Brick, 1983

University of Alabama in Huntsville

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Pondicherry was somehow different. Although the usual throng of dirty, big-eyed children tracked the two down, the staff didn't want these urchins annoying the patrons. She felt like a pawn. All the way to Pondicherry just to feed this child. This surprised the children somewhat, for they quickly gathered around, careful not to detect a foreign-born Indian as though it were a secret; it was usually the wealthy northern Indians speaking English that emigrated. Only one boy came forward; the rest took a few steps and peered out into the street. The dirty throng had all happy! Reet carried a heavy fatigue. She played a move a piece and he would take up the challenge. But Reet was weary. She tried to find the origin of blueness. They stared in wonder, deep, deep into Angela Narayanan

Crystal Heart

by Angela Narayanan

throughout the night. She asked him every question in her head: Did you go to Nepal? How deep is the Khyber Gorge? Do Indians sleep on beds of nails? "In two weeks I'm heading back. Would you like to come along?" His father did not allow him to eat at home since he was a child that he'd leave Singapore, since he was a child that he'd leave Singapore, and sometimes guide tourists. I English speak." Reet smiled, genuinely startled at the story of a child. He spoke like a world-worn traveler. He recounted the adventures of his trek turned into the open front of the lodge. Reet always waited somewhere for a week out of sight when they were renting a room or buying goods. Her glow increased the price tenfold. It was a shining heat and she could taste the dust in the air. The children, all boys, covered their faces and giggled when she turned towards her and scammed back into the pack at once. Reet figured they imagined her to be an occupant of a palatial estate, here merely for adventure of to buy gold. Chandra was coming back, with that peculiar traveler’s stride. It made Reet think, you can tell how far we've been by the way we walk. His steps were wide, each planted firmly. There was no sway in the torso, otherwise one wore down quickly under the weight of the pack. There was so much minutiae that was inevitably of grave importance; a moment’s lapse could cost you everything. Baggage was never left behind casually. Passports and traveler’s checks never left the body. They were hung in a pouch about the neck, slept with and bathed with.

"Darned good deal. Five rupees. I told her the recipe as he went along. He put no meat in it, said he'd never eaten meat before. She thought she had to have her meat, but not tonight. Finally, after they'd eaten full, she asked him what he was doing here and he said he’d known since he was a child that he'd leave Singapore, that a deep urge would lead him far away. Following a star, he said.

He recounted the adventures of his trek
“It’s OK,” the boy told them, “I’ll wait outside for you.”

Reet snatched up the boy’s hand. “He’s with us and he’s coming!” And she shouldered past the proprietor and took a table. The boy sat silently, searching their faces occasionally to see that he didn’t embarrass them. At the sight of the ravenous child, Reet was no longer hungry. As a matter of fact, she couldn’t recall having ever been hungry.

The streets were lit in hazy splorches where oil lamps burned at stalls. Some offered rich sweet coffee, a virtual heady aroma; others, edible seeds and roasted nuts. At the far end of the esplanade was a crowd, a political rally as it turned out. They drew close. At the center a speaker pounded and croaked, paused and pounded. The face of the audience was intent, the men looked at one another and nodded.

“What’s he running for?” asked Reet.

“A seat in the state government.”

“What party does he belong to?”

Chandra grinned. “I’m sure no one knows. There are hundreds of parties, at least ten in every village.”

“What’s his platform?”

“Just the one he’s standing on. These guys rely on pathos, strictly pathos.”

The babble raved, the boy and Chandra absorbed the tirade, Reet scanned the crowd. The compact gathering waved with the blasts of the speaking trumpet. It seemed all the faces had pleasant features; the women were black with white caps of hair down to their hips; their saris, regardless of repair, were clean, their counterparts among the men were boyish and smiled innocently. They stood to the rear of the crowd; the women with their entourage of children stood to the front. The children planted themselves dutifully about the hems of their mothers. The smallest ones straddled a hip. The men did not look at Reet, out of respect, but the women did and giggled shyly, as did children. They all had black, liquid eyes.

The crowd began to disassemble, dissolving into the night streets. Reet’s companions discoursed intently. Chandra turned to her.

“You would be astonished at this child’s political comprehension. He’s explaining to me the entire local system, scandals and all. The fellow just at the dais has betá shipping money to a foreign bank, having accomplices buy goods, then smuggling the goods into the country. But the boy says he’ll win the election because his opponent is known to have a mistress!”

Reet aimed the little band toward a stall, “Tell him to take anything he wants.” That magnanimous feeling had returned. The boy studied the rows of treasures: a bowl of peanuts in the shell, a large jar of hard candy, a locally made gum called Wrigglers, salt dried plums, sugary rice cakes. He looked at Reet, then Chandra, then back to the shelves he’d never dreamed of touching. He brought up his heavy arm and slowly lowered it into the peanut bowl, drew out a single nut and folded it in his fist against his chest. Reet couldn’t swallow properly against his chest. Reet couldn’t swallow properly.

Chandra turned to Chandra. “What did the boy say to those children?”

Chandra looked straight ahead. “He asked them not to beg from us, because we can’t afford it.”

Reet swung around for her last view of the boy, to hold it in her heart. His head was bowed over his business, a multitude of children pressing in. He was breaking up an old rice cake and distributing it through the black palms. The tide rocked in and back, depositing empty shelves and scattering crabs. A tiny offshore island suddenly released a burst of seagulls; breakfast was on the beach.

One point began crystallizing with the dawn. She hadn’t come all the way to Pondicherry to feed that child. The famine was her own.

“Reet! Ready!” Chandra stood with his pack on his back, and the boy, bent with the weight of her pack, stood at his side. She nodded, and inhaling as much sea air as she could hold, turned to follow them.

The boy gently deposited the enormous backpack against the pile of luggage at the base of the bus. The driver was flinging the bags to the top of the bus where a boy caught them and strapped them down. A crowd converged for the weekly event of the bus departure. “Copi, vada?,” the vendors hawked coffee and fried rice bread in odd quacking voices. There was a European couple backed into the sprawling roots of the banyan tree and about them teemed a dozen dark children, begging. Pondicherry had beggars, too. Their next target was Reet and they swarmed toward her, but the boy halted them and spoke loudly in an explanatory tone. They all backed away.

