

When All Has Been Given

and all taken

(and both have been taker and giver)
time's womb is the room they wake in;
what bauble will it deliver?
Have charged poles, pronged and plussed,
uniting themselves in desire,
lost Venus' cross, Mars' arrow of lust:
smoke rings from the Phoenix fire?
Or popped to birth Donne's hemispheres?
whose torrid equators might
merge in the flux of flea-bitten years
if not cooled by equilibrious sneers
congealing by polar night
to thicken a skin around captive fire
and drive an axis through poles of desire.

—Edward Hart