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## Three Poems

by E.M. Schorb

### Twenty-First Century Moles

It was in the last century that moles came into their own. Of course it has always been true that they liked night life. But with the invention of the movie camera, moles began to listen to the music played with silent films. Of course they couldn't read the subtitles, but were able to pick up the dramatic impact of film from the vibes of the pounding piano. Nickelodeons were beyond them, but "The Great Train Robbery" got to them, and, for the first time in biological history, they strained to see. There are zoologists who insist that moles are still blind, but it is clear that the crowds at the Pantages and Grauman's Chinese are able to follow the floodlights to a nesting place in the dark; and, if able to follow the floodlights of the great openings and premiers of Hollywood, are certainly able to see the flickering lights on the screen. This is action-packed evolution. Now, any day or night of the week, you can see the public in multiplexes all over the world, munching five-dollar bags of popcorn and struggling to follow the plots of independent films. This I believe to be the final solution to the question of Intelligent Design and Darwinian theory. Darwin wins!

### A Second Childhood

It was her birthday, but how could such a child read her birthday card, how could she enjoy her birthday cake? She was too young to read and wanted suckle, wanted to be held in arms and warm breast and find the nipple of life and the warm milk. The card was blurry and the cake was too rich. The nurses should quickly wrap her in warm blankets, lest she get a chill. But everyone must look at her, must look and say Good. "How bald she is," one said. "How tiny," said another. "Look, her eyes are stuck shut," said a third. She could not bear the pain of their attention, birthday or not. She began to cry. There was just a sigh with which to accompany her tears, but now her voice burst on their ears with a long, high-pitched cry. "We must take her away now and wash her and put her to beddy-bye," said the head nurse. And the relatives left the nursing home in several cars, another birthday under their belts, wondering if there should be yet another in the year to come.

### Wilder than Wilder

The Town Crier came by crying, "Time to get up and trash the day." Nonsense, the Town Crier is not an alarm clock, but the Town Crier is an alarm clock of sorts, so the townspeople rose and immediately

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prepared for the monkey war of all against all. While they were having coffee, they scowled at one another. A sister threw porridge at her little brother, the little brother pulled the cat's tail, and the cat scratched the dog. It was a typical morning. The Town Crier went home to his wife. "I have done my duty," he told her. "I have started the whole thing again." "One day," said his wife, "I am going to refuse to wind you up." They scowled at each other. The Mayor came to see the Town Crier. "I'm going to fire you," he said. "If it weren't for you waking the town every morning we shouldn't have all this strife." "I have a contract," said the Town Crier. "You have no authority to give me the chuck." Then the Doctor visited the Mayor. "What we must do," said the Doctor, "is to make the town sleep through the Town Crier's cry. I shall put a powerful drug in the water." "And the town will sleep peacefully all day long," cried the Mayor, seeing the merit of the Doctor's plan. So they tried it, and the town slept right through the Town Crier's cry. All but the Mayor and the Doctor and the Town Crier himself, who never drank water. The Town Crier came to complain to the Mayor because he couldn't wake anyone up and felt that he might lose his job. On the grounds that he was being neurotic, the Mayor sent him to the Doctor. The Town Crier stated his case, and, to his surprise, the Doctor agreed with him. "The fact is," said the Doctor, "I have no patients—no broken bones to heal, no blackened eyes, no split lips, nothing to do all day. And the City Contractor is upset. He has nothing to repair. Let's go and have it out with the Mayor." So the Town Crier, the Doctor, the Fire Chief, and the City Contractor went to see the Mayor. The Mayor refused to see them, so they trashed his office, and, finding him hiding behind a file cabinet, they dragged him out into the town square and threatened to hang him. By this time everyone in town was wide awake. Quickly, a mob formed, ready to hang the Mayor. A riot ensued, and the town was torn apart. The City Contractor was very pleased. And when the mob set fire to the town, the Fire Chief was pleased to be busy again. "You tear it down, and I'll rebuild it," said the City Contractor to the Fire Chief. The Doctor said, "There will be injuries galore." A wife said something hateful to her husband, a sister to a brother, and a cat scratched a dog. The Town Crier cried, "Hear Ye, Hear Ye!" and life went on much as before.

**E.M. Schorb's** latest collection of prose poems is *Manhattan Spleen*. His novel, *A Portable Chaos*, is out in a revised edition after originally winning the Eric Hoffer Award for Fiction. Recent poetry collections include *The Ideologues and Other Retrospective Poems* and *The Journey. Paradise Square*, his first novel, was the winner of the International eBook Award Foundation's grand prize for fiction at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Schorb's work has also appeared in *The American Scholar*, *The Sewanee Review*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *The Yale Review*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The Antioch Review*, *Stand*, and *Agenda* (England), and the *New York Quarterly*, among others. Most recently, his poems appeared in *Measure*, *Shenandoah*, and *The Hudson Review*. His homepage is [www.emschorb.com](http://www.emschorb.com).

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