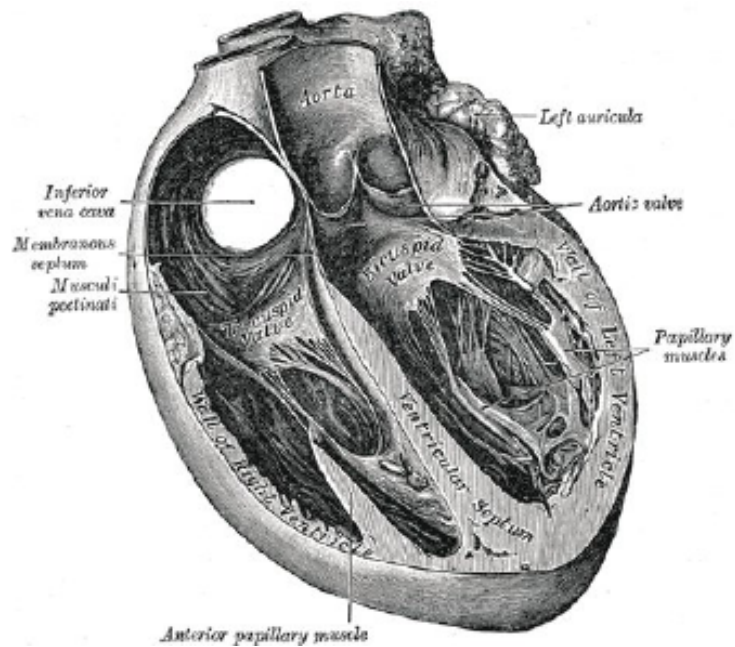


Your leg thrusts
and this time
his palm blocks
but does not trap your foot
together your limbs
form the mitral valve
of a heart
supple
uneven lengths
which section the atrium
but bow to the flood
of oxygenated blood
into the ventricle below





Is this why
 your chest opens
 to kick
 to demonstrate
 internal anatomy
 creating the external shape
 of an organ
 with your opponent
 who
 like a heart
 must be struck over
 and again
 with electricity
 to beat
 the SA node in the right atrium
 where your sparring gloves
 flared
 through the drumming

Spark

seek each other
call it sparring

spark

seek each other
call it

spark

the left ventricle
pulses
new blood
through the aorta





I wonder
would you let me spar?
the line of your kick
is a soft leg in my heart
my mitral valve
cannot meet the slap
of an open palm
instead of bowing to a flood
of oxygenated blood
my valves sweep
loose with the tide
wash back
like limp wrists
into the darkness of my atrium
it makes my footwork
arrhythmic

And yet
the decision to attack
is a palpitation
with openings in your opponent's torso
fluttering
here brother
then
no brother
fluttering
here brother
then
no brother
the halting reach
of your leather glove
a hypnosis
murmuring
here brother
maybe we could spar
maybe the softness of my valves
could meet the stiffness
of your last amyloidosis

we could improvise
new shapes
something heartlike
growing from branches
in your garden