

THE FATES

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Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.

—Seneca

1

I Have Internal Metre

By which I live my life
Out of step with all I see
Around me. But the time

Will come when Fate
And I shall walk a step
So similar I need not be.

2

I Can Fold Days

Into a book. You can't:
You just live pages. See?
You just live lines.

You just live words —
You, in the end, live gaps
Between the words.

I am the Fate. I read
In silence. I hold the book.
I read you into being.

3

She Chose a Sun-Dial

And said: 'Look: where
Do you wish the hour?
My hand points illicitly

Beyond that gnomon,
And away from you,
As though you were a sun.'

4

Some Persons Think the Fates are Plural

Others don't: they take their Fate
As singular. Maybe they are right.
I wouldn't know. Sometimes I seem

To sing in chorus: sometimes I seem
To sing alone. Sometimes I do not
Seem to sing, and never sing a song.

5

Sometimes I Skip

Sometimes I lean upon a staff:
That's my choice, said the Fate.

When I skip: you skip with me.
When I lean upon a staff

You share my staff with me.

6

The Fate Draws Figures in the Sand

As a child might. All around
The sound and smell of sea: the pattern's
Washed away. But the Fate draws

Figures in the sand: endlessly—
All incomplete and indeterminate
Until she works upon your life's form.

You'll view that, finished.
When she draws mine— I'll see it
And perhaps I'll understand.

7

The Fate Holds a Mirror

And so you admire yourself.
But the mirror's angled: Your
Vacant self is not engaged:

It reflects some person fined
By time: you engage a face
That is not yours. It's fine;

And registers emotions: but
It is not yours. All Fate's mirrors
Reflect a past like this.

8

The Fates Shall Never Let You Fall

Others may witness the apparent
Catastrophe: but Fates are clement.
They won't immerse you

In the purifying waters: they don't
Pretend. They will not let you drown.

9

You Were Born Rough-Edged

And your metal was touched
By the Fate: "Keen-honed
Or chamfered:

or just left rough-edged?"

10

Do Fates Have Destinies?

Let's be contrary: are destinies
Subject to Fates? The moon
Hangs in the sky, more round

Than last night. Perhaps moons
Decide. Hard, bright moons
In winters; soft, huge moons

For harvests. New moons;
Dying moons: still the same pale
Satellite. Do Fates have phases?

Are we subject to planetary Fates?

11

Did You Not Feel a Fate's Touch?

'No: a cold breath of air.' 'That's well:
Only at the end do you feel the touch
Of the Fate.' 'No: a cold breath of air.'

'Ah! How you understand the touch
Of the Fate! It is a cold breath of air.'
Oh, the years were passing: then

A cold breath of air bespoke me.
'At your shoulder: in your heart:
In your feeling: always I'm there:

I've touched you: I've liked you:
I'm as cold as a cold breath of air.'

12

Disasters Come

The Gods might come
To rescue; but they only come
With the compromise:

Believe. Fate does not exact
Any kind of duty. It does
As it does. Behave: Fate smiles.

13

Do Fates Have Free-Will?

Who am I to apportion choice
By sentients of whom I cannot
Take the measure? Do I
Have free-will in the assembly

Of myself? Best, perhaps, to start
With the simpler queries—
Are Fates live? I don't know.
Do they need the rest of sleep?

Maybe. I do not know. I need
A full eight hours of sleep:
Perhaps to dream of sleeping Fates
Dreaming my vocative free-will.

14

Don't Tempt Fate

Well, you can if you like;
But it won't do you
Much good. Or ill.

Life could be a masterpiece;
And to live a masterpiece
You must tempt Fate.

I'll wait for you: I'll wait—
I'll wait for you,
for good or ill, I'll wait.

15

Erinyes or Eumenides?

That depends on your cast of thought:
For you, read me. Or any other person,
Save you. I have my prerogative: you

Have yours. I have my cast of mind:
You, alien to my nature, have yours.

16

Fates are Not Astrologers

They play cards in primitive conditions.
See. They play cards: but not as we know

Cards.

