

Compass, Abacus

Compass, abacus, algebra, fine damask
from silk spun with wool, glass into new
transparencies, spices, paper ledgers,
noodles hash ducats and florins the fork,
Indo-Arabic numerals and the zero. . . .

Lady Luck both muse and nemesis
of capitalists since the heyday of Florence and Venice —
blind Justice and one-eyed Injustice,
Fortuna's wheel up and down *Natura*
naturing, only uncertainty certain

neglecting all the other goddesses
in her retinue — those ample figures
the songs immortalize: beneficent
sloe- and bedroom-eyed infinitives
entered in columns with deft recursive strokes

conspicuously absent from moral accounts
kept by more scrupulous merchant-bankers
their places taken by strictly material goods
reasonably durable and attractively priced
with shelf lives yet to be determined

setting the imagination free —
fantasy fancy faith by any other name —
to realize all parties to the transaction, as
they aren't no less than as they might be—
which is no way to run a business.