Ezekiel's Wheel

by Edward Nelson

The planets and the moons that Galileo saw
Revolve and move within a groove
That always will endure;
They never cease to flow in peace,
Predictable and sure:
They are a wheel that turns by certain law.

The atoms when they meet perform a wilder dance —
They intertwine and recombine
In long concatenations,
With sudden bump and quantum jump
In radiant fulminations:
They are a wheel that turns by ordered chance.

The leopard, if he leaps or crouches waiting still,
Knows loss or gain and pleasure-pain
Within his brutish musing —
To jump his prey or go away
Decides of his own choosing:
He is a wheel that turns by innate will.

My woman, when she sings with joyful glowing face
Our spirits lift to meet the gift
And share in exaltation —
She reaches out to fear and doubt
In loving conversation:
She is a wheel that turns by God's own grace.