17

Fates Understand Dead Theologies

And smile: they wait on the platform
And say: "you won't be needing that,"
As they take away your little suitcase.

Poor you! As they take away
Your little suitcase, saying
"you won't be needing that."

18

All's Porous: All's Porous:

It slips though the hands:
All reasoning's porous; it
Slips through the hands;

And a mind is so porous:
It slips through the hands.

19

Do Not Try to Faze Me

Do not try to faze me
For you won't: neither
Try to tempt me, for
You can't: never try

To put me on the spot—
That will never work:
Your hands and mind
Alone will stitch

The image of dry straw—
The fatal effigy.

20

Do the Fates Attend to Mice?

Well, they might. The whiskers
Attend the bait. The mouse
Has a will: as powerful a will
As yours. And that's the trap.

*Where there's a will
There's a tight-coiled spring:
Where there's a will
There's a trap.*

21

Do the Fates Have Gender?

Possibly not; but I wouldn't know;
I can't predict the Fates until
I come to go. But there they'll be.

For myself, I wish a Fate whose mien
Is that of a caring woman: others may wish
The stance of a considerate man.

22

Fatal Doorsteps

And above them doors.
Doors without knockers:
Doors without bells: doors

Without jambs or lintels: doors
Without walls around them:
Doors without handles—

Yet once through these doors
We lose our fatal need of words.

23

Homer Nods

And so do I; but apparently the sky
Does what it must; unthinkingly.
The sun comes up: the sun goes down:

I blink; I drowse— even Homer nods
Unthinkingly.

24

If We Always Hit the Mark

Where would be the joy?
Failures make us: failures
Maybe make the Fates

Accessible. Who better
To understand: and smile.

25

A Funeral in Leiden

And it was a grey day.
Births are private: but
This was different: the

Slow progression of
The coffin, borne by men
With stove-pipe hats

And long frock-coats
In black. I never knew
The person who was dead:

How could I? Anonymous,
I reflected on a life I did
Not know: and bowed my head.

26

Breath

Is mortal: you breathe
To count your breaths.
Who comes to count them?

Who do you imagine
Would count them?
Celestial pencil and paper

In hand?

27

Do Languages Have Ulterior Intentions?

Of course. But you need
A schizotypic psyche to see this.
And such a state is not as common
As you might suppose.

So it is not generally acknowledged
That languages have ulterior purposes:
But that does not detract from the truth.
Seeming paradoxes are not rare.

28

Fates Are Blindfold

What makes you think so?
A classical conjecture? No.
Fates have the clearest of eyes.
In their iris-vortices you see

The far-off galaxies.
Justice has clear eyes too:
You see their lucency
When she unwinds the black satin

Of her blindfold at night. Her eyes
Are a little more human.
Justice has clear eyes, too.

29

Fates aren't Gods

You can pray to Gods, if you wish,
But Fates act irrespective of your likes
For Gods: Gods are mutable: Fates

Are not. Gods have names
That you endowed. Fates
Are nameless: if you're driven

To name the Fates:
That's your loss—
That's your everlasting loss.

30

He Cranks the Gramophone Handle

And puts the record on: "I'd like to hear
My creation: I'd hear it once again."
The Maker-God, the Listening-God:

He wants to hear it; and so let's listen:
Again, and again. And again.
And perhaps once more.

31

Acquittal Comes at a Cost

Maybe. Let's say it again:
Acquittal comes at a cost.
Let us walk then, you and I:

I'll re-word it: let them walk.
You and he. Let them walk.

32

Another One Gone: a Fateful Day

Waking up to a blustery morning,
Sleet on the sash, another illusion gone.
The frame of the house shakes;
Sea and sky are indeterminate.

We live our days in the loss of illusions;
None the worse for that;
When we've lost them all
We are on departure's brink,

Life being an illusion,
and the last to be lost. But for now,
Rising in the bluster of a windy morning,
Listening to the waves of sleet upon the sash.

