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## Advice to Scholars

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"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 anybody's.

### 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