

DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE

Lyrics © 2007 by Richard Milner and John Woram
(in homage to W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan)

I was lying awake with a dismal headache,
And my sleep was put off by anxiety.
For I feared that my plan of explaining how man
Had evolved would provoke notoriety.

Though I'd fled London town for the village of Down
And a home that is quiet and regal,
Yet I get no repose, and I can't even doze
Without dreaming I'm back on the Beagle.

We are rounding the Horn in a furious storm
And our progress is measured in inches,
Then we're rolling around 'til the crew's
almost drowned
And they scatter like terrified finches.

Cap'n FitzRoy's in a mood, and he's coming unglued
And cannot say where our next port is.
I fear he's unwell, for he's sprouted a shell,
And turns into a monstrous tortoise.

He ignores the enormity of this deformity,
Carapace, scales, and the rest of it,
And vows his complexion is close to perfection,
And as for my fears, makes a jest of it.

After ten thousand miles—the Galapagos isles,
Now I'm tense and exceedingly wary.
For I fear that this place could result in disgrace
When I use it to further my theory.

Then I scramble ashore as the sea lions roar,
And I hear a contemptuous snicker,
I glance up in a tree, and there what do I see?
Seven chimps and an Anglican vicar.

It's not hard to tell that they're all mad as hell,
So I ask, "What's the source of your fury?"
His Grace's retort is "Silence in Court!"
For I am your judge and your jury."

With a barrister's smile, he declares I'm on trial
And tells me the cause of his action.
"You cannot escape, for you said 'man's an ape,'
And my clients demand satisfaction."

To challenge my fitness, he calls his first witness
An albatross down from Guiana.
But the bird flips its tail and turns into a snail,
Then uncoils and becomes an iguana.

The judge is perplexed, and I say, 'Don't be vexed,
We've been changing since Adam's arrival.
The monk in his cloister descends from an oyster,
The fittest have mastered survival."

His Honor says, "Quiet! The court will not buy it,
You mock, Sir, the truth of Creation,
You've played fast and loose, now your
neck's in a noose,
And you're off to eternal damnation."

I've given up hope as he tightens the rope
And the chimps start to make a commotion
Then a wave hits the shore with a volcanic roar
And the island sinks under the ocean.

With a shriek I awake, and it's all a mistake,
The iguana is really a kitten.
No chimps are in sight on this miserable night,
And no wonder -- I'm back in Great Britain.

I'm a regular wreck with a crick in my neck,
My anxiety's hardly diminished.
And the night's been too long, ditto-ditto my song,
And thank goodness -- they're both of them finished!



WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?

Lyrics ©1992 by Richard Milner. Music by Jacques Semmelman

(When Darwin's friend Thomas Henry Huxley first read "The Origin of Species" in 1859, he exclaimed, "How incredibly stupid not to have thought of that myself!")



Of course! Of course! It must be so,
I should have seen it long ago.

'Twas adaptive radiation that produced the mighty whale
His hands have grown to flippers and he has a fishy tail.
Selection's made him streamlined for his liquid habitat.
Why didn't I think of that?



There was an ancient mammal that could hop and leap around
But with webbing 'twixt his fingers, he could fly right off the ground.
And so this mousy creature evolved into a bat.
Why didn't I think of that?



There are fossils in the ground, protozoa in the sea
All these unrelated facts
Made a monkey out of me.
But now I see how species were selectively defined.
Oh, how could I have been so ruddy blind?



There was an ancient monkey with a long and curly tail.
This ape evolved into a man
(He's teaching now at Yale.)
A chimp could pass for upper class
In gloves and a cravat
Why didn't I think of that?

The struggle for survival lies outside the jungle, too.
Just take a look at Parliament, it's better than a zoo!
We're at each other's throats just like
the bulldog and the cat.



But why didn't I, why didn't I —
Your ideas on evolution will create a revolution!
Why didn't I think of that?



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