

DEATH: A STARRING ROLE IN THE CELESTIAL SCENARIO

Eons before we encountered the womb
And ventured into death's arena, this
Short apprenticeship we serve between
Revolving epochs, there was a staging room
Where I remember bending toward the kiss
Of light, becoming crystal tourmaline,
And once, part of a pool flooding a ravine,
And next, a mustard seed, the genesis
Of being. And you and I met at times,
You in a hail-storm, then a blue clematis.
But can you recall the others with whom
We shared galactic fires and spiral climbs,
Or did we leave them in the early rimes
Of cooling clay to plan a nobler tomb?

Our blazing fall must have been awesome when
The red giant burst and spewed us through the void.
Swift sidewise flashbacks of the beginning
Ignite the under-edges of our minds then
Vanish like a burned-out comet tail. Freud
Said we forget what we can't face— Did spinning
Through velvet silence, pressure of twinning
Cells blank that memory? Or have we employed
Soft padded rationale on which to lean
Our origins? Perhaps we even enjoyed
The centrifuge, imploded time. All men
Were processed thus. The creation machine
We know as death will one day intervene
And gather us back to stardom again.

Death never was the enemy we thought,
Nor is it sinister or strange. Our acts
Could not go on without it, this pivot tip
That makes the drama work. Our closing is brought
About by saturation, emptied facts,
Not death. It gives us earthly drive and grip,
This old inviolate contract to equip
Us with an exit that repels but attracts,
Spares us rote lines, dull plots, and staling breath.
Foreverness of now and here impacts:
The wise Director leaves no player caught
On stage so long he mouths a shibboleth
Instead of song. The scene is saved by death,
Resumed by understudies we have taught.

But death is just a word we mortals use,
All entities don't regard the same.
No design is new— man, beast or other thing.
Time curves away, form alters to diffuse
Its atoms, rebuilds, takes another name.
Matter returns to an elemental spring;
We must do the same, completing the ring.
Energy recycles, fuels cosmic flame
As basic thread for stars being basted.
Each role we learn supports the total frame;
Evolving stages offer different views.
Nothing we master is lost or wasted;
It fits in vast collages being pasted.
Endings are openings where each part renews.

Transition is a better term. Our scenes
Will change dimensions, turn with different keys
And combinations, be perceived by other
Sensors. Those dimensions number more than genes!
The ones we know will be passé, and of these,
Who understands the fourth? Time is mother
Of birth, death is the sire, space the brother.
Death deserves far better press: veinous freeze
And stumbling lungs are not reacts of truth.
The revulsion we feel is for disease
And wounds and all ignoble painful means
By which we meet, unready and uncouth,
In evil scheme, old age or careless youth.
Fear no death itself— perfection supervenes.