Advice to Scholars

Larry Rubin
"I'd like to go backward," said the boy.
"So would I," answered his father. And his mother and his sister and brother all said: "So would I."

So, for a while, his father backed the car down the road. But it was getting late, and they were a long way from home. Besides, all the other cars were going forward, and that made it hard for them to go backward. So after a while his father sighed, and they all sighed, and his father turned the car around, and they went forward, just like anybodys.

ADVICE TO SCHOLARS

A shuttered room is best for taking notes:
Lust of the eyes can ruin the sternest mind
If one so much as glance outside. What gloss
Of furry diction, of whatever close-bred
Rarity, can break the mongrel hold
Of any season loose within the year?
Green world, white, or brown—a peek through a broken
Slat is fatal. All earth's citations prove
No systematic thumbing of the leaves
Can match a maple's index.

I tried it once. Objectively I sat
Correlating incunabula
Beside a window giving on the moon.
Stolidly I studied vellum texts,
Emending Gothic vowels with flat precision,
Until that subtle satellite had spun
Deep into the casement's orifice,
Keats-like. I erred: I looked—the garden's ghost
Impaled my brain upon a moon-spiked sky,
Crippling my cry for shutters.

—LARRY RUBIN