

Dusk or Dawn

Demons drink
blood and tears
from the skull cup
of killing

The knife of death
sends consciousness
off to seek safety
where none can be found

The blood of others
keeps the self
safe and strong,
the sole survivor

The tears of others
keeps the self
refreshed and
a little thirsty

Cruelty keeps
their hearts
free of the taint
of compassion

Beings are diminished
by fear
while the merciless
triumph alone

Predator and prey
are born together
into a game
that never ends

Herukas drink
blood and tears
from the skull-cup
of emptiness

The knife of wisdom
cuts out the cataract
of duality
letting awareness shine

The blood of delusion
keeps awareness
bright and clear,
the sole refuge

The tears of the lost
keep awareness
effortlessly emptying
the ocean of suffering

Kindness keeps
the heart
free of the taint
of self-cherishing

Love for others
revives their hearts
while the merciful
cut them free

Saviour and saved
are born together
in the simplicity
of their unborn source

Compassion without
the wisdom of emptiness
will merely replenish
the source of suffering

Illusion grows heavy
with belief
in the real,
enveloping us in delusion

This illusory real
is the seriousness of samsara,
the thickening veil
of unawareness

When self and others
seemed separated
their need
for each other
gives birth
to demons

Since self and other
are inseparable
their unborn
ceaseless play
gives birth
to buddhas

James Low, March 2022