

PRAYER BEFORE BIRTH – LOUIS MACNEICE

I am not yet born, O hear me.

Let not the bloodsucking bat, or the rat, or the stoat, or the clubfooted 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 from me, tress 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 (please).

For the sins that I 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.

I am not yet born, rehearse me.

In the parts that 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.

I am not yet born, O fill me.

With strength against those who would freeze my humanity, would dragoon
me into lethal automation, 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 tither and tither and tither 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.