The driver called for all to board. Reet wanted to hold the boy for just a moment before they left, but it would embarrass him. She sighed instead. She and Chandra took the long seat at the back near the rear door. There the boy stood; “You must be very careful. There are those who would steal from you. I hope your trip abroad is pleasant. I will remember you forever.” The door slammed. The bus jerked away.

Reet turned to Chandra. “What did the boy say to those children?”

Chandra looked straight ahead. “He asked them not to beg from us, because we can’t afford it.”

Reet wandered to the gate and surveyed the ashram compound. It was some sort of bundle. Reet squinted, trying to engage her night vision. No, not a bundle. She stopped. “Oh God!” she howled, reeling back. A baby, it was a baby. A baby with marbled eyes and stiff, withered arms. The boy bolted to her side and grabbing her arm, jerked her away.

“She shouldn’t see this,” he said. “She mustn’t see this. It will spell her seed. No, she should never have seen this.”

With one on each side they led her back to the mud-brick lodge. At the desk Chandra paused to order a tub of warm water sent to the room. While Reet bathed, the boy and Chandra stood in the dirt lane in back of the lodge.

“We’ll be taking the bus to Madurai in the morning.” Chandra meant this as a prelude to goodbye, since the bus left at six.

The boy spoke up quickly. “I will see you off, then, I will come wake you and help you with your baggage. Rest well, father.” He turned in the dust and walked toward the rear of the house. Reet turned to Chandra.

“Why are you so good to me?” she mumbled.

“You’re my shining star.”

She felt astonished before the tea was cold, and Chandra stayed beside her for a while.

She woke in the dark and listened to the sea roll in waves landward. She stepped into the lane behind the lodge, which opened onto the beach, and went with the magnet of the tide. She felt the light breeze off the sea lift her hair from her neck and watched the palmtrees and smelled the air, washed clean of dust. She watched the flag of the dawn star, the sun, come abreast of the horizon. The first light broke into floating shards, glinted through the peripheral vision snagged a slight movement just outside the circle of the gate light. She strained to see, sifted an almost inaudible moan from the wind. Moving quickly out of the light and focusing, she beheld a hollowed-out woman, too poor even for a sari blouse. Her eyes were glazed and sunken, unseeing even as Reet moved in front of her. Something lay inert across her lap. She kept a shriveled hand splayed across it. It was some sort of bundle. Reet squinted, trying to engage her night vision. No, not a bundle. She stopped. “Oh God!” she howled, reeling back. A baby, it was a baby. A baby with marbled eyes and stiff, withered arms. The boy bolted to her side and grabbing her arm, jerked her away.

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BRICK INTERVIEW: MICHAEL CISSELL

A candid conversation with the author of "A Type Book" and "The Type Show" about serving letters, words and a long sentence.

Brick: I see. And how did you learn so much about type?
Michael: I saw a lot of it when I read. Being relatively astute, I eventually made a connection. Also I saw great potential. Barbara, I've always had a belief: as long as people think, as long as people talk, as long as they write, people will use type. And you know, the very beautiful thing about it is that no matter how many "g's" or "h's" you or someone else uses, there will be as many in the future as you need. Unless of course you are having to piece together an extortion note and the only literature you have is a motel room DO NOT DISTURB sign.

Feeling by a consuming passion (I've always venerated food) I decided my career as a picture framer would eventually signal not only an occupational cul-de-sac, but by the extent of its recompensation would infringe on my existence. Those were lean months. They would go on for years.

I wanted in on get-rich-quick schemes, I'll admit. That's how I got involved with this group of fanatic Norwegian State Troopers. We lived in a large house and shared everything—even television privileges. Such a bureaucracy...we had to take votes to see who would answer the phone. Thank God for sign language! Anyway, we wanted to meet a new industry comeback hero: accordion repair. Bleak, bleak period in my life. For the most part it was a huge failure. In a way, I think I would have been better off if I wore a beeper to announce when I was free.

I realized I needed something declasse, pedestrian if you will. So, I got my head out of the clouds, my body out of the gutter and stuck my face between the pages until I learned and learned and learned.

Brick: About type?
Michael: No, about how impossible it is to get a job by phoning people. I even tried random dialing.

Brick: Mike, tell us about some of your favorite characters.
Michael: One of my favorites was a character named Franklin. He was from one of those elite Swiss families. Kind of a plain type, with a different slant. He had this black dot over one eye. Birthmark, I guess. Consequently he was self-conscious, but at one point very fashionable until he developed a weight problem from being overextended. Finally he died of a vertical stroke.

Brick: It must be unusual for most people to encounter someone dubbed "Type Expert." I imagine they don't know quite what to make of you. How do you feel you are regarded by others?
Michael: At first there was a big stigma attached to my title, I would shield it by telling people I was a chiropractor. Gradually I stayed farther and farther away from parties or other events where the density of people would increase the possibility that I had not talked to at least three of the individuals before. I was in a theatre once and someone had a medical emergency, so they (thinking I was a chiropractor) screamed for me. I told them I only did eyes, ears, nose, and throat. Off the hook that time, so I figured I better "come out of the closet." That's how I lost my fiancee. She wanted the income I guess. Or open heart surgery—well, I didn't want to tell her the same story. I'd have to hear it every time we'd visit her parents. So I bailed it up a little. Threw in a Mayo Clinic and a set of golf clubs. At that point I even wore a beeper.

Don't laugh, those things can get you out of some tough binds. It's the predecessor of Captain Kirk's "Beam me up, Scotty!" unit. It got to be a kind of drug. Whenever I got into a situation—any situation—in which I felt uncomfortable, I'd just trigger the thing, say excuse me and run like hell! It was like California.
Now it's all different. How do people regard me? People close to me say I'm very clean.

Brick: Let's talk about your book, *A Type Book*: what are your reasons for choosing that particular name?

Michael: Why *A Type Book*? At that time I was very heavy into some of the great writers of the twentieth century: Solzhenitzen, Mailer, Vidal, Ronnie Milsap.

I wanted a title that would speak to the isolated, the oppressed, and not leave out those in clerical occupation. Some have said the title is evasive—almost mystic.

Brick: How have commercial sales been going?

Michael: If I could be a type font, Barbara, I have to think I'd be Dom Casual (heh heh heh)

Brick: (heh heh heh)

Jeff Babine

4

issues are not addressed more often?

Michael: Barbara, even people that work with this stuff every day, day in and day out, why they just don't care. We saw the same problem in public schools in the sixties.

