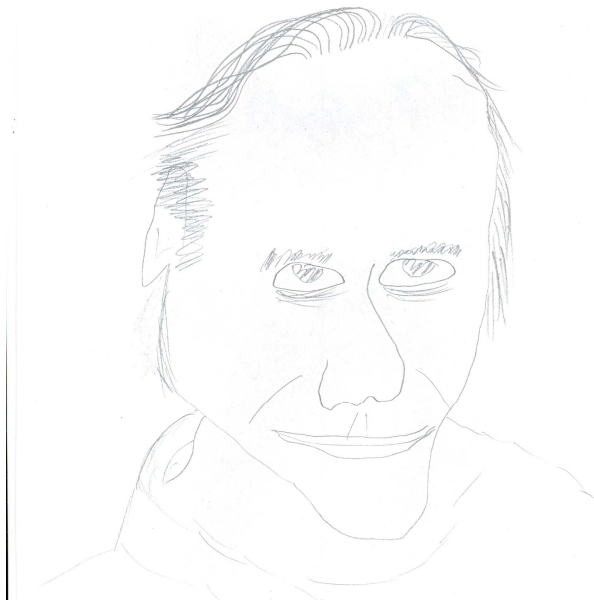


Sir Dicky Dinkins Explains the Whole Entire History of Human Evolution—Or, The Knight’s Tale

Dedicated to that most worthy
of all Her Majesty’s subjects
(just ask him—he’ll tell you),

Sir Richard Dinkins:

“Evolution helps those who help themselves.” (*The
Selfish Jean*)



Sir Richard in repose

The General Prologue

When April with its showers so sweet
Warms the earth beneath our feet
Cold weather beats its slow retreat
Winter's done! Here comes the sun!
Now let us all rejuvenate!
Let's get it on! We cannot wait
Tender crops and small fowl
Barnyard mouse and barnyard owl
Make their lovely melody
Right there alongside you and me
This is the time of year as well
When the pompous ass comes out to tell
How it all got to be so swell

So let us visit Angle-land
Where the knights of new now make their stand
Whose weapon is the mighty pen
Or sometimes play the bass guitar
And woo the groupies near and far
Or sometimes prance with hands on hips
Pursing those enormous lips
While another strikes the small white ball
And another fills the concert hall
And others still take up the stage
And one is even all the rage
Crooning to the ladies fair
Who hurl at him their underwear!
Some run banks and corporations
Others run entire nations
Some find notoriety
Making all those films we see

While others, pensive, calculate
And speculate about our fate
Where did we come from?
Where will we go?

The pompous ass presumes to know!
He is learned; he is wise
Much smarter than those other guys
Just ask him; he will tell you sure
This guy's not spreading cow manure
He has studied; he has pondered
Near and far the man has wandered
No ordinary scientist
Don't call him that or he'll get pissed
His genius cannot be denied
He's talked about it far and wide
Where we come from is not a mystery
This guy knows our whole damn history.
Nor did he see it in the tea leaves
Or read it in a crystal ball

Oh no! Far from it—he's a scholar
Much more bookish than we all are
From the facts he can deduce
That which escapes the more obtuse
Moreover, he can turn it loose
In language that is guaranteed
To blow your mind (if you can read)
He'll set you straight in verse that's fine
Just like a comedy divine
The pompous ass is a classy guy
He'll tell you that; he is not shy
He will not merely educate you
But just for kicks he will berate you
Why should he want to placate you?
He is the better man.

So listen to his knightly tale
And see if it can move you
As little as you seem to know
It surely will improve you
If his story seems farfetched
Try to let your minds be stretched
You've been weaned on superstition

Let's see you get some erudition
The Knight's Tale may be speculation
But it shows real imagination
So please try not to criticize
Don't skewer our hero with your lies
Listen now respectfully
He'll tell you how we came to be
The gentle knight will now astound you
With his brilliance he'll surround you
Listen now and don't be frightened
Prepare yourselves to be enlightened
Yes, he'll school you; yes, he'll train you
But he will also entertain you
He'll tell his tale with charm and wit
So please don't say he's full of . . . it.

