

# TOWARD WISDOM

for Copthorne Macdonald's [wisdompage.com](http://wisdompage.com)

## I

We are a dangerous experiment  
The Universe has curiously wrought  
To see if something so innately bent  
Can finally and happily be taught  
Through perilous trial and error to grow wise,  
Which means to go beyond the cruelty  
And conflict of our past and realize  
Compassionate rapport and harmony.  
Like "sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,"  
Our kind has yet to master harmony,  
And what might be high drama looks like farce  
Or worse—a universal tragedy.  
    But still we may succeed and happily mend,  
    If we take wisdom as our highest end.

## II

How will we know that humans have grown wise?  
When *Homo sapiens sapiens* realize  
What is implicit in our hopeful name  
And can our clear benevolence proclaim.

When humankind at last grows truly kind,  
The happy end for which we seem designed,  
And all our wicked waywardness is mended,  
We'll reach that state for which we are intended.

For what is wisdom but to realize  
The double prudence that our name implies?

## III

With care, compassion, kind solicitude  
Is lasting human happiness pursued;

There is no other way to realize  
What sages seek: the art of being wise,

For wisdom's not a cogitative art  
As much as it's a habit of your heart,

And there's no earthly purpose that's above  
Your tendering and garnering of love.

## THE VIRTUES OF THE WISE

If you'd be wise, then you would realize  
Those virtues that a prudent person owns:  
Compassion that secures our human ties,  
Humility that modulates our tones,

The peacefulness of equanimity,  
Wonder, joy, humility, insight,  
Sound judgment, vision, self-sufficiency,  
That generosity which breeds delight,

A positive and up-beat attitude,  
Discernment to distinguish what is sound,

A disposition to show gratitude,  
An oriented sense of where you're bound.

There are yet further virtues to attain,  
But these should do to keep you safe and sane.

*—Alan Nordstrom*