

What the heart is

by Janice D. Soderling

I.

The heart is a toothed hole that cannot be filled. It seizes love and chomps it up, grinds it down, melts it with caustic juices. The heart is ravenous, gluttonous, insatiable, never satisfied, wanting more, more, more. *Gimme, gimme, gimmie*, it says. Chomp, chomp.

II.

The heart is a cavern. Ice coats its sad red walls. The heart cries: *Ah, Love, come in and warm me, make me cozy, light a fire. Ah, Love, have pity on me. Ah, Love, I die in this insidious chill.*

III

The heart is an barren expanse, a private outer space, darker than a black hole. Signals from the galaxies beat against its little telescope, *thump-a-thump-a-thump-a*. Its core is dense and needy. Its instability strip is broad. The heart orbits the brain like a white dwarf.

