

Decision

Had I known the end when I began,
Gussed how high the count of years would go,
Felt disappointment, gut deep, blood wide,
In the clear-eyed morning mirror,
Weighed my contribution, my results,
Compared the wasted words of memos and reports
With poems, plays, and essays never done,
Reviewed a prime's worth of decisions,
Measured my waist at 36,
Found my forehead bare above the lines,
Heard my cracking voice struggle for an E,
Yearned to raise a child again,
To undo, redo, teaching, helping, love,
Ached for relationships lost, destroyed,
Stared busy loneliness in his bloodshot eye,
Read my x-ray with a time trained eye,
Finding the cancer you said was there
But my careless glance denied,
Would success have snared me then,
Applause so thrilled, winning won?
Would Proverbs 3 have reached me,
Romans 6:12 shown the way?
Would I have heard you, Father,
Stayed with you, followed, obeyed?
Will I now?
Seeing the future through my lens of loss,
Will I listen now?

Robert D. Smith, age 44