

Martin Robertson

Balance Sheet

Not so much the fear of dying or of being dead
(absolute nothingness
is what we can't conceive
but must imply at least
an absence of unrest)
not so much fear... rather distress
knowing so much is done
badly or left undone,
and if something's done well, not knowing at all
if that can help the scalepan fall.

To stand before a judgement-seat
and hear just what
the things we've done, the things we've not
are in an absolute cold light
to sink or save us...

Or

to be sent back—
another life, down or up the scale,
again, again, again, until
our beterness prevail
to free us from the wheel...

Either of these. But these and anything
like these lie outside
my sense of what might be.

No, alone one has to make
(fumbling in the dark,
measuring light against dark,
light against prevailing dark)
one's own garbled, prejudiced reckoning.