Brick: I noticed, Mike, that in your book you actually mixed serif and san serif within the same line. What do you feel are the implications of the differences between these two ethnic groups of the type population, if I may coin a metaphor?

Michael: The first thing people try to do is to make someone a hero. Now I’m not the first to be concerned with the integration of the different types in this world. But in the future I will continue to make bold (and sometimes demi-bold) attempts to bring together all faces. Call me Marxist, but I have dreams of ruling great united columns that will someday run through history books. I will achieve this by evolution, not revolution. By staying within the margins, I can avoid the problems we’ve had with the Fifth Column.

Brick: Let’s move to the subject of typewriters for a moment. Would you say that the daisy wheel was Copernican in nature while the IBM “ball” hearkens more to the Prolemaic world view?

Michael: Imagine a point in space. A point orbited by a handful of characters. From each of these tiny characters will flow billions and billions of letters. Letters that will someday travel the earth’s surface through the librarian constellation. Are there more? What is their origin? New Jersey? Michigan? No one knows for sure. But we do know one thing.

In my mind I hold one of these miniature solar systems. From overhead I can tell it is circular in shape—something we all take for granted because we have seen it time and time again in photographs, diagrams from the recent past, catalogs. But imagine you are sitting in a chair, typing a letter for your boss—perhaps to a loved one. From this point in your room, in front of your typewriter, the daisy wheel—(we’ll call it) appears oval.

Now sink a bit lower in your chair and the daisy wheel continues to appear to flatten out until Pop! you can’t see it due to the horizon of the typewriter. To many people of the past, the daisy wheel was mystic, perfect and flat—the order of corporate demigods from the North.

It’s easy to see why the IBM “ball” caused such an uproar. Instead of one plane from which the letters, numerals and punctuations could soar, a sphere could radiate as many, but from a much smaller nucleus, an even tinier mass. For years, those in power would continue to hold on to the “Daisy Wheel” concept. Some would still believe in the ancient method of individual keys. In our era, many of us will be witness to an amazing event: slowly, slowly this mystic sphere will appear in places, some nearby, some quite remote, in a huge kind of cosmic clerical conversion. A conversion that will eventually leave nothing unchanged.

Brick: Mike, I saved my favorite question for last. If you could be a type font, which one would you be?

Michael: If I could be a type font, Barbara, I have to think I’d be Dom Casual (heh heh heh)

Brick: (heh heh heh)
It was war, and romance was everywhere. Joe was handsome, and his mother and father packed their only son off to sail the high sea. Joe felt as though he never saw the sea, but instead woke every morning to a bugle call, and the harsh wind blowing through his clothes. He would write home:

Dear Mom and Dad,

I wake every morning, feel the harsh wind, then wonder what you are doing. I'm fine, it's just there's this awful nip in the air, and I feel as though it's getting colder every day. I'm not sure what to say. They say baked beans are nice this time of year, that they warm you up, and make you feel ready for action. I hope that they are right.

Try not to worry.

your loving son

It was necessary then to encode messages, but they knew what it meant. Joe sailed from Boston; it was late, and it wasn't long after he sailed that he saw France and Germany, but he never saw the war. That was alright with Joe, but he did want to meet an English lass.

* * *

It was not the war that Joe was worried about. It was the folks back home. He knew his dad. Billy could listen to Jack Benny for hours. He would clip his barber scissors and rattle a tale to the men in the shop, and they would laugh when they heard on the radio that it was only a nickel hidden in Jack Benny's shoe. They could imagine seeing it.

Jack would roll his eyes, and fold his arms, and say I don't know what you're talking about. His pants were loose and his hands were large with his fingers tapping silently on the sleeve of his coat. Then he would look off to the side as if he wasn't clued in at all to what was happening, but everyone knew he really was. Then Fingers would steal his shoe, and Jack would go No, Not my shoe! But it was too late. You could hear Fingers go tap...tap...tap, trying to find the combination to the safe in Jack's shoe. It was almost silent, and you had to laugh, because the air was tight with everyone knowing that Jack kept money in his shoe, and no one could wait to hear how much it was.

A nickel! Fingers would cry, and Jack would look away and say it's my mad money, and everyone laughed until they cried. Billy would step back from his barber chair and pretend he was Jack in the room. "It's my mad money!" he would repeat, with his arms folded and his eyes looking off into the sky, and everyone would almost die because Billy looked just the way you imagined Jack would.

So Billy kept on shaving the customers all day, every now and then telling them a story. The radio would be playing, sometimes a war song, sometimes a song about a lonely Saturday night, and sometimes the news. Everyone got quiet when it came to the part about the war. Joe knew this, and it made him sad. He wanted to hear them keep on laughing, but instead he was looking out from a jeep onto a torn up and embittered France and wondering where-the-hell he was.

It wasn't exactly the war that Joe saw from the jeep; it was the aftermath, and there were families without homes everywhere. He rode by the borders of cities that weren't cities anymore, but hollow shells with a casing of burnt trees. One town was like the next, and before he knew it there was Germany, and the war was over. He stood there, with his hands in his pockets, and his hat tilted to one side. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat from his forehead. Everything was burnt around him. Mountains looked strange and barren. A pack of families would go by, with their homes on their backs or in small carts. Joe followed one down the road. He tried to move as slowly as they did. Someone called hey buddy, it's time to move out, and Joe got in the jeep and went back home.

* * *

Back at school, Joe would lie in his bunk until it was late at night. He would lie still, with his hands behind his head, until he thought he could hear the war. It sounded like a low muffle. A guy might be restless, and the sounds of his Glenn Miller recording would be playing somewhere in the distance. If a guy snored or his bunk squeaked, that was alright with Joe. He was used to waking in the night and not knowing altogether where you were. He turned over on his side and folded his hands into a pillow. He kicked the sheets loose and tried to sleep.
by Marylyn Coffey

"Sweetheart, how'd you like to do me a favor?" Harry was addressing the new girl at Ryder's print shop. He had to speak loudly. The presses were clanking and wheezing in back, and in here the girls had the radio on — some idiot wailing about missing kisses.

The new girl looked up at him brightly.

"Why, sure," she said, "What did you have in mind?"

Harry pointed to the brochure he was holding.

"See right here," he said, "where it says seven­teen thousand, five hundred dollars? I want it changed to nineteen thousand, five hundred dollars. Think you can handle that?"

"I think so.

