

## *Læne*

*Her bið feoh læne, her bið freond læne,  
her bið mon læne, her bið mæg læne,  
eal þis eorþan gesteal idel weorþeð!*

Here wealth is fleeting, and friends will pass away.  
Here man will surely fail and kinship falter.  
Every abode on earth will stand deserted!

*The Wanderer ll. 108-110*

Remember we are here on sufferance,  
so many nemeses poised all around.  
Carbon pooling in the atmosphere;  
magma pressing hard against the roof  
on which, like flightless birds, we've come to roost;  
glaciers up and down their altitudes  
will squeeze the oceans just like water balloons.

Oort-cloud swarms of planet-killer rocks,  
waiting for some gravitational flick  
thence to nudge a murder of megaton crows  
down the solar chute whose other end  
debouches in the higher airs of earth.  
Where we, below, sprawled on the bloody slab,  
conquistadors beneath obsidian,  
await the last descent to tear the sky.