33

Do Fates Attend Abortions?

I'm not sure: don't ask me—
I don't understand.
I'm not unique in that.
I don't understand where

Sentience stirs and comes to be.
I'm not unique in that.
I'm perturbed: if you are alive,
And human, so are you.

34

Do Fates Have Tastes?

I suppose they must. Toffee?
No. Nougat? Probably not.
Blood? Tears? Nouns?

Difficult questions? Doubts?

35

Fate Once Wandered—

An erratic boulder.
Long set down,
The glacier's memory
Remains within it.

Desires are similar.
Gnomon-like,
They cast long shadows
And foretell the hour.

36

Fates Have No Language

That I know. How may their deeps
Be heard?

No emotion, that I know. How may
Their deeps be felt?

No mode of thought, that I know.
How may their deeps be known?

37

Gods Rely on Language to Exist

Fates are illiterate; save they
Understand every cadence
That the mind has to utter;

In the end it's a speech without
Noun: without verb: without
Adjective: Fate is illiterate.

38

I Don't Know How They Work

By reason, or sortition, or reading
Under palimpsests of character:
But they do the work they have to do.

As for me, I work by over-writing
Journals of the past: nothing new
Is made. Perhaps Fates come pristine.

Perhaps my end alone is new.

39

Look into the Mirror

And there you'll see your Fate:
The mirror image: time reversed:
Face reversed: place reversed

Again: a life reversed:
And then look back again—
A reflection in virtual time.

40

Make Believe

I understand Make-Believe.
It's how the mind works.
I understand Make-Believe:
I invented it — indirectly.

You can only know me
By reflection. A virtual me
Aside from any notion
Of my self. Come. Hold me

By the hand. Understand
The Allusions of the Fate—
Or Fates— Sometimes one and
Sometimes three. Understand.

41

As a Small Child I Wanted the Moon

As did you: as a small child
You don't wish to share: I wished
For the moon. Twin voices

Immediate: I wish for the moon.
Only later do you understand
That borrowed radiancy shared.

42

Do the Fates Regard the Days as Sintered

Rather than catenary? Those who escape death
Narrowly tell of sintering: a ceramic of a life
Nearly broken. How shall I regard the Fates

Except they hold the fragile bowl within their hands?

43

Fates Have No Witnesses

That's why they are so peculiar.
Do not try to witness them.
Best be unaware of Fates:

Try not to witness them.
Take the Fates as they decide:
Do not try to witness them.

44

Gales Outside: But the Soul is Quiet

Or the gales are in the soul— and
The night outside is still. Or all
Is cool tranquillity. Or all is gale:

In the end it's difficult to tell.
I listen constantly: I rarely have cause
To use words. Thought is deeper

When words are few within the mind.

45

God Makes the Moon Rise

Hush, little one: he makes the moon
To rise: let me sing a lullaby:
A bed-time lullaby, moonrise baby:

Tomorrow he'll make a sun
To light the risen moon.

46

How Do Fates Manage Man-Made Deaths?

Do they stand by the guillotine in silence?
Or the gallows? Do they wait for human
Order: do they wait for the garrotte?

Or the high-water drowning? I don't know.
Maybe they alleviate the fright: I hope so.

47

I'm In the End Anonymous

And so are you. Admit it
And I'll like you for it. Let's
Enjoy anonymity together.

48

Idiosyncratic Landscapes

Occupy my sublunar mind—
Move: perspective changes,
But by its own rules, and those
I do not know. More honest to say:

Move, and something happens.
The time shall come when
A pace is taken and the place
Remains unchanged.

49

I Once Knew a Lady Who Kept a Large Family of Cats

They were not neutered: the kittens she drowned.
As it happened, she was deaf. I'm glad she was deaf.
As for the Fates: they aren't deaf: I'm glad

They aren't deaf. I hope they aren't deaf.

50

I Want to be Me

'Ah, but you see, you can't.
Only an apportion of a me.'
'Ah: you'll never be a me.'

