

Reginald Gibbons

Bad Families of the Western World

Earth gave birth to Heaven and then
she slept with him, and by him had
more children.

But then Heaven tried
to push them back inside her womb —
(Angry at what she'd let him do?)

Later, hidden Kronos leapt up
behind his father Heaven and cut
off Heaven's balls.

But some years after,
this Kronos stood near at the births
of *his* offspring and gobbled them
alive as they saw light.

But then
the strongest, Zeus, whose mother hid
him till he'd grown, was helped by her
and tumbled Kronos down in turn.

But all the rest were weak as pups.
Zeus ruled them every one.
He toyed with goddesses and girls.
He did not pity men.

Thus recorded in early texts,
the classic patterns, the spoiling rage,
the damaged lives now damaging —

thus fiends and furies, titans, giants,
much human life, so far; thus fathers
with their sons; and sons with theirs.