

THE DEVIL TEACHES THERMODYNAMICS

My second law, your second law, ordains that local order, structures in space and time, be crafted in ever-so-losing contention with proximal disorder in this neat but getting messier universe. And we, in the intricate machinery of our healthy bodies and life-support systems, in the written and televised word do declare the majesty of the zoning ordinances of this Law. But oh so smart, we think that we are not things, like weeds, or rust, or plain boulders, and so invent a reason for an eternal subsidy of our perfection, or at least perfectibility, give it the names of God or the immortal soul. And while we allow the dissipations that cannot be hid, like death, and — in literary stances — even the end of love, we make the others just plain evil: anger, lust, pride — the whole lot of pimples of the spirit. Diseases need vectors, so the old call goes out for me. But the kicker is that the struts of God's stave church, those nice seven, they're such a tense and compressed support group that when they get through you're really ready to let off some magma. Faith serves up passing certitude to weak minds, recruits for the cults, and too much of her is going to play hell with that other grand invention of yours, the social contract. Boring Prudence hangs around with conservatives, and Love, love you say! Love one, leave out the others. Love them all, none will love you. I tell you, friends, love is the greatest entropy-increasing device invented by God. Love is my law's sweet man. And for God himself, well, his oneness seems too much for natural man to love, so he comes up with Northern Irelands and Lebanons...

The argument to be made is not for your run-of-the-mill degeneracy, my stereotype. No, I want us to awake, join the imperfect universe at peace with

the disorder that orders. For the cold
death sets in slowly, and there is time,
so much time, for the stars' light to scatter
off the eddies of chance, into our minds,
there to build ever more perfect loves,
invisible cities, our own constellations.