'Who am I, who'll never be
A me?' 'A fiction: a cerebral
Fiction: but there'll never be me.'

51

Idols Have Wills

If you believe in them:
Magisterial wills. But,
If you don't — they vanish.

And then you walk
The poor, misillustrated world.

52

Fate's a Bridge

Of stone, or thought:
What lethal river

Flows beneath
The shadows of that arch?

53

I'm Curiously Neutral

I can't be otherwise: how else
Can fates be apportioned?

I appreciate my neutrality!

54

In the Midline of My Life

I reconsider Fates: I'm petty, but
In my smallness, I acknowledge Fates.
My small love; never accomplished:

Well: that is me. As for you—

55

Justice is Blind

And her hands are tied
Behind her back: her ears
Are muffled: her mouth

Is masked: her legs
Are in irons: truly
Lady Justice is blind.

56

Let's Get This Straight

Fates don't love; neither do they hate,
As far as I can see. They keep the gate:
Arriving and leaving. And at either

End, you do not have to pay. As far
As I can see. To come without payment;
To leave without payment: while

You're here, enjoy the mortal fair!

57

Fates have Faces

As you pass the midplace of your life
(unknown to you) it's wise you recognize
The faces of the Fates. Best begin early.

58

It Came Out of the Blue

I thought; the dire.
Then I was contradicted:
'nothing comes out of the blue:

'there are always signs there:
Nothing comes out of the blue:
Look for the signature:

'Nothing comes out of the blue.
You speak of colours: the red:
"it came out of the red?" Or,

'Better: "it came out of the green."'
A pause. 'The living and dying
Came out of the green. It always has:

'It came out of the green.'

59

Lineage!

Drop the baton, and the race is lost:
Only the dust on the track remains.

Progeny are illustrious: they're gods.
Drop the baton, and the race is lost.

60

Gods Claim Prerogatives

But market-forces prevail.
Look at the past. And look
At what shall be. As for me:

I don't claim existence
Aside your mind. Mirror-like
We'll decide the wordless:

And we'll decide as one.

61

Have You Not Heard the Siren-Voices of the Whelks?

Well, perhaps you haven't: nor have I, Madame,
As we eat them. (And you have to be drunk
To eat them.) It's the silence of the whelks

That mortifies. Even Ulysses never understood that.
Oh! Madame: understand the call of the whelks!
As we eat whelks on Blackfriars Bridge: Understand

The grave call of the whelks! It's your teeth, Madame,
And your lips, Madame, that invoke the call of the whelks!

62

How God Loves!

My little moonrise baby.
Sleep; my moonrise baby.

How God Hates!

My little moonrise baby.
I'm afraid he does, my moonrise baby.

63

Maybe They Have Abandoned Us

Our ideas, who we call the Fates,
Or Gods, or even the idea of Nature.
Oh, well. We are made to pray:

Start again!

We'll find some other fractured form
To hold: to whom we have to pray.

64

I Was Born to Love and Hate

And endure the ministering Fate.
And so, I think, were you. Best
We love: best we share a Fate.

Best we love, and best we share
A single Fate as evening fades,
In growing shades, unique to us.

65

Memory Lapses

On the edge of sleep.
I'm not sure if anything prevails
On the edge of sleep.

Sleep is touched-wood:
Keep me safe. The Fate
Is possibly a touched-wood:

Fate: take me for your alter-ego:
I submit to you: but keep me safe.
As I go to sleep; keep me safe.

66

Mythical Creatures

Pertain: you, me, the Fates,
Justice, Mary the Mother of God,
Aunt Klara: we all pertain

In some way or another.
All of us clutch dolls. They
Are all home-made, these dolls.

During the night we kiss their crayoned
Faces off. That's Night! Each Day
We draw a new face to be kissed!

67

Fates Were Never Janitors

Companions, rather: they know
The gates. It's you who hold
The keys, and relinquish them.

You held the key to get you in: now
You hold the key to let you out.
Choose wisely, though.

