**Prayer Before Birth**  
  
I am not yet born; O hear me.   
Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the   
      club-footed ghoul come near me.   
  
I am not yet born, console me.   
I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,  
      with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,  
           on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me.   
  
I am not yet born; provide me   
With water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk   
      to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light   
           in the back of my mind to guide me.   
  
I am not yet born; forgive me   
For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words   
      when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me,   
           my treason engendered by traitors beyond me,   
                my life when they murder by means of my   
                     hands, my death when they live me.   
  
I am not yet born; rehearse me   
In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when   
      old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains   
           frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white   
                waves call me to folly and the desert calls   
                     me to doom and the beggar refuses   
                          my gift and my children curse me.   
  
I am not yet born; O hear me,   
Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God   
      come near me.   
  
I am not yet born; O fill me   
With strength against those who would freeze my   
      humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton,   
           would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with   
                one face, a thing, and against all those   
                     who would dissipate my entirety, would   
                          blow me like thistledown hither and   
                               thither or hither and thither   
                                    like water held in the   
                                         hands would spill me.   
  
Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.   
Otherwise kill me.   
  
                                                                                                                                       Louis MacNeice