

THE FLOATER

Floating, floating through the stars,
Choosing, gaining, losing, waning,
Wanting to be free to be enslaved
To the unscratchable worldly itch:
“Wanting my rights! Doing my thing!”
But wanting their rights, too...
“Hey! Stop judging, you bigot!”

Floating, floating in a philosophical soup
Of lifeless molecules a billion years ago.
Whammo, by Chance! Whammo!
Well, for the love of Chance, a cell...

“Let me out of this cage, you hypocrites!
That pig got what was coming.
Anyway, it’s your own fault.
You taught us how in Nam!”

Floating, floating away, furiously demanding
Something meaningful to scratch the itch,
Away from the lightning accident of Chance
In the chemical soup a billion years ago
That they taught about in public school.
“None of that Sunday school jive, okay?
Man, forget that whole trip.”

“Where’s home base? My roots? Ha!
Mom and Dad? They split, ‘cause Dad was gay.
School? I quit! I didn’t fit.
My boss? A dim wit, and I hated the pay.
My second wife? Well, there was this girl...
But me, I have to be me, I have to be free.
So let me be and quit your lousy preaching.
We’re just animals, anyway, right?
And I’m going for all I can get out of it.
So, stop bugging me with the silly God-routine.
Sure, I believe in a god, but not your kind.
I believe in. . . I. . . I. . . Oh my god! I, Ah-h-h!”

Chance blew it with that mortally faulty
Cardiovascular evolvement, so very prone
To atherosclerotic obstructive fatality,
When the animal eats all it thinks it wants;
When the animal doesn't get enough exercise;
When the animal is under too much stress:
Whammo, by Chance! Whammo! "You're dead!"

And then, the most awesome realization
In an unending, inescapable eternity:
The floater ate soup at the wrong restaurant,
Played the whole game of life on his own,
Making no effort to find out the rules,
Floated out in left field all his life scratching,
Missed Home Base and slid instead into the Pit,
Forever cursing the Umpire who called, "You're out!"

Chance had absolutely nothing to do with it.
Floaters do their own thing to the very end,
Only to find, when the journey is over,
That there really is an Umpire after all.

— *David L. Hatton, 1980*