68

Do the Fates Conflict with Angels?

Probably not openly: once a Fate has done,
She relinquishes you. "Here: you:
it's done." A handing-over. Probably

A frigid one. "Thank-you" says the angel:
"you've done your part: now vanish:

Purgatory's begun."

69

Fates Do Not Determine

They wince; as you would.
As you do. And, if you don't:
As you shall come to do. So.

Nightfall is inevitable: and the Fates
Do not determine: but observe,
And work out their strategy.

70

God Loves Us, Moonrise Baby

God understands my love for you:
Even when you're old, and I am gone—
He'll understand, my moonrise baby.

71

I Don't Dislike You

But neither do I like you, nor
Call your thought my reverie:
for myself I have little feeling.

For you: I tell you what you were,
And are, and how you came to be.

72

No-one Gives Medals to Fates

Winning means nothing to them.
Only vast silences bring meaning
To their ears. How is their silence

To hold no echo? How do they act
Where no language speaks?
How do they know — endlessly

Know—
Where no knowledge prevails?

73

O King! Live Forever!

Moons pass across the sky;
In June the mowing-fields
Are ready: Septembers are made

For the anxious reap of wheat
Against the coming rains.

74

Our Age has Blown a Gasket

Gaskets are unnoticed, usually,
Until they're blown. The machine
Winds down. Don't worry: suns

Blow gaskets: our own amongst them:
If Sirius has already blown a gasket—
Then, eventually, we're done.

75

Pa is God

And God is a rearrangement
Of a Pa: rearrangement of a God
As Pa. Pa slapped me, hard.

Now Pa and God are dead.

76

Regard the Veins on Your Hands

They're unique: blood flows within them
Though they're unique. Why are the veins
Unregarded: the veins on your hands:

They're lovely! They're lovely! the veins
On your hands! They prodrome your future,
The network of veins on your hands!

77

Sheep and Goats

Why the distinction?
Biblically? Lambs
Are lambs: and kids

Are kids. Both share
Endless playfulness.

78

Fates Have No Given Names

As we do: you might call them
The Innominates. And they don't
Call us by our given names: Named

Gods do that: remember *Samuel*?
No: the Fates call us by our characters:
Which, perhaps, we do not recognize.

Otherselves, they know us better
Than our names. They know ourselves.

79

Reflecting on reflections

Are your questions to me
Reflex to your being?
How should I answer
In a tongue you'd understand?

Your very name for me,
The Fate, is something
Of your own. You know
I am synonymous with life,

Your own. I decide the time
That I shall step aside.
That hour, and only at that hour
We two shall act as one.

80

Religions Want Pristines

But when the pristines have gone
They hold idols. Idols: I hold
An idol in my hand. I house
An idol in my mind.

81

Does the Fate Have Memory?

Who am I say? Shall I have memory
When I come to die? Is true memory
Something of a tale provoked

Upon the moment when we come to die?
Is memory backward-cast, elementally,
From the bridge we finally traverse,

When we come to die?

82

Fates Have No Memory

Even of themselves: they
Only act as they must.
Are they agents
Of an unknown other;

Or an unmemorable god?
No. Fates are drawn
By your namelessness,
To the reverberations

Of a symbolic name.

83

Only the Naive Can Create

Said the Fate. 'That says something
About the gods,' said the Fate. 'They
Aren't original: gods copy the tense

Of your mind. They can't create: they
Can only duplicate.' Said the Fate.
'Only the naive can create.'

84

Right in the Middle of My Daily Duties!

Pompeii comes to mind: was the Fate
Busy in the ash, going from one to the next:

Two at once, and then the little dog?

What is the Fate? I know
But do not have the words.

85

Small Silences

Coalesce to greater quiets;
Islands to continents
With continental climes.

Days to seasons, years
To forever. Blank pages
In quiet perpetuity.

86

The Character is Written in Encaustic

And I must acknowledge this: the face
In the Daguerreotype; the portrait in the
Orthochrome developed in the bath:

The simulacrum of a person. For a moment,

Live.

