

## That Frail and Fickle Fate

At times I get the haunting vision,  
that what we think is our decision  
was pre-decided, ere we've known,  
by something else - as has been shown.<sup>[1]</sup>

Enzymes and gravity and other  
constraints, that often we don't bother  
to think of, set the scene for plants,  
amoebas, mankind, sheep and ants,  
as if there were a magic Loop  
within the gently simmering soup  
of energy-and-time-and-space,  
where weird phenomena take place,  
far off the balanced thermal state,  
where we can't peer into the fate.<sup>[2]</sup>

Where structures vanish and emerge  
and sometimes show a sudden urge  
to branch in unexpected dashes  
just like a Phoenix from the ashes,  
as if to cleverly outsmart  
the Second Law by arcane art.

The Law takes care that you, tomorrow,  
return what you today might borrow;  
that heat flow, motion and diffusion  
establish equidistribution.<sup>[3]</sup>  
The Loop, instead, promotes a greed  
to heap up more than one would need:  
Thermodynamics, what the heck,  
take what you can, don't give it back.

Alas, the competition 's rough!  
So, if you dawdle or ain't tough,  
somebody else will squat your niche,  
will snatch your plate and eat your quiche.

But what you grasp with strain and wile  
is just a transitory file  
recycled in the Loop's next round,  
for nothing's lost that can't be found.  
Except for what, by dissipation,  
got moved into a dump location  
of thermal chaos (what a pity,  
that's not exactly Emerald City)<sup>[4]</sup>.  
And yet, maybe as times advance,  
Emergence gets a second chance.<sup>[5]</sup>

But who will in the end succeed?  
The Second Law or Loopy Greed?  
Will destiny bring cosmic glare  
or utter blackness - with no hair?<sup>[6]</sup>  
It begs the question, as a twist:  
Is Nature art- or commun-ist?

We all are part of this exotic  
and irreversibly entropic  
procedure which the Loop has brought,  
and queerer is than we had thought.  
But if this Loop had never been,  
there'd be no life, no time we're in,  
no football, bible, art, blue sky,  
and no-one who would wonder why . . .

Ernst H. Jager

<sup>[1]</sup> G. Roth: "*Fühlen, Denken, Handeln*", Suhrkamp (2001); <sup>[2]</sup> I. R. Prigogine: "*From Being to Becoming*", Freeman (1980);

<sup>[3]</sup> Ch. Gerthsen et al.: "*Physik*", Springer (1989); <sup>[4]</sup> L. F. Baum: "*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*", G. M. Hill (1900);

<sup>[5]</sup> R. B. Laughlin: "*A Different Universe*", Basic Books (2005); <sup>[6]</sup> Ch. W. Misner et al.: "*Gravitation*", Freeman (1973).