

It's a Long Way From Amphioxus

It's a Long Way From Amphioxus

A fishlike thing appeared among the annelids one day
It hadn't any parapods or setae to display
It hadn't any eyes or jaws or ventral nervous chord
But it had a lot of gillslits and it had a notochord.

Cho.

It's a long way from amphioxus
It's a long way to us.
It's a long way from amphioxus
To the meanest human cuss.
So goodbye to fins and gillslits
Hello lungs and hair,
It's a long, long way from amphioxus
But we all came from there.

Well, it wasn't much to look at and it scarce knew how to swim
And Nerius was very sure it hadn't come from him.
The mollusks wouldn't own it and the arthropods got sore
So the poor thing had to burrow in the sand along the shore.

Cho.

It burrowed in the sand before it grabbed in with its tail
And said gillslits and myotomes are all to no avail.
I've grown some metapleural folds and sport an oral hood
But all these fine new characters don't do me any good.

Cho.

He soaked a while down in the sand without a bit of pep
Then he stiffened up his notochord and said: "I'll beat 'em yet."
They laugh and show their ignorance, but I don't mind their jeers
Just wait until they see me in a hundred million years.

Cho.

My notochord will stiffen to a chain of vertebrae
As fins, my metapleural folds will agitate the sea
My tiny dorsal nervous chord will be a mighty brain
And vertebrates will dominate the animal domain.

Cho.

Recorded by Sam Hinton, who says it was written in the 1920s by an author unknown to him..