"Nice house, isn't it?" Harry said, running his thumb across the black and white illustration of a long, low structure with two small windows on either side of the door. Narrow steps led up to the door, and flowers had been sketched in on either side of the steps.

Miriam, who'd worked for Ryder for years, turned slowly and stared at him like an owl.

"Harry, you're not raising the price again! Who's profiling this time? One of your old drinking buddies?"

Nasty, Harry thought. Just like last time. Of course, she had worked awfully hard on the brochure. Guess she had wanted more from him than a drink or two. "Miriam," he said, trying to soothe, "naturally I got a friend or two in the business, but they're not about to cut their throat for me. Things are tough all over these days."

"Sorry to hear that, Harry," Miriam said.

"Tell you what," Harry said, "both of you. You work at these houses built for you or someone in your family, I'll let you have one for the original price. How's that?"

"Oh, we couldn't afford that, Mr Trotter," the new girl chirped.

Harry retreated to the doorway, where he watched one of the smaller presses spewing out pizza coupons. FREE FREE, FREE FREE, FREE FREE, each with a smiling red clown face, sailing by on yellow paper. It made him queasy. His brochure would be multiplying pret­tily soon. By this evening there'd be hundreds of them. And then he'd have the mailing to do. And then he'd have the mailing to do. He'd told them to leave the sideburns. Miriam hadn't gotten it cut quite so short this time, and Andrea, her small hands, and the way she sometimes covered her mouth with them when she laughed. Had it really been three days? He hadn't been seeing Andrea for three days. He'd been missing you.

"Harry. I was hoping you'd call. I haven't seen you for three days. I've been missing you."

"I miss you too."

"Come over, then. I'll fix dinner."

"I'll try. I've got a couple of things to take care of first."

"Don't take too long."

"I won't."

"Harry, I love you."

"See you soon, babe," Harry said, and hung up.

Miriam stopped him in the hall as he was leaving.

"Harry, I meant to tell you. I really like your hair that way."

"Thanks," Harry said, embarrassed. He continued on his way out the building, got into his car and turned onto the parkway. Miriam wasn't so bad, after all. Divorced, with a couple of kids — she'd told him their names and ages once, but he'd forgotten. Everybody had kids, except Dan and himself. He hadn't even been married. Sometimes he was proud of that, like he alone had managed to escape something terri­ble. Other times he felt left out, especially since Dan had gotten married last year. When Dan bought his house, he'd sold Harry the trailer. His own private box. He liked it, but Andrea didn't, so he always went over to her place. They'd been seeing each other for almost half a year now, and even Andrea had been fine, but lately she was talking serious.

He was driving past the place that used to be Keg's Korral, where he and Dan used to hang out a lot. Somebody had bought it recently, fixed it up to look like some kind of castle. He decided to stop. The place was empty except for two guys in a booth in back. There was a piano on the stage now, and pictures of old movie stars on the walls. On the wall behind the bar there was a picture of a muscular man in white tights and a funny jacket, leaping. The way the picture was placed made it seem as if the man were leaping from one row of liquor bottles to another. Harry ordered Scotch from a young guy with a beard, and went to the john.

In the mirror, he examined his hair. He had not and never, at this time of year. He was dark, wavy, uncontrollable, so he usually wore it short. He hadn't gotten it cut quite so short this time, and he'd told them to leave the sideburns. Miriam was right, it did look good. He looked like a country-and-western singer.

He returned to the bar, and sat thinking of Andrea, her small hands, and the way she sometimes covered her mouth with them when she laughed. Had it really been three days? He must have lost track of the time, boded up in that damned trailer, watching TV, drinking beer, trying to come down from the job, this advertis­ing crap Dan was getting into. And Andy hadn't been laughing much lately. That bothered him. He didn't, so he always went over to her place. He didn't know what he was doing wrong, but he hadn't really wanted to find out.

"Time for another?" The bartender was lean­ing into Harry's field of vision, displaying a row of perfect white teeth between the beard and mustache.

"No! No, I'm... running late as it is." Harry rose somewhat sluggishly from the burstool.

"You come back, now."

"Yeah."

Outside, the air was dark and full of move­ment, as if invisible birds were flying past and around him. Maybe he should bring Andrea a bouquet of those, Harry thought. The thought made him smile. The drink had gotten to him just enough so that, as he sped toward Andrea's he thought, maybe we could do it. Maybe it wouldn't be such a bad idea. Hopefully ever after, and all that.

She came to the door of the apartment with a huge wooden fork in one hand. Harry thought for a second that she meant to stab him with it, but she just said quietly, "Harry, it's been over an hour since you called, you know. I was get­ting nervous."

"Andy, you're always getting nervous." He reached out to take her in his arms for a moment. He felt small and icky. Her hair smelled of perfume. Her hands smelled like fish.

"What are we having?"

"Shrimp," she whispered, extricating herself.

"Andy?"

"Mmmm?"

He pulled her back into his arms, kissed her. A wave of pleasure broke over his head and swept up a beach somewhere inside him. But he couldn't yet feel the water or taste the salt.

"Want a drink, honey?" he asked, again pulling away from his embrace.

"Yeah, I'll get it."

He went to pour himself something from the little arrangement of bottles she had on the marble-topped side table. Andrea bought and sold antique furniture. That's where they'd met, at an auction. Back before Christmas, Dan's wife had got it into her head that she had to have one of those tall cabinets with a glass front for her dishes. She wanted one that was dark and fancy, but most of all, old. He and Dan had spent an entire weekend looking, and had ended up miles out of town at an auction. There they found it, over six feet tall, with drawers and doors and lots of shelves behind diamond shaped panes of glass. And there Andrea had been, in jeans and a tweedy kind of formal looking jacket, clutching a large pothook with both hands, her eyes on that same monstrous piece of furniture. Dan outbid her.

She'd started to cry, quietly. Harry had watched her pull out a handkerchief and snuffle into it. Dan had wanted to get going right away, upset at just having spent over a grand. But Harry had said, no, let's stick around, he might see something he wanted. Andrea was bidding on a
chair, an ugly, straight-backed thing, all spindles and velvet. She got it, and afterwards, he approached her, said how sorry he was about the cabinet. Said if it had been up to him, he would have let her have it. She accepted his apology and his offer of a night out, and the rest of the scene was easier than he’d thought it would be.

“How is the publicity coming along, Harry?”

Andrea was coming out of the kitchen with a salad bowl in her hands.

“Just fine, Andy.”

