

**Darwin's Acid**

In 1859 Darwin spilled the first splashes  
Of his universal acid, and the effects were like magic  
Burning human arrogance into ashes  
In exactly the same way that Copernican math did  
No, the stars don't shine just to improve the view from earth  
No, we're not the centre of the universe  
No, we weren't created in the image of Jupiter  
No, we're not so special, and yes, the truth hurts  
But that's how evolution works – once it's been applied  
The acid burns into the superstitious side  
Of the human mind, and fills it with light  
It even dissolves the original sin of pride  
The pride that says: "I'm a special creation  
And my creator has given *me* dominion over nature  
And *he* has the power to replenish his creatures  
So if species go extinct, he can recreate them later  
And if he doesn't, well that's just part of his plan"  
Ah, but Darwin's acid is hard to withstand  
It plucks the arrogance deep from within the hearts of man  
And teaches us never to build our houses on sand  
But instead to try to understand why we're here  
One species among millions in this biosphere  
Each with millions of ancestors, whose fighting spirits  
Combined to give us this great survival gear  
These minds, these limbs, these incredible tools  
Perfectured by millennia of competitive use  
And yes, these attention-seeking genitals too  
Without them, these living forms could never improve  
It's such an elegant view, full of breadth and grandeur  
And yet, some people react with depression and anger  
Like: "It's so unsympathetic, so viciously random!  
What's the point of compassion, or ethical standards?  
If this is just a game that organisms are trapped in  
Genetically adapting to environmental factors  
Then there's no responsibility for individual actions!  
Where's the governing dynamic!?"  
Well, once again Darwin gives us some answers  
He says yes, *everything* from violence to violets to viruses  
Consists of organisms adapting to environments  
If you're alive, it's because your ancestors were the best survivalists  
They were the finalists in the genetic Olympic Games  
Every one of your ancestors lived to reproductive age  
And they were all better than their competitors at getting laid  
Otherwise, you wouldn't be sitting here today

There's something inspirational in this vision of Darwin's  
 And it goes like this: organisms – like us – are not isolated  
 Organisms are part of an environmental mix  
 So your decisions affect evolution – it isn't directionless  
 Now, before you dismiss me as a mad environmentalist  
 Just try to imagine how natural selection applies  
 To countries that have industrialized  
 Companies live and companies die  
 And when customers buy based on a company's green plan  
 That affects the economy, just ask Alan Greenspan  
 Cultural evolution is ours to reinvent  
 Wait, can *we* affect current events? Yes We Can  
 And when we choose who to sleep with and reproduce  
 Our sexual choices affect the gene pool  
 So it's simple, all we need to do is refuse  
 To sleep with mean people, and things will improve  
 Especially women – on you the pressure is greater  
 'Cause men will always do what it takes to get into your favour  
 That's just in our nature, so if selfish behaviour  
 Was a sexual graveyard, the effects would be major!  
 In each of these cases, our intentional efforts  
 Can play the part of environmental pressures  
 I can say: "This is a space where a peaceful existence  
 Will never be threatened by needless aggression"  
 I can say: "This is an ecosystem where people listen  
 Where justice increases over egotism  
 This is a space where religions achieve co-existence  
 And racism decreases with each coalition"  
 This is my vision of Darwinism, and how we all factor in  
 Each of us is a part of the environment; we pass through it  
 And change it, and affect the way that others adapt to it  
 And after we get to look back and see how *we* impacted it  
 And maybe have a laugh *if* our sense of humour is still alive  
 And what did Charles Darwin do? Darwin threw some light  
 On the origin of mankind, and he left us with skewered pride  
 But he taught us that, yes, there's grandeur in this view of life

*"There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers having been originally  
 breathed into a few forms or into one, and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on  
 according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms most  
 beautiful, and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved."*

Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species*