The Gentle Knight's Tale

At first there was naught but darkness and void
The Earth was shapeless, without form
But then we think it got really warm
The formless mass began to bubble
A witches' brew portending trouble
In the brew were little bugs
Much smaller than the garden slugs
These creatures were such simpletons
That they could never be the ones
To bring about life complicated
So they waited and they waited
Until through some mysterious turn
Passage they might finally earn
To history evolutionary

Such a journey they must make!
(Without intention undertake)
Moreover they must wander blindly
No Old Man's hand to guide them kindly
Or chasten them when they should stray
Return them to the godly way
Or thwart for them their enemies
Drive those suckers to their knees!
Make them beg, "Don't hurt me, please!"
With helpful plague or helpful famine

God would send those bad guys scrammin'
Beat them back and make them beg
Bust a head or bust a leg
Heathen and apostate smite
With all His beatific might

And when His flock again should falter
He'd scare them straight back to the altar
(These guys have little faith, I know,
That's what makes them human though)
The only way to set them right
Is with a little well-placed fright
Burn a city, send a flood
Warn them, "I mean business, Bud."
Make them wander in some desert
Send some frogs or maybe locusts
Or turn some mighty river red
(That'll get inside their head)
Or tempt them with some golden treasure
Wine so tasty, carnal pleasure
Then smack them down when they should stray
Take the eldest son away

"Listen up, idol-a-tors!
Leave your boozin' and your whores!
And get back on the godly way
Promise me you'll never stray
'Not again,' let's hear you say
And just to seal the deal you'll pray
'Father, take my sins away!'
So get low, sinners, do it quick
'Cause I can make you really sick
I can blind you, I can maim you
Or maybe I will just defame you
If I see you're not prostrate
I shall put you in that state
Bow before me! Take a knee!
Beg forgiveness, make your plea
You'd better get your mind right, friend
Or I'll send you to a painful end."

But no! This story's no such tripe
All that fire and brimstone hype
Our god is not the jealous type

He'll not condemn us with His curses
Couched in those ungainly verses
This god maintains a view impartial
No, not loving—but neither martial
This god is blind to good and bad
No sense of either ever had
Just makes the world keep right on turning
Sometimes freezing, sometimes burning
But this god has no earthly yearning
Doesn't care what happens next
If the world by plagues is vexed
Or if our future intersects
With some grand and glorious end.
This god just doesn't care, my friend

So let us get back to our bugs
Smaller than the garden slugs
Little teeny tiny guys
Couldn't see; they had no eyes
Bubbling in primordial slime
Could not mark the march of Time
Had not will or consciousness
About past or future they could care less
Living in the there and then
What we might call survival mode
They bore their teeny tiny load
And made their teeny tiny way
Toward this unseen distant day
When we might scratch our heads and say,
"I wonder where we came from!"
Onward, onward, inexorably
Had no clue they'd someday be
Such fine specimens as you and me
Have to stand (or sit) to pee
And contemplate their destiny
And come to understand it.

Yet somehow in their mindless state
They managed still to gravitate
Toward the here and now
They did not ponder destiny
Did not envision you and me
Nor wonder what the world might be
Yet here they came, relentlessly

Onward, onward, without thinking
Ages passed; they just kept slinking
Onward, onward, mindless still
Millennia they had to kill
Years and years and years to fill
With naught but bare subsistence

Until one day they made the leap
Across that gap so wide and deep
The eukaryotic chasm
No thinking creature would attempt it
(Some folks say I merely dreamt it
“Well, how’d they do it?” they demand
But they would never understand
They want a world that’s fully planned
Some bearded geezer pulling handles
Long white robe and leather sandals
Pushing buttons, working wonders
Makes excuses for his blunders
Says, “I did it out of love
Question not your Lord above”)

Question neither this one here
Just shut your yap and lend your ear
Besides, it’s not so hard to fathom
How they leapt across the chasm
One germ meets up with another
Call one “Dad” and call one “Mother”
One of them gets stuck inside
The other and they grow together
Maybe throw some sunlight in
To start a chemical reaction
(Think of it as being like
An editorial redaction)
And if in your resisting
Mind you still can’t get no satisfaction
Please don’t call me crazy
For heaven’s sake I’m not psychotic
This is all just symbiotic
One cell melds into another
Something they just do for fun
Pretty soon the two are one
And now you’ve got your nucleated cell