87

Fates, When You Are Aware of Them, Perturb

For you, read I. I'm perturbed by beings
That I cannot understand; yet my own brain's
Way of work is strange to me. Let's pause:

Let's go a level lower: let's pause again:
Let's imagine at a deeper level, deep to thought:
and let's pause again.

88

Oblique: or Straight?

The Fate took the five cards
In her hand. 'Oblique:
Or Straight?' She pointed

To the table, in the waiting-room
Beneath the lamp. 'One last time:
Oblique or Straight?' Her face

Was set. I chose: I had to choose:
Her face was set.

89

Fates Have Stern Faces

But maybe these are masks
Held before unseen faces
Held before unseen psyches

Held before nothing much.
But, whoever they are, they don't
Allow the mask to slip. Fates'

Hands never tremble: the index
Finger comes to point. It is exact.

90

Prison or Paradise?

Marriages are similar:
When you die, do you marry
A Fate you have lived with

From conception: were you born
To marry, and live with, a Fate?

91

In Contemplating Fate, I Don't Matter

I agree. I don't matter. The wood-fire
Burns low. I stir embers: I watch the sparks.
But who are you to speak? Do you,
Speaker, think you come to mean? Maybe you do.

Who are you to break the long night-silence
And to speak? I contemplate the nature
Of the Fate. I lose myself, and as I lose
The vision of my nature, I stir embers:

Contemplate quick swirls of sparks.

92

Oh, Let Me Sleep

Prayed Mary: she was never
Allowed a moment's peace,
Was Mary. "Don't pray to me:

Pray to some other poor soul,
But just let me sleep," said Mary.

93

Fates Aren't Saviours

If you fall, you fall: and
If there weren't some solid
You'd fall, and fall, and fall.

Fates are something solid:
They arrest your fall.
Your Fate needs to be there:

Or you'd fall, and fall, and
Fall.

94

Stilling Thought

Sometimes through my life
The Fate deems silence,
Stilling thought: then begin
The quiet sequesters. Time

No longer equivocates. Time
No longer has direction: I am
In the open poise of zero
And comprehend the still

Solemnity of Fate.

95

The Deadly Day

Of my conception:
I can't remember it—
Nor did my father and my mother
Now both dead.

What was the conformation
Of the clouds? Was the air
Filled with the sound of breaking waves
From the incoming tide?

96

The Duchess of Donisthorpe

Said: they named her after me;
The Duchess of Donisthorpe said.
They built her in Derby: the Duchess

Of Donisthorpe said. A fine locomotive!
The Duchess of Donisthorpe said:
I stood on her footplate: I shovelled coal:

I took her from Sheffield to King's Cross
She said. The Duchess of Donisthorpe.
She was so hot, she said.

97

The Needle Skids Across the Disk

And settles where we have to be. Song begins.
And that's where Fates are: they decide
Not the skidding needle, but the groove

Within the spiral where it falls.

98

The Fates are Sometimes Bored

Waiting for the last train of the day
And roll pennies across the table
In the first-class waiting-room
Determining the way they'll fall.

99

Sometimes the Fates Transgress

Their station. They admit a life
That has no reason: they close down
A perfect life. Ah, well: the Fates

Aren't faultless. As for us: we
Must shrug our shoulders.

100

The Bee in the Bonnet

The bee in the mitre;
The bee in the Phrygian cap:
The bee in the boater

The bee in the panama:
The bee in the black Fedora hat.

101

Do I Then Deserve My Life?

‘The little that you’ve lived it:
Yes, you do; as much as the blackbird
On the terrace: or the blade of grass.’

Do You Then Decide My Life?

‘Only indirectly: it’s you who
Takes the indeterminate: it’s you
Who points the time when you must leave.’

Do You Then Decode My Life?

‘Yes: the book is open at your leaf;
Sortition-wise. You go through days;
But I apportion an avid sense of end.’

What Becomes of You When I am Dead?

