

⁶*The Swinburne Letters*, I, xxv.

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⁷Reprinted in *Swinburne: Selected Poetry and Prose*, p. 326.

Vestibule in Hell

Time, that mournful player of old bones,
Sits aging on his pile of rusted tools,
Tortures himself by staring at clock.
Clock clicks back — that little rat. Time spits.
Sucks on hollow tooth. Jokes with old friend Scythe
About the head-lobbing days. Scythe loves it,
Laughs a scrape out of his old dark scratches.
The two get screwed up into a catastrophe.
Think they'll go out and manage a few old whores.
Time, that mournful player of old bones,
Figures he'll call up Jimmy Death for laughs.

John Dean