Britannicum Supercilium:
the first nucleated cell

No, it's not a person yet
Don't call it Bill or Sam or Chet
Yes, these cells have nuclei
(And I have just informed you why)
But many rendezvous remain
For this evolutionary train
Many stops along the way
To get where we have got today
These little cells were still quite simple
Simpler than a wart or pimple
Simpler even than a Beatle
(John, Paul, George, Ringo
In unscientific lingo)
But they had what it would take
To make a monkey or a snake
To make a mallard or a drake
To constitute a dog or cat
A pound of flesh, a pound of fat
A preying this, a flowering that
They had now what once had lacked
(And, honey, that's a natural fact)
More little parts to interact
And build a better mousetrap—or
Maybe not, but they could grow
More organisms than you know
Just by sucking up more germs
Along their merry way
Toward the world we see today

And suck up germs is what they did
(I ain't lying either, kid)
Like some cinematic freak
Direct from Hollywood
Or perhaps a Japanese creation
Made with cheesy animation
Giant monster from the sea
Looks like something that might be
In the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade
But this big fellow's no attraction
Come to make the kiddies smile
This guy's big and mean and vile
Moreover, he's escaped his isle
And now he's wreaking havoc
Snatching airplanes from the sky
Making lots of people die
Just by knocking buildings down
As he stomps across the town
People running! People screaming!
Away from him in terror streaming
Please tell us that we're only dreaming!

But wait a minute—I digress
Once again I've made a mess
Of this evolutionary tale
Let's get back to our little bugs
Much smaller than the garden slugs
But growing more and more complex
With every germ they swallow up
With every new bug they create
With every teeny tiny step
Toward the world we see today
Begins the next important act
In our history-building play
Our tiny species find their way
Into the history-building fray
Branching into families
Each family to its phylum
Each phylum to its kingdom
Each kingdom finds its place
And every species must compete
In this history-building race.

So listen up now, take some notes

'Cause this is what I'm thinking
I've got the whole thing figured out
(And no, I've not been drinking)
Rushing forward quickly now
From teeny tiny bugs
Here is how we made our way
To worms and garden slugs
Here is how we made our way
To kitty cats and puppies
Here is how we made our way
To Beemer-driving yuppies
Here is how we made our way
To moms and apple pie
To fishes in the deep blue sea
And birds up in the sky
To lying politicians
Who think they know what's best
But everything they do "for" us
Just makes us more distressed
To preachers and to teachers
To cabbies and to cops
To bakers and their baked goods
And farmers and their crops
And, yes, to famous scientists
And other deep, deep thinkers
Sure those politicians lie
But we too tell some stinkers

"Enough, enough," I hear you say
"Get on with it; it's getting late
Surely there is more to life
Than hearing you pontificate
You tell us that your story's deep
But right now it's just boring
We're on the very verge of sleep
And soon you'll hear us snoring"
Well, all right, then, is my reply
You've waited and you've waited
I guess it's finally time to let
Curiosity be sated
But don't forget, you peons
This storyteller's knighted
Let your insults go too far
And your futures might be blighted

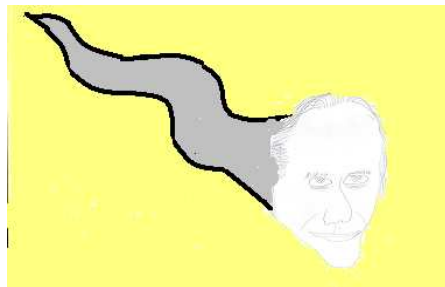
Best to use discretion
When you're criticizing me
'Cause I have friends in places high
And let me tell you, they're not shy
About helping out a friend, you see
This welfare state that I embrace
Can be an unforgiving place
When you bump heads with one who
Has friends higher up than you do
So smooth your ruffled feathers
And soothe your restless nerves
It's in your own best interest
To remember just who serves
And just who is the master
And buddies with the Queen
In your case it might just be best
To remain not heard but seen

Do we understand each other?
Here's hoping that we do
'Cause, friends, my friends
Can make life quite miserable for you
But if we understand each other
Then I can return
To my glorious recounting
Of the story that you spurn
And you can just pretend
That with eagerness you burn
And then we'll all be happy
With the lesson that we learn
You'll learn the power of statist power
To tell you what to think
And I shall learn—well, the same—
And we'll all be in synch.

