

## THE END OF FAUST, THE SECULAR HUMANIST

*by Alan Nordstrom*

### *Bad Angel:*

All right, you old agnostic, here's the deal:  
In one day you'll be dead, so make your choice,  
Get off the fence, acknowledge Hell is real,  
And while you live, your wish is my invoice;  
The tab's on me for anything you lack  
To make your unambitious life complete.  
You've neither dreamt nor dared, your hope's hung  
    slack,  
Your death will leave no void, so I repeat:  
Sell us your soul, put all your stock in fame,  
Deny the possibility of bliss,  
And you shall win forever world acclaim—  
You'll weave a sonnet worth Athena's kiss.  
    You see how profitless is disbelief:  
    Choose Hell, live well, and banish grief.

Alan Nordstrom is Professor of English at Rollins College, Box 2672, Winter Park, FL 32789; e-mail [anordstrom@rollins.edu](mailto:anordstrom@rollins.edu).

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*Good Angel:*

To find relief, Faust, in your waning hours,  
Ignore such blandishments of worldly fame  
As devils brandish, promising vain powers  
Of poetry or prose, and rather aim  
Beyond mere mortal grandeur, transient  
As time, susceptible to fashion, taste,  
And ignorance, a moment's monument  
Condemned to crumble to momentous waste.  
Aim higher, man; transcend the transient,  
Affine your soul unto the infinite,  
Renounce both doubt and hell and then repent  
Your disbelief, reprove your sins, and sit  
    In heavenly glory near the throne of God,  
    Bright angel then, no longer gilded clod.

*Faust:*

Not angel nor a gilded clod shall I  
Aspire to be, I thank you nonetheless.  
Though four and twenty hours might serve to buy  
Me fame or bliss and lighten my duress  
In facing death, I cannot now accept  
Relief on such conditions, with good cause.  
While both of you, with rhetoric adept,  
Have made your case, yet reason gives me pause,  
For reason offers laws and proofs that death  
Concludes all life and that the world as well  
Will end in time, and time along with breath  
Will end, ending all dreams of heaven and hell.  
    Avaunt, vain fantasies, keep your relief.  
    I choose an honest death in disbelief.