

### To Becky or Ben

From blastocyst, to fish, to ape,  
 our DNA ticks off your fate,  
 suspended in your normal saline,  
 you mature up to that first gate.

Your nature and nurture will blossom  
 in some unforeseeable hell  
 or heaven of a coming age.  
 Processed sooner, I wish you well.

— *Robert L. Tyler*

### Strangers

My final manhood — the thought that time  
 Is calling me back into her cave —  
 Came to me tonight talking with my father  
 About his father's unknown father,  
 The stranger who lay with my great-grandmother  
 In 1877 before she was great or grand or mother,  
 But a girl: I saw them on a foggy night  
 In warm damp darkness, or on a cliff of yellow flowers  
 Overlooking a bay of pregnant death.  
 I said to my father that he and I  
 May owe our being to a wild whim,  
 Or a lunar need, or a gypsy smile.  
 Then came the truth, stronger than usual:  
 Prepared to see myself (once again)  
 As the lucky climax to century of family  
 I had forgotten, for a moment, my newborn son.

— *Michael Brian Oliver*