So here it is, the story of life
Not steeped in superstition
But from a genius world renown
For his erudition
Not from crazy nut-jobs
Whose evangelistic zeal
Clouds their minds and blinds them
To everything that's real
Not from religious zealots

But from a guy who's known
For dropping pearls of wisdom
Like a rabbit dropping pellets—
Or something like that
At any rate it's coming now
There's nothing that can stop it
But this pearl's really heavy
So try hard not to drop it

The years kept going by and by
As they're prone to do
Thousands into millions turned
And more organisms grew
The germs begat more germs
And some of them took root
And others on the byways
Of the Road of Life did scoot
Some germs begat the veggies
And some the little bugs
And some begat the worms
That begat the garden slugs
And some germs begat fishes
To inhabit oceans deep
To wriggle through the water
Or on ocean bottoms creep
Some of them had backbones
And some no spine at all
Some of them grew fins to swim
But others had to crawl



The Dinkness Monster (aka “Dinky”)

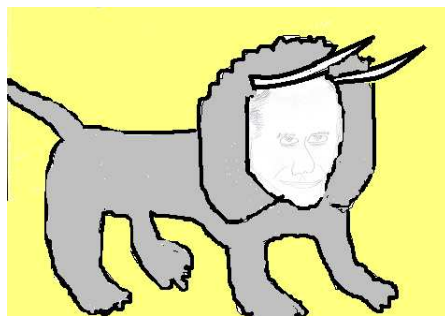
And how in the world
Do I know all this?
I know that's what you're pondering
You should be trying to learn it all

But I know your minds are wandering
Well, it certainly didn't come to me
In a vision that I had
While sampling some chemicals
From Zanzibar or Chad
And, no, it didn't come to me
One night when I was stinking
Rest assured this theory
Is no product of my drinking
And you know better than to ask
If it was inspired by God
You know I place no credence
In that crotchety old sod
Think, people, think!
Science doesn't work like that
I'm not like some magician
Pulling rabbits from a hat
I have a secret weapon
It's really, really cool
Perhaps someday even you will use
This scientific tool
A molecular rangefinder
Is what we scientists call it
And though it sounds complex
It's really easy to install it
It's easier to use it
Just aim it at the past
And you too can predict history
With one scientific blast!

So doubt me not, you doubters
Or I'll use my tool on you
I'll decompose your molecules
And squash you with my shoe
Let's get back to our story now
Before we lose our place
We're creeping ever closer
To the birth of our own race
(No, not our race, our species
But let us not go there
Semantic quibbling doesn't merit
Pulling out our hair)

Lampreys, sharks, and all their kin

Grew from little germs
And from them even more fish grew
In no uncertain terms
And from them grew amphibians
Emerging from the mire
To live upon the dry land
(And some day build a fire!)
Eventually came sauropsids
And other creatures too
Crocodiles and hippos
And varieties of shrew
Dinosaurs of every kind
Enough to blow the simple mind
Roamed the land and filled the seas
Digging holes and climbing trees
This might sound like paradise
But only if you're crazy
You wouldn't last long in this world
If you were slow or lazy
These guys had no welfare state
To keep them smug and fat
If they wanted to survive
They'd best remember that
Life for them was nasty
Life for them was short
Life for them was brutish
And it wasn't spent in sport
Life for them could end so fast
That it would spin your head
Let your guard down for a moment
And you'd likely end up dead.