‘I die. I die lonelier than you. I am used to it.
I die daily. You die just the once; but I—
Lacking nascence— lacking family—

Home— Divinity— I daily cease to be.’

102

The Fates Sighed Before the Origin of Language

A sound at the threshold of hearing — the sigh
Of a Fate: coming from an asymptote
Of near silence: and then returning

To a near infinity. But, once heard, you know
You’ve heard it all your life. Now I speak:
But behind my words I hear the fatal sigh.

103

Who Shall Decide When Doctors Disagree?

Search me. I'm not learned. My hand
Has its unique veinings: my calvarium
Its unique sutures, winding like rivers;

My tendons: they are all unique. Shall I
Take universal scriptures to understand
My one-and-only unique form?

Listen to my synthesis: a form unique.

104

You Can End it As You Will

Fates take suicides in their stride:
Making clauses of the title.
You can end it. As you will.

That is not to say they do not care:
They may, for all I know.
Sadness is not always best expressed

Along conventional avenues of sighs.

105

We Take Our World for Granted

And that's usually a big mistake. And,
When we come to die, the Fates usually
Never seek to remind us: they just do.

But sometimes they allow a final gasp:
“let the twenty-acre field go fallow—”
“how was the fair on Maddingly Green—”

“Little Susie—” Experiences recalled
At the end: final requests: “feed Tuppence—”
“I've forgiven Aunt Eda—” Fates observe.

Rarely they witness a stronger silence:
As great and as dignified as theirs.

106

Who Has a Parlance that May Talk of Death

In this world of anodyne poetry? Only the Fate,
And her echoic theme. Only the Fate: and she
Never speaks: she never smiles. She never beguiles.

She listens: she sees: she understands: and she does.
(I call her she: but maybe she transcends gender.)
Taken into the world: momentarily live: then removed:

You; I; she; he; it: persons pass. Persons pass.
The Fate is impersonal: persons come to be, and pass.

107

There's Human Justice (of a Sort)

Divine justice there doesn't seem to be.
Oh, well. Let's play cards for worlds,
Poker-faced. You don't play cards?

I understand. I'll play solitaire with
Faceless cards, imaginary emblems
On each one. The backs of these cards

Are all the same: intricate patterns.
It requires memory. The Fates
Play an intricate, but similar, game.

108

Try Me, Try Me, said the Fate

'Try me: tell me more:
Pretend I do not know you:
Tell me more.' 'I was born.'

'I know that: most people are.
But tell me more.' She leaned
Across me. 'Tell me more:

When were you conceived?'
She asked. She knew. 'Tell me
More.' The Fate was wiser

Than I am. 'The place? I wish
To hear it: you know it: how
You know it. Now tell me more.'

109

We Imagine Fates

But They know us. Known
By the imagined: imagined
By the known: incipient

On the stage. And where's
The audience?

110

Who Says Fates are Grave?

Not I. Maybe they borrow
Demeanours: emotions: expressions.
Maybe they borrow our seriousness.

Maybe they touch our shoulders
And imagine our lightness of mind
While holding our serious masks.

111

Who Has Written These Lines?

Not the brain behind the hand,
I'd have said. I don't mind.
Some guard identities jealously
Lest they be changed or lost.

Who has written these lines?
A titular mind, apportioning
Space and time in its own locale?
Or something vaster but unknown?

112

The Soul is Simple; as is the Fate

Can there ever be duality? I guess not:
Though I'm ignorant. I guess that soul

And Fate are ultimately one. Maybe

In that unifying state, I'll lose the ignorance
Of words, and come to understand.

113

Does the Fate Have Motives?

Probably not: a chance question.
Who asks it? Not me. Some chancer
On the road who wishes to sell

Pottery without provenance. It has
An image of a Fate about its brim:
Encaustic. Winged, and hovering.

I admire: study: but I do not buy
Someone else's representation.

114

Fates Touch Consciences, I Think

Through our deeds. They hold our brief
Catenaries: and we come to walk them.
We walk their tight-ropes: and we do

Not care to fall. Suns go under: moons arise:
Planets turn: but as for us, we do not care to fall.

