LIFE

 I. Growth

All mortal beings, born, mature and die.

The scene is set; the menu made. We live

Penned in by pre-programmed procedures. Why

Is not to ask. It's all we have to give.

Birds grow wings. Elephants get big.

Ants crawl, and are, inevitably, small.

Snakes slither side to side. Giraffes are tall

As trees. Always the same. Our routes are rigged.

Mind, through memory, can modify

This mold. Experience can qualify

This set a bit. But it’s not a simple deal.

Words will wound as often as they heal.

Life both skin and skeleton will scar.

But it's just these mars that make us what we are.

 II. Unity

In spite of infinite diversity,

The world is one. Buddha is everywhere.

Correspondences converge. Unity

Is nothing that we need. It's in the air.

The earth speaks to the morning, rocks to springs.

In the fall, leaves yellow, redden, brown, and die.

In summer, the sun is centered in the southern sky.

And in winter, a cold moon rises, and to trees, snow clings.

Fish form schools and swim in swarms. On the plains,

Brown buffaloes bellow below red buttes.

Bees bumble. Beetles bring it on with their best game,

While scholars cite what sages all refute.

Cynics say the world is just a mess.

But they're wrong. The world is one, no less.

 III. Virtue

Our ancient virtues are survival skills,

A suit of armor, a circumscribing skin

We brandish like a bodkin at life's ills.

Courage keeps us safe so we can win.

Temperance trains our troops, keeps order.

Justice gives us codes of conduct. Wisdom,

Through memory, secures our eastern border.

Our Christian virtues save our souls. Love is

Our center, selflessly self-fashioning.

Purity keeps our mind out of the mud.

Hope heals heartache with a future. Faith rations

Reason, and so nips skeptics in the bud.

Platonic forms that fashion how we feel,

Our virtues link our lives to our ideals.