

Charles Watkins
by Jeremy Luke Hill

I am he, with foreignness struck,
breathing the insupportable air,
where those fomenting justice
from folds of fire, watch eye to eye
through silky fronds of flame.

I see them as in a mirror,
the glossy side of a toppling wave,
a water-smoothed stone shining
like glass, reflecting flesh-time
in scales of time, wrapping together
Andromeda time, galaxy time,
moon time (oh woe and alas),
anything but Earth time.

Down among the dead,
where sweet sleep has dreams
that daylight never knew,
sweet promising dreams,
marvelling visitors who know
and tell that behind (or before),
that down (or up), is the door out
into the sweet light of day.

– from Doris Lessing's
Briefing for a Descent into Hell