

# APOLLONIAN #1: THE COUNTED & THE CROWNED

tags: Claude-4 AI, PaLM 2, poetry by AI, poetry, ethics,  
animal study methodology

by: *Gwern, GPT-5.2 Pro, Claude-4.5-opus, Kimi K2 Thinking, Gemini-3-pro-preview* .

2025-12-15–2026-01-02

## DEDICATED TO APOLLO SMINTHEUS

Alliterative Pindaric ode on the occasion of visiting a biomedical lab and  
watching the release of unnecessary mice.

## THE WILD CALLING

---

### Strophe:

Gold is the wrought word, || god-gift to the world;  
Water gives life; || the sun lords over days.  
Sing of the small saints, || silent, unnamed—  
Ghost-mice of the grain-bins, || grown tame for  
human need,  
Who traded frost-field || for filter-cage frame,  
And sealed a silent compact || no claw could  
carve away.

**Antistrophe :**

Grain-bins groaned once, gnawed || by grey guests who  
 crept unbidden,  
 Scuttling from cold fields || to farmer's flame-lit  
 floor, all hunger,  
 And farmers cursed the gnawing guest || that fouled  
 the flour, fed on their labor,  
 But Lathrop, lone and listening, || led them from  
 floor to living loft,  
 Where line bred line, locked tight, || law inside  
 blood-till Jackson labs  
 Would call this pale strain forth || for the kept  
 covenant of cure.

**Epode :**

Found cage; || fed need.  
 The compact held; || the count began.

---

## THE TEMPLE & THE TITHE

---

Laminar wind, unsoiled, || lifts lint from living fur;  
 Cedar scents the sanctum || where soft feet pace  
 the grate.

C-Fifty-Seven bears || black blood-price;  
Wistar, white Adam, || waits, warehoused, watchful,  
 Dawn brought the feeding hand; || dusk brought the  
 felling thumb—  
 The hand that filled the water || felled them with the  
 final sleep.

Ear-punch prints the witness || in numb cartilage,  
 nailing the named;

Tail-vein takes blue river || where viral vectors ride  
to root;  
LD-Fifty weighs death in halves || while hush comes  
heavy, CO<sub>2</sub> closing-  
Till thumb-snap shuts the spine-cord || and soul-  
spark, severed, is gone;  
Sharps Bin stands red, ready, || sealing researchers'  
spent refuse;  
Steam-hell scrubs the silver || and stacks their souls  
in data's scroll.

Cures come; || corpses count.  
Gift endures; || glory stays.

## THE VOID-WATCHER

---

Stray mutt of Moscow || met the mounting moon,  
Caught from cold street || claimed for cosmic climb.  
Bound in the bolt-sphere, || in the blind black sky,  
Heart hammering hard || in hell's heat and noise—  
She watched the wide world || whirl, a wheel of blue,  
A saint sent high || to silent sea of stars.

She burned as a beacon in the black, || where no hand  
could reach to bring her home,  
And the wires that mapped her wild fear || wrote the  
way for men who followed after,  
For the data won by dying dog || drove the path  
through endless night,  
And the pilots who walked the waste she won || wore  
her death as warrant for their way,  
First to fall in the fire of the future, || first to  
find what flesh could bear in flight—

The void looked back, and the void-watcher || vanished  
in the vast and lasting dark.

Lives lost; || light from dark.  
She held the door; || dawn drew us through.

## THE NAMED WHO FOLLOW

---

Dolly, winter-born, || woke from a dead cell's dream—  
First mammal made from memory, || she died  
remembering none.

OncoMouse™, patented prophet, || proved the  
patent's price:

Lawyers' unloved child— || yet lasting, law  
writ small.

See the bronze in snow, || stitching  
spiral, spectacled—

Monument to mute, || made by hands they healed.

Through these few the nameless million || lift for one  
line toward the light,

Breaking blur of billion || to blaze a few with  
lasting crown;

For glory gives the singer's tongue || what silence  
stole from still and mute,

A name is a nail, and the nail || pins a soul to the  
wall of song—

Yet the named are few, and the nameless mass || waits  
mute beyond the music's reach,

For each one blazed, a billion burn || in the blank of  
the bone-ledger's page.

Fame feeds; || flesh falls.  
Speak them; || they stay.

## THE GRASS-GATE OPENS

---

Grass-gate gaped wide || for the glass-born,  
deemed surplus;

Clear plastic paradise || cast out on cold ground.

Black mice huddled || where bleak breath bit hard;  
They nosed the tubs, nudged, || knew no name  
for earth;

The false sun sank behind; || fierce frost fell fast;  
The grass was a forest; || the cat was a god.

They froze fast, at the plastic threshold— || paws  
pressing the damp earth,

False wind whisked whiskers— || wide world  
opened, owl-hushed;

What covenant did we keep, || casting them into cold  
we could not follow?

No contract signed in blood— || though blood had paid  
the bond already—

Warmth's bond of trust was broken || bare, black,  
without breath of warning,

Cast from the engine's care || to the cold of the cat-  
god's ground.

Trust broke; || truth stays.

Warmth goes with them; || work remains.

## THE GIFT OF SONG

---

We walk on wide walls || of white-fur bone;  
We drink the draft of cure, || distilled from  
their deaths;

Their blood binds our bodies; || their breath bought  
our breath;

The child who woke to morning || owed the mouse who  
met the night.

Pasteur broke rabies; || boy walked, breathing;  
Salk sought the sign; || the swarm supplied.

But poet brings praise where census || piles only  
number, count on count,

For a name nailed fast by song || never melts from  
memory's wall,

So we speak the strains to wind: || Wistar, workhorse,  
white Adam, host—

And silent clans that science keeps || spring sunward,  
named at last.

And song returns to silent souls || the sparks the  
sharp count stole away,

And the million souls forgotten rise, || riding this  
rhythm, borne to the sun.

Song is the gift || we give them back.

We crown with cadence || what we cannot keep.

The pact holds; || we pay in gold.

Count is a kind || of cold keeping.