“Listen, I’d be glad to help out with typing things—but. You know I’ve got the time.” She was looking at him almost pleadingly, her head tilted to one side.

“Dan says we can’t afford anybody for that. Besides, I don’t want you dragged into this.”

Now she was trying to look stern. “Harry, I meant for free. How could Dan turn that down—someone willing to just help out?”

She had finished fussing around the table, then came up to him, searching his face for something. His mouth flickered nervously. She touched his cheek. “Dinner’s ready.”

They sat on opposite ends of the small table. Andrea had lit some candles. Through tiny flames, Harry shushed her to the side. He felt solid in his chair, like liquid rock that had hardened into whatever he was supposed to be to the gentle edges of her hair glowing fuzzily in the soft light.

“You look just like an angel,” he said, wanting to make her laugh. She laughed. “You could have dinner in heaven every night, you know.”

Harry shifted in his chair. He was not a rock after all. “You wouldn’t want me all the time, Andrea. We’re always so well-behaved. I’m a crazy ‘un. I like moving around.”

“I’m more inclined to stay still, I think. The things around me move, the furniture, the people. I’m always right here. How do you like the shrimp? Is it fabulous?”

“It’s fabulous.”

Harry didn’t really care for this sort of thing, the candles, the formality. But he knew Andrea loved it. Harry would rather have taken her right to bed. He felt more real there, more like he belonged, even though sometimes, in the middle of making love to her, he’d feel as if he were taking a liberty: be careful, don’t fall in, don’t get used to this, you can’t always be here.

At the same time he’d be telling Andrea how good it was, how there was nothing like it in the world. He’d go to Dan’s. Maybe Dan’s wife would never be pregnant before.”

“Yeah, so?” He knew he was sounding like Elvis Presley, only leaner, tougher maybe. When he got back to where Andrea stood, he went behind her, put his hands on her shoulders as tenderly as he could.

“Andrea, baby, don’t worry. We’ll talk about this. We’ll talk over it.”

She reached back and gently pushed his hands away. “I don’t need to think it over, Harry. I know what I want to do. I guess you don’t, but maybe that doesn’t matter.”

“What do you mean, it doesn’t matter?”

She moved away toward the window. “You don’t have to marry me,” she said softly. “I should have realized that’s not your style.”

“But Andy, I--well, I want to marry you. I really do.”

She was looking out the window with her arms folded around herself, her face firm, motionless. She looked like a statue. The room began to seem like a little niche of a painted box. Harry felt it might collapse on him at any moment. Andrea turned from the window, her eyes glinted little. “Harry, I’m sorry.”

“No, don’t be.”

She came over to him and lifted up her hands to his face. He caught them, and brought them back down into the space between them and held them there. “Andrea, I’ve got to leave for just a while. I’ll be back.”

“Harry! But we have to talk. I thought you said…”

“We’ll talk. I just need an hour. A couple of hours. To get used to the idea. Please.”

He thought maybe he was angry, but the feeling of being angry was somewhere outside that window, descending in circles like a paper airplane in the dark.

She pulled her hands away. “Well, I guess you’d better go now, Harry, if you’re going.”

“Andrea, don’t be like this!” But he found himself baring his teeth,实验ing. He splashed water on his face, experimenting. He splashed water on his face, and noticed the blood on his shirt. It had been scared of wild with lipstick. Harry wanted to say something, but the guy sat him down and handed him a wad of paper. It was the bartender from a TV commercial. Someone bumped into him from behind, and he turned quickly, ready to growl into a plump, reddish, apologetic face. “Sorry,” she said, and slid out from behind him, leaving an empty stool. Harry took it. His beer appeared. He looked up and down the bar, thought maybe some trying to look good. Not too many women.

Darn Andrea. Why did she have to get pregnant? Just when things had been really going good. But a kid? He couldn’t let Andrea do it. He couldn’t take the chance. And I’d prefer that you didn’t come in the bar, not in a million years. That wasn’t who he was. He watched the blonde chewing at her boyfriend’s earlobe, and wondered if she wanted to cut him. It wasn’t fair! He’d been screwed! He suddenly wanted to cry. The music became a tangle of horrible noises. The dancers looked like mechanical toys. “All right, if that’s the way you want it,” Harry said angrily, out loud.

The man next to him turned and gave him the once-over. Big nosed, with a hangdog look, hair dragged in his eyes. Harry sensed meanness.

“Cut the shit, O.K.?,” Harry requested solemnly.

The dog-face leaned closer to him, its eyes narrowing. “Don’t be an asshole.”

Harry’s head felt as if it were on fire. Then his hand came up real fast and pushed out dog-face away, hard. He heard people crying out in surprise. Seconds later, a fist hit him in the jaw. As he fell, he thought he heard the piano give out two loud chords, and then he couldn’t hear it anymore. He was quenched. Sweet wet ashes filled his mouth.

A while later he saw that he was on his feet. Some guy was helping him to the men’s room.

He caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror, all smeared with red, like someone who had gone wild with lipstick. Harry wanted to say something, but the guy sat him down and handed him a wad of paper. It was the bartender from this afternoon.

“Get yourself cleaned up and then split,” said the bartender. “We can’t afford this kind of scene. And I’d prefer that you didn’t come back. Nothing personal.”

The sound of the piano was still ringing in his head. Harry blobbered softly along with it as he spat blood into the sink. He pressed several teeth, experimenting. He splashed water on his face, and noticed the blood on his shirt. It had been an expensive shirt.

“Let’s go,” said the bartender.

People seemed to give him sympathetic looks as he walked back through the bar, not so crowded now. He should be embarrassed, but he wasn’t.

“I’m going to be a Daddy,” he said. “I want to say to someone, anyone, but he was at the door already.

Shit. He couldn’t go back to Andrea’s like that. He’d go to Dan’s. Maybe Dan’s wife would have something to put on his face. He’d go to Dan’s and call Andrea from there. And he’d tell Dan about...HA! Dan would be so pissed off! For once, he, Harry, had gotten somewhere first!
Hybrid

High technology races onward. To ignore it is to repeat a thousand evils. To be seduced by it is to lose all judgment, the self unexamined, is to once again forget that man is home-fabber—the maker of the tools—and become the slave of the tools and misguided tool-makers.