The Horny Dinkisaurus

Reptiles ruled the world back then
They had their way with mammals
Who were mostly little bitty guys
Not elephants and camels
Not tigers, lions, or giraffes
Not bears or cows or moose
Not caribou or reindeer
Out there roaming on the loose
Something had to happen first
To pave the way for these guys
Or else to this very day
We mammals might be small fries
And happen something surely did
Though we're not quite sure what
But it was something major
That could kick our planet's butt
Nowadays most experts think
A rock flew in from space
It struck our happy home
And caused disaster every place
And in the aftermath
The reptiles lost hegemony
The door of evolution
Opened up for you and me.

And now the lemurs came along
And so did all the monkeys
The gibbons and orangutans
Gorillas and chimpanzees
Ape men came of many kinds
One with little feet
(I think I saw him just last night
Out dancing in the street)
Neanderthals, Cro-Magnon man
You've heard this all before
It's all a standard part
Of evolutionary lore



The Dinkins Monkey

But don't get up just yet, my friends
I'm not through with my teaching
You'll not escape my clutches
Without just a little preaching
The whole point of this exercise
Has been to demonstrate
The capacity of science
To shed religious freight
No faith here!
This is scientific fact
I may be a man of science
But I surely can redact
I don't need no stinking deity
To make the world make sense to me
Just give me data piled up high
In steaming mounds and heaps
And I'll supply the requisite
Imaginative leaps
But I will never call them that
No matter how they sound
'Cause I'm a man of science
Not some superstitious clown

If I come across as arrogant
Well, that's because I am
I may be a man of science
But I'm also something of a ham
Just don't look too closely
At the ending of my book
'Cause there you might discover

That I'm also something of a crook
Or maybe not a crook as such
But more of a deceiver
It turns out that down in my core
I'm just a True Believer
Every book I end, you see
With a mild apology
To those who say I paint the world
As it is, not as it should be
Progress? Humans moving "forward"
Toward something good and pure?
Sure, have fun, go right ahead
And tell 'em that, for sure
Go right ahead, dream big
Feel free to fantasize
I can play along
There's little comfort in the wise
As long as there's no god involved
You've got me on your side
I know who my friends are
And want to see them satisfied
And after all what harm have dreams of
"progress" ever wrought?
A purge here, a cleansing there
Such happiness they've brought!
Rest assured that I do not
Endorse such fantasies
But if you do, well, that's all right
Indulge them if you please
As for me, my only interest
Is in evolution
And I would not subscribe
To some madman's last solution
But still I feel compelled to end my tale
With self-ablution
Accept it now, I bid you
In the spirit in which I send it
I'm out of here, my tale is done
It's over now, let's end it.
Exeunt

Epilogue

Thus spoke the pompous ass
That stellar intellectual
A man possessed of taste and class
Both brilliant and effectual
A deep, deep thinker nonpareil
And just an all-round smart guy
A real academic big wheel
Who doesn't just explain why
Oh no, he does much more than that
He also entertains you
(Unless you are some ID prat
In which case he just pains you)
This guy lectures far and wide
And people come to listen
They chuckle at his wit so snide
(And watch his big pate glisten)
They smile at him and nod assent
And sometimes they applaud
They just adore this British gent
Who's come so far abroad
He's come to set the record straight
To tell them how it is
There's an awful lot of that of late
In the intellectual biz

The pompous ass, you see, is not
An isolated case
For there are many here among us
To explain the human race
So let us not depart from here
With the wrong impression
There are many here among us
Who share the same obsession
They see that God above has
Left us all and gone away
(He was by us dismissed
It is more accurate to say)
And now they deign to take His place
And offer up a cure
For every ill that plagues the world
They dole out their manure
These folks have pedigrees

To choke a horse (at least a pony)
Too often, though, it's us they try to
Choke with their baloney
Oh, yes, it's true, we've seen it
Self-styled "experts" now assail us
We peons must have experts to
Cure all the ills that ail us
We don't know how to live our lives
We're just too damn pathetic
We need these experts to explain
Just what is copacetic
Whatever would we do
Without these experts to explain
How to speak and act
(And when to come in from the rain)?
They tell us what to eat
And they tell us what to drink
But most importantly of all
They tell us what to think

