numerous vignettes, editorials and essays in national and international journals, as well as two books, *Patients Are a Virtue* and *Village Voices*. He blogs online at [briantmaurer.wordpress.com](http://briantmaurer.wordpress.com).

## **About the poem:**

"Freud wrote that wherever he ventured in his scientific investigations of the mind, he found that a poet had been there first. Modern neuroscience continues to struggle to define the human mind by studying anatomical brain function. It occurred to me that dissecting the human brain is similar to peeling an onion. When the last layer is peeled back, what remains? In particular, where does our humanness lie? The implication is that the human soul can never be discovered in the anatomy lab."

## **Poetry editors:**

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer

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