Be Sherry Brubaker

"In the earlier stages of progress, the forces which man applied to their work were simple, and, as the result of man unbalanced by his search for completeness, and his endeavor to conquer the forces of nature, the forces to capture man. The sum of force attracts, and his thought are alike its product; the movements which impinge on his senses, whose "forces" and man:"

"The engineering officer’s preparing something! The engineering officer’s preparing something! It’s the saraband of fright, the quartermaster! It’s the saraband of fright, the gadget roars out and crackles right between his fair under the dislocating thunder! It’s the wildly away...Everything! the carcasses! the junk! the tanks! piles upon the crunching and stinker!"

Mauran would proclaim, "a speeding automobile is infinitely more beautiful than the Vicary of Humboldt" (that is, Wingham Victory, a maroon from classical antiquity), after the war participants in it would see it as evident that the machine and its attendant horrors, the engineer, would hasten the end of man, as Ferdinand Calde did it in Gagarin’s Band.

Within a decade the pure idealism of the machine worships was neutralized. Amongst someone gazed in the machine, a skeptic could point to the passage of mechanized warfare and work, "That is where it will lead." Stromko followed, considerable, and capitulated the danger a generation later. The bachelor on the terraces Hoyt, or as Marcel Duchamp portrayed his seven bachelors in The Glass Cube: The Bride Stripped Bare by the Bachelors, Eve, inside the manufacture choosing grader, became barren and frivolous. Yet still we could not resist the inducive machines; the fast automoms, the perpetual phase turning step rolls and trammels, the radio blues and the television glows, the electronicroper and the smart bomb. The electronic typewriter (continued on page 15)
same supposition that Adams comes to, for the impulse which inspires the apes to dance and shriek around the monolith seems to be the same one that leads the astronauts into interplanetary space. The difference lies in the present.

The brilliance of Kubrick's film is in his choice of the two extremes, for while it is obvious we would not choose the primal world, we would opt for something more in the other. The empty rhetoric of the cosmic board meeting is laughable; the talk of planning the reaction of the terrestrial public hearkens to our suspicion of deception in advertising; the sight of a machine less in control of its emotions than the two all-American boys on the space ship is alarming. Oh, for some dancing and shrieking.

What is it we fear when we speak of "de-personalization," of the fragmentation of modern life? Perhaps it is something like the terror incubated in me when I felt so cut off from the world around me.

Adams suggests that while from the beginning man was attracted to "forces," responded to them, was educated by them, for a long time the unity of these forces was symbolized by the Virgin; sex was power, fecundity the greatest mystery. Later the Virgin was replaced by the Dynamo, and power and art became distinct things. Along with this distinction between symbols, Adams suggests, 'the banks of a channel in man's perspective; for it was not until relatively late in his evolutionary history that man moved from pure assimilation of force to last Adams calls "economics" in man's "methods of pursuit" of force. In 302 A.D., the Roman Empire economized the gods:

"...the cross had absorbed all the old occult or fetish-power. The symbol represented the sum of man's energy, and society believed it to be as real as e-rays; perhaps it was!"

While "man's function as a force of nature had always been to assimilate other forces as he assimilated food,..." once done, the mind resumed its perceptions...Once done, the mind resumed its sensibility of force to what Adams calls "pure sensibility of force"...In 1543, the universe in its thought must be in a state of equilibrium:

"A man who has lost his sight but not his eyesight is for the Bushman, we are creatures who are still possessed of an unconscious, and so we doubt (perhaps beginning with Copernicus), so did symbology, for it is the stuff of the unconscious which is fed by the senses. But while it is natural for us to symbolize as it is for the bushman, for us to find ourselves in situations altogether new and unforeseen, a flash of inspiration had led them to put numbers signalled the imminent submission to the purely sensual force, the original unity. Ben Gideon needs a house before winter. David Dempsey

In "The Blind Man," D.H. Lawrence writes about a man who has lost his sight but not his sensual contact with the world. In fact, the loss of one sense seems to have taught him a new mode of seeing:

So long as he kept this sheer immediacy of blood-contact with the subterranean world he was happy, he wanted no intervention of visual consciousness. If so, he knew in him, in a way that made him a like a tide leaping, leaping, and advancing, enveloping suddenly. It was a pleasure to stretch forth the hand and meet the unseen object, cheer it, and praise it in pure contact. He did not try to remember, to visualise. He did not want to. The new way of consciousness substituted itself in him.

Maurice, the blind man, is a farmer. He is confronted with a barrister, Lawrence's representative of the industrial city. While Maurice is described as large and passionate, Bertie (the barrister) is small and scaldes; Maurice feels a fullness, strength in his darkness, while Bertie is empty and weak in his world of light; Maurice is capable of intimacy, while Bertie is not. Maurice experiences dark depressions, submersion into dread, is capable of full joy, while Bertie is bound to misery, misery dictated by his "insane reserve."

So my misery was insanity, and so it was borne of the extremity of reserve. Any depression would have been unbearable, any submersion into dread, for intimacy is what sustains us and it is the opposite of dread. When, in Adams' metaphor, the Virgin was replaced by the Dynamo, the word "intimacy" came to be associated with sex, which was segregated from the force which assimilated. Sex and intimacy became one thing; the machine became the symbol of power. D.H. Lawrence writes about the need to re-establish the intimacy which can exist only between a man and a woman, but also between two men, between a man and the world.

What Adams calls "feath-power," Jung calls symbology. Both terms describe a way of assimilating into the consciousness the perception of the unconscious, or, as Jung says, a way "to bring the original mind of man into advanced or differentiated consciousness." Once the evidence of the senses had come to be doubted (perhaps beginning with Copernicus), so did symbology, for it is the stuff of the unconscious which is fed by the senses. But while it is natural for us to symbolize as it is for the bushman, for us to find ourselves in situations altogether new and unforeseen, a flash of inspiration had led them to put numbers signalled the imminent submission to the purely sensual force, the original unity. Ben Gideon needs a house before winter. David Dempsey

As a vehicle for art it had no business being ugly and playing bad music. One of the records in the machine was an insipid, whiny song about terminal illness. Death. Sentiment about death; that most dreadful of mysteries subjected to forced rhyme. Enough was enough.

It is not the machine itself but the aesthetic of the machine which endangers us. The comparatively simple technology of Adam's age has burgeoned until our culture is inundated with it. Technology, the stuff not of balance but of redundancy, not of surprise but of predictability, the means by which to eliminate conflict, is supersensitive to the extreme.