115

The Death Motif

Begins in adolescence:
Prior, just, to sexual awakening.
The Fate's expression

Changes with the utmost subtlety.
Did I imagine that change?

116

A Fate's Epitaph

Is rare as rocking-horse shit
Or politicians' admission
Of guilt, or justices' candour.

Fate speaks. I know my length
Of life. I know your prodrome.
You think my epitaph.

117

Heigh-Ho Fate! I Stand Akimbo!

That's a bad way to start: though,
On reconsideration, it might be not.
Though you wouldn't want to do it

More than once or twice: bring it on
More than once or twice — Celestially
Bored, she'll bring down her thumb!

118

The Siren-Singing Fates

But there is no song:
I'd love to hear them
But there are no words.

I'd love to hold the sheet
Written with their thoughts:
But there is no stave.

Imagine the music!

119

The Still Abyss

Lies underneath the tense sensorium;
The brain's aurora flickers in the night sky

As the fingers track the text upon the stone
Written by past hands. All's unique:

Even the still abyss, timeless, vast,
And common to us all.

120

Tough World: Tough Heaven

Striped lawns in the Elysian Fields:
Waters flowing with wine. Fate
Shakes her head: imagine the picture

Of the Gainsborough Lady: hatless,
And frowning, and shaking her head.
Unknown, and frowning,

And shaking her head.

121

What is it in Me

That allows myself to think?
The Fate stood by.
'Do I take it all for granted?

The Fate stood by.
'And how shall it be ended?'
I looked across the meadows;

The Fate stood by.
'Do I think a Fate to be?
Is it my imagining?'

The Fate stood by.

122

Who Am I?

Who is asking? You or I?
If you: then you are asking
Who am I? And you'll get

An empty answer: for who
Am I to ask? If I? Then I'd
Ask the prosaic question:

Prosaic because it's meaningless:
Who are you to ask?

123

Who Created the Fates?

No god in the regular pantheon,
I'm sure; but I wouldn't know.
They aren't weird sisters: those

Are fakes. History is good
At making fakes who bring
A history to a foredrawn end.

Fata Ex Machina, they are not:
The real Fates. Never. No.

124

Who Has a Liking For the Same?

No-one; apart from you: apparently
You like the well-worn paths:
Day-to-day: week-to-week: a year.

Let's stop at that one year. I guess
You can't remember it: portions,
Perhaps. A certain street which

Echoed in the way it did. A pie:
Which you appreciated and which
You now remember: but I bet

You can't recall its taste. So.
Try. See: the pristine's gone. How
You invent, custodian of the pristine,

When the pristine's gone.

125

Why Should I Control You?

But again, why should you
Submit: my will is not divine—
But even so I'll have my way,
You can be sure of that. Wills

Are wills. The strongest
Wills are those you never
See as wills. You don't see me
But I'll have my way, eternally.

126

You Shall Die

Expect: do not wonder:
You shall die. Do not anticipate:
You shall come to die.

There's no prerogative:
You shall come to die.
Do not imagine:

As you must live: So
You must come to die.
For a while you've touched

A mode of living: now the Fate
Decides that you must die.

127

Names

Are disastrous. I need no name
And probably you'll not heed
My warning. Don't trust names:

Not even your own. Your conceptus
Never had a name. A name came
Later. So you were before

You had a name: your soul's unnamed.
A name's the shackle you will accept:
You'll willingly accept your name.

Names are disastrous: the moment
Of your conception was unnamed:
An event untimed. Even the stars

Never knew the time that you were made.
Your horoscope cannot be cast. Names
Are unlovely: perhaps you'll grow

Into yours with duplicity, not liking it.
Names tell untruths about a person
And register parents' expectations

And beliefs. The Fates won't call you
By your name. They'll beckon.
They'll pause. And then they'll point.

THE END

[Link to <http://www.davidwheldon.co.uk/>]