And we should listen! Yes, we should
'Cause after all, they're just so good
At knowing things that others don't
And seeing things that others won't
Think about it for a moment
And you'll surely come to see
Just why all these experts
Are so good for you and me
'Cause how else can you learn a thing
About this world of ours
Than sitting in some classroom
And counting up the hours?
If you want to learn about the world
For God's sake, don't trust your preacher
Place your faith instead
In the one they call a "teacher"
Think about it for a while
And if you're not a fool
You'll realize the only way to
Learn is in a school
The only way to learn at all
Is from pedantic snobs
Whose major claim to fame is that
They've never had real jobs

But you can bet they're smarter
Than you'll ever hope to be
Their smarts are hanging on the wall
(They call it a "degree")

Besides, that God of yours
He really wasn't very bright
All He ever talked about
Was what was wrong or right
He never said a single word
About trying to improve us
Unlike these experts who replaced Him
They know they can move us
They know just what our problems are
And they're happy to inform us
(That's the first important step
In helping them reform us)
And if a little education doesn't do the trick
These experts have more tools for helping us
(Since we're so sick)

The most important tool they have
They get from government
And unlike the power of God
This tool is hardly heaven sent
You may have heard of this tool
A little thing called "regulation"
The most important tool
For keeping peace in any nation
(Well, "peace" is not
The word for it
But it will have to do
Let's just say regulation's used
To keep ol' me and you
In line?—compliant?—obedient?—subservient?
All of the above?
Come on folks, give government
Just a little love!)
Regulation serves the common good
That can't be bad
If you don't like the common good
You must be friggin' mad
No, let's put it this way:
If you don't like the common good

Then you don't know what's good for you
'Cause if you know what's good for you
You'll like the common good
—If you catch our drift

But let's put it more kindly,
So you can appreciate the common good
(Not just submit to it):
If you don't know what's good for you
We'll very kindly show you
What's good for us is good for you
We hope that doesn't throw you
But let's try yet another way
To make this crystal clear
And if you know what's good for you
You'd better listen here
What's good for us, you see,
Is good for you
That's how it works
And those who see it differently
Are really selfish jerks
'Cause the common good is what we seek
And we know what that is
It's what we say it is
Here in the world-improving biz

All of this is crystal clear
So why are you not listening?
You really must be quite obtuse
The way your eyes are glistening
Your problem is you lack the power
To know what's good for you
But that's all right; that's why we're here
To tell you what to think and do
So relax, stop worrying,
Don't see this as defeat
It's just a friendly caution
From your political elite
You're wrong to see this as a threat
To see it as submission
Think of it as joining in
On our important mission

So let's just put an end to this

We're tired of it now
And Doublespeak is good
For ending almost any row
So let us hear more Doublespeak
And let us hear it quickly
'Cause the more we think about all this
The more we're feeling sickly
Regulation makes folks "agreeable,"
That's how we shall say it
(First let's ask the government, though,
To make sure they okay it)

Come to think of it
The pompous ass is not so bad
All he does is probe the past
For that we should be glad
He hasn't tried to fix us yet
So he could be much worse
(Not every snob's afflicted
With that "I can fix you" curse)
So he may be annoying
But he's relatively harmless
And since he is a funny guy
We'll admit that he's not charmless
Would that we could say the same
For others of his ilk
Who think their mission is to turn
Poor sows' ears into silk

To those good doctors we impart
A bromide of our own
Maybe they will take the hint
And leave us all alone
"Fix thine own selves, pedants
Before you take on us
You may think that you are wise
But you're just supercilious
If you knew half of what
You think you know
You'd all be wunderkind
Instead it turns out most of you
Are just big bags of wind
But if we put our faith in you
The joke will be on us

We'll only have ourselves to blame
For tying our own truss."

Let us close now with that thought
Our pilgrimage is done
We don't know how it's been for you
But for us it has been fun
Yes, we truly have enjoyed
The time we spent with you
We hope we gave you pause for thought
And left you smiling too
We hope we entertained you
We hope you found us funny
We hope you'll ride with us again
(Cause we sure could use the money)!

*Here is ended our tale of evolution, as
Told by Sir Richard Dinkins*