Buzzy Aldrin's minister, Reverend Dean Woodruff, sought to explain the symbolism of the moon trip in "The Myth of Apollo II: The Effects of the Lunar Landing on the Mythic Dimensions of Man." He says:

"Man's capacity to symbolize and to respond to symbols is the central fact of human existence... The Apollo event will be the kind of occurrence that will reach down to this level... Science has created a worldwide technological civilization and, as yet, has not given birth to any cultural symbol by which we can live... We need now a paradigm of the human experience of the whole."

In popular culture the journey into space has been symbolized not as the ultimate endeavor of a technological culture but as the frontier which embodies the same potential as the American West in the last century. In Star Wars, the spaceships possess the quirks of horses, the good guys wear white hats, robots and androids are as eccentric as the town idiot. Unlike the Western, however, Lucas' film reckons with the threat of technology, for its heroes have ridden its supersensitive force out to see the stars and come out the other side, into a world restored to the purely sensual force, the original unity. Ben teaches Luke to feel, to close his eyes and let it guide him. As in Lawrence, vision seems to obstruct the way to intimacy.

Annie Gideon Needs a House Before Winter

Along both shoulders, stray cotton thrusts like a thousand gulls invisible surf tumbling past her feet that have for thirty seasons stumped at the little clouds in steady rhythm.

All is in that interval of lungs, broken only as the horizon scatters— a headlamp blaze that slaps her skull afire. The gulley behind is anonymous and without clues. Only her queer expression waits for those who pass and look.

All is the dryness of grass, waiting then flattering like her lips, all flickering past the windshield glass. Except this year she appears on many roads, her back to town inward and curled in secret dread. All dread is unexpected and bold by night. Those of us who recognize her know the truth in her face twitching on the glass.

Annie Gideon needs a house before winter.

David Dempsey

"The Myth of Apollo II: The Effects of the Lunar Landing on the Mythic Dimensions of Man." He says:

"Man's capacity to symbolize and to respond to symbols is the central fact of human existence... The Apollo event will be the kind of occurrence that will reach down to this level... Science has created a worldwide technological civilization and, as yet, has not given birth to any cultural symbol by which we can live... We need now a paradigm of the human experience of the whole."
In *Of a Fire on the Moon*, Norman Mailer speaks of that same sense:

Obviously, then, if the great brain of NASA were attached to any sense, it was the eye. The eye was the collector of unquestionable facts.

Mailer’s harrowing look at the Apollo 11 project is an anatomy of something that is an embodiment of both unquestionable fact and twentieth-century mythology; it explores the possibility that the project is the ultimate expression of technology and the possibility that it is a grand attempt at “greater synthesis”:

...it was that he hardly knew whether the space program was the noblest expression of the Twentieth Century or the quintessential statement of our fundamental insanity.

*Of a Fire on the Moon* is a book about the “schizophrenia of the ages,” about the great irrational act of a culture embedded in rationality. It speaks of technology’s attempts to outmode intuition, while its hero, Neil Armstrong, speaks of the “deep inner soul.” Its protagonists are “technicians and heroes, robots and saints, adventurers and cog of the machine.” Like any good American novel, it is about paradox, for America’s mission as the world’s last frontier was to resolve the paradoxical position European man found himself in as a creature both conscious and unconscious, civilized and wild, good and evil: a creature divided. And such a mission embodies the ultimate paradox, for it asks us to deny what we are.

Mailer finally sees this venture into the new frontier of space not as a venture toward resolution, but as a means of re-establishing the dynamism of our own duality:

...that we are the only creatures who live with dread also makes us the only ones capable of joy.

William Blake speaks of a progression of the soul through innocence, experience, revolt, and the “dark night of the soul” to what he calls “higher innocence.” Perhaps we sometimes wish for a more primal world because we long for that original innocence, naïve acceptance, maybe as Americans we embody the cultural pinnacle of revolt. If so, it is clear that we cannot go back to innocence, we must go forth to its enlightened counterpart, and that may mean we have yet to experience the dark night of the soul—or are we already there? Perhaps as humans our step into consciousness was only the first step in our evolution toward higher innocence, wisdom, a state of being in which we conceive metaphors as easily as we traverse the stars. Evolutionary time covers spans so great we can scarcely conceive of them, but in this period of supersensual chaos we have our psychiatrists to help us, our gurus, our artists, our children, each other; and we still have nature to educate us, nature with her forces more mysterious and powerful than any other.

Perhaps mystery will sustain us until we come to embrace it; perhaps that is the grace of the Lord.
Near the end of the nineteenth century, in a small community in North Alabama, there occurred an auspicious event. An infant was discovered, early one morning, on the steps of a Benedictine monastery, the Abbey of St. Bernard. The Father Abbot tried in vain to locate the parents. After his efforts, he concluded that whoever had left the child had done so with the intention that the boy be trained for the Vocation. A wet nurse was acquired, and the infant was named Nathanael, which means "gift of God." As he grew, he was quartered and educated within those cloistered walls. Never was it considered that Nathanael would prefer another vocation. Indeed, Nathanael took to ecclesiastical learning with such precociousness and enthusiasm that the Abbot's early supposition seemed confirmed. Nathanael went through his catechism at eight, an unusually early age, and took First Communion soon after. At age eleven he was a college student — for the Benedictines maintained a college at the site of the Abbey — and by age fourteen he was enrolled at the seminary. On reaching his eighteenth birthday he was ordained Father Nathanael O.S.B., fulfilling the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The Benedictines were, at that time, a missionary force in that part of the country. Most of the parish priests in the communities north of Birmingham were furnished by the Abbey of St. Bernard. After Nathanael's ordination, the Father Abbot, old and near the end of his days, summoned the only real son he had ever known. With some reluctance he had, upon consultation with the Bishop of Birmingham, decided to send the young priest on an assignment outside the cloister and its adjoining groves. The young priest accepted his assignment without trepidation and kissed the ring of his superior. The Abbot observed him as he strode out of the study, observed that he appeared to be rather ordinary in physical aspects, at least in complexion and general cast, except for his stature, which was small, and his limbs which, though tempered with work in the garden, seemed bony and frail. Still, thought the Abbot, he has grown up well. Like Moses in the bulrushes, he was discovered by people of good will. He was, as a priest, revered. As a young man of almost childlike appearance, he was "one of the boys," a youth who incidentally had taken vows. He was a frequent and popular dinner guest among families at St. Florian and he occasionally spent evenings drinking with a gathering of single men. In spite of his age and small frame, the little priest had an indelicate capacity for consuming beer.

