

“The Scientist as Gambling Man”

When a body exerting force (say yours)
comes in contact with the body
on which this force is exerted (say mine)
we have that branch of physics
called Mechanics: the horse's shoulder
leaning in its harness the jockey's
stirrup bending to the boot These
are called contact forces: push-pull pull-push

But other forces race through empty space
called action-at-a-distance forces
Your weight perfect for the Derby
is a measurement of gravity's attraction
as well as mine And starshine sprinting
through your hair from distances that terrify
the heart reflects another as does
a rigid compass needling toward true North

Even dreams could they be measured
by their melting instruments have weight
and scope Those talking numbers beckoning
last night like pimps or touts who know
the world is fixed lie on my morning
like Pimlico's results proclaiming
the low percentage on this earth
of constancy in ordinary bodies

This may be so: a scientific tool
for measuring mechanics of devotion
where the balance of opposing forces
as in revolving doors or starting gates
is measured by a coiled spring and the odds
that we'll emerge from this together
are smaller than the smallest jockey's foot
It may be so: I'll wait to see proof