

Evolutionary Hymn
by
C. S. Lewis
(30 November 1957)

Lead us, Evolution, lead us
Up the future's endless stair:
Chop us, change us, prod us, weed us.
For stagnation is despair:
Groping, guessing, yet progressing,
Lead us nobody knows where.

Wrong or justice in the present,
Joy or sorrow, what are they
While there's always jam to-morrow,
While we tread the onward way?
Never knowing where we're going,
We can never go astray.

To whatever variation
Our posterity may turn
Hairy, squashy, or crustacean,
Bulbous-eyed or square of stern,
Tusked or toothless, mild or ruthless,
Towards that unknown god we yearn.

Ask not if it's god or devil,
Brethren, lest your word imply
Static norms of good and evil
(As in Plato) throned on high;
Such scholastic, inelastic,
Abstract yardsticks we deny.

Far too long have sages vainly
Glossed great Nature's simple text;
He who runs can read it plainly,
'Goodness = what comes next.'
By evolving, Life solving
All the questions we perplexed.

On then! Value means survival—
Value. If our progeny
Spreads and spawns and licks each rival,
That will prove its deity
(Far from pleasant, by our present
Standards, though it well may be.)

C. S. Lewis, *Poems*. Edited by Walter Hooper
(New York/London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1964),
pages 55–56