Father Daniel had speculated if such fraternizing would be injurious to the Office of the young priest until he noted that, during Masses and Novenas, the dignity of the Vocation was maintained, and that Father Nathanael, when the celebrant, was credible, not just to the congregation but also to Father Daniel. On confession days, those who were confessed by Father Nathanael — for they could recognize his voice in the enclosure — were impressed by the tolerance and mercy that he articulated, in contrast to the strict and didactic apothegms of Father Daniel. Father Nathanael's circle of acquaintances was an odd mixture; the status of single man was all that was held in common. Included in the circle was a postmaster, young and sullen and all too serious. The beer seemed to free him. A big, strong lad, noted for his mischief, was usually present. He had started out with a firewood enterprise and now owned a sawmill. Father Nathanael saw him as a basically good person. He knew that his pledges to the parish were generous. It was rumored that the big lad was a womanizer. "Possibly," Father Nathanael had suggested to Father Daniel one day, "these rumors are based on his happy-go-lucky disposition and his youth and
looks, rather than on facts." "I think not," Father Daniel had replied dryly. Another frequenter of these evening gatherings was a carpenter, a dull, silent fellow. He let his presence to the circle, little else. In addition to these regulars, there were also those others who showed up intermittently.

One such person was old Olaf. Those of the circle, regulars, and peripheral affiliates, were occasional drinkers. Sometimes they, in good spirit, overindulged. Drinking, for Olaf, was not an occasional matter. When he was present, it was because he needed company and another excuse for drinking. Olaf was in his fifties and sometimes imbecilic. Because the old fellow was good natured and kind, Father Nathanael suspected that Olaf had confussed, again and again, that he drank too much. Father Nathanael would absolve him and request that he go and sin no more. Once, Father Daniel had pronounced Olaf in a state of mortal sin on account of drunkenness and lasciviousness and excluded him from Holy Communion. Shortly afterwards, Father Daniel decided that the drinking was as much illness as sin. At the following Mass, the bow-legged, strong shouldered stonemason, his trembling, thick hands held in front of his broad chest, had received the wafer, tears flooding his ruddy cheeks.

Father Nathanael, observing the last of the church construction, noticed something about Olaf as he worked. Olaf had difficulty with church construction, noticed something about Oldf the old fellow was good natured and kind, Father Nathanael suspected that some sin, unconfessed, hides but long ago committed, was the impetus for drink, something that gnawed at him from inside and required the numbing effect of the lager brew.

The new priest was, in a matter of months, just Father Nathanael, a priest. The church, skeletal when he arrived, was nearing completion. The cross was carefully hoisted on top of the steeple spire. Altar and windows were intricate, cornerstones would be set in place, the Bishop and Father Abbot were to be there for the dedication. Father Daniel, assured that the parish was in good hands, would return to the Abbey.

1917

The Bishop in full regalia, followed by the Abbot, by Father Daniel and Father Nathanael, and by a delegation of monks, led the procession around the new building. The well secured stones were sprinkled with holy water. The sweet, thick fumes of incense, swirling from a swinging censer, encircled the edifice. The procession had completed the round, there was a brief pause for a ceremonial anointing of the cross, the Bishop and Father Abbot were to be there for the dedication. Father Daniel, assured that the parish was in good hands, would return to the Abbey.
rose and walked off to the front side by the image of the Blessed Virgin. Under the gracious image of marble, he... what hollow Hubris is contained In unripe talk, and green conceits. Forgive this poor sinner. Lee Baker

front of him and the vipers flicked their genitalia. He shuddered and felt aflame. He felt tendrilous tongues. As each penitent passed him, wine skins. He saw mortification — mutilated with rib cages like apple crates and bellies like upright mounds of dying flesh. The wailing and cracking of whips was to him. His disease but, even more horrible, her skin was smooth, terribly smooth. When he arrived, he found a visitor awaiting him, a release of breath, slow and dramatic like the ebbing of a tide, from the disorientation from his parishioners. The present seemed not to notice. The shackles fell from his eyes.

On another night, he was visited by the tribulation of St. Catherine. The holy woman slyly, and mumbled on his floor, her chest cleared of its femininity. Mocking pagans displayed her severed breasts on a platter, upright mounds of dying flesh. The night before Christmas Eve, after a Mass, he returned to the rectory to be visited by St. Teresa of Avila. The saintly woman, almost swooning in a form of ecstasy, loudly lifted up her hair shirt, displaying the maggot swarm in her torso. He recited the Pater Noster, as his habit. When, before Communion, he spoke the Dominus Non Sum Dignus, he spoke with conviction, for he, too, was unworthy, steeped in sin. During the Communion of the people he watched for old Olaf, but the bowlegged figure did not appear. After Mass, he rang the bell dutifully. The parishioners heard it as tidings of good cheer. It was, indeed, a view without necessity. Then he put on a shawl (as if to give appearance of being affected by the cold) and mounted the mule and rode to the rectory where he was immersed in terrible protestations. He recited The Preface. For the reading, the Credo was repeated. Flanked by the acolytes, Father Nathanael prepared the Eucharist. "O God," he entreated silently, "we are not worthy to be able to honor you. We have been created in your image, Imago Dei, we betray You and yet You save us. Such is Your love."

Then, following an invocation, he kissed the chalice. Then Gloria Patri, sung in unison with the pealing pipe organ and Dominus Vobiscum, "Christe Eleison," echoed by the mourners. Then "Kyrie Eleison," echoed by the mourners. Our God, Lord of all."

One night, a few days before Christmas, he found himself as well as his flock. When he struck the flame, he changed his voice. He returned to the rectory to be visited by St. Eustace. Old Olaf was near death and was requesting the Last Rites. The little Father was teaching a catechism class would be confirmed on Easter Sunday. He entered the rectory with a sense of dread. That night, though, he did not experience any apparitions. He experienced only a stillness, as if every living creature was holding its breath in expectation of Olaf’s death. The rectory was in a hurry. The carpenter. Old Olaf was dead. Forgive this poor sinner. Father Nathanael entered, following the upraised brass cross. Ahaem of him, he could see the draped bier. He did not realize it at the time, but his vision was improving. There was less distortion. The ringing in his ears had dissolved in the stillness of the night before, but he was not yet aware of that improvement