

To Luck

By W. S. Merwin

In the cards and at the bend in the road
we never saw you
in the womb and in the crossfire
in the numbers
whatever you had your hand in
which was everything
we were told never to put
our faith in you
to bow to you humbly after all
because in the end there was nothing
else we could do
but not to believe in you

still we might coax you with pebbles
kept warm in the hand
or coins or the relics
of vanished animals
observances rituals
not binding upon you
who make no promises
we might do such things only
not to neglect you
and risk your disfavor
oh you who are never the same
who are secret as the day when it comes
you whom we explain
as often as we can
without understanding

Source: Poetry



A prolific poet and translator, W.S. Merwin's style changed over the years from traditional to free form. He won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize for his first book, *A Mask for Janus*, published in 1952, and the Pulitzer Prize for his 1970 collection *The Carrier of Ladders*. A prolific writer, he was the author of over 50 books of poetry, prose, and translations. Merwin lived in Hawaii for the last 40 years

of his life; he was a devoted environmentalist and many of his poems take up ecological themes. He was appointed Poet Laureate of the United States in 2010. He died in 2019.

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