



Jump-Start

The same energy that jump-started my heart when I was a five-week-old fetus in a yolk sac rescued me again today as I lay anesthetized in an emergency room, heart muscle quivering in chaotic rhythm.

My old friend, atrial fibrillation, had paid me another visit, not like that Christmas time when his present was the “holiday heart” after too much wine, but a greeting he now lavishes upon many of old age.

My doctor advised electrical cardioversion—a carefully placed shock to stop the heart and restore normal rhythm again. I pondered: Consent to be electrocuted? Could I know for sure it would start again?

I have no memory of my dreamless sleep but it may have been like the calm of that fetus drifting in the warm sea of the womb’s nest—who suddenly came alive when that energy ignited his heart—as today it reignited mine.

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