Ode to Glia: A Tribute to Bruce Ransom

Stephen G. Waxman¹ · Joel A. Black¹

Published online: 22 August 2017
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2017

We met him at Stanford, back at the Farm
He impressed at first meeting... incredible charm
Neurologist – scientist par excellence
We liked him at once, more after some months
Dashing, smart, and incredibly handsome
The inimitable and brilliant *Bruce Robert Ransom*
From Valley to VA, and in between
Some of the best diagnoses we'd ever seen
He was great with a tuning fork and reflex hammer
But Bruce also worked on the brain and its glamour
Neurons made most neuroscientists happy
But right from the start, Ransom was GFAPy
Astrocytes, astrocytes, everywhere serving
From cortex to brainstem, and in the nerving (oops!)
Astros don't think, they don't spike, they are gluish
Could they be Baptist? Methodist? Jewish?
In the mid 80s Ransom moved to Old Blue
But even at Yale, it was glue and more glue
From College to Yale Bowl, from Med School to
Mory's

All we kept hearing was astrocyte stories
From pancake to star-like, and in between
Astros and oligos were king and queen
Sontheimer, Stys, Fern and then Rose
O'Connor, I think, kept Bruce on his toes
Gray matter was elsewhere the focus of chatter
But Ransom was different, he liked the white matter
Then in '95 it was off to Seattle
Again came the star-cells, Bruce brought them like
cattle.
He injured those astros, anoxic, ischemic,
but as far as I know they were never anemic
And now we look back and we honor Bruce Ransom
Glial cells, well, we all had a chance-um
But Bruce did it better and firster and smarter
He understood glia... he took them aparter.
So we honor Bruce Ransom with a hearty Thank You,
Our neurons are grateful...
Our glia are too

✉ Stephen G. Waxman
stephen.waxman@yale.edu

¹ Department of Neurology, Yale Medical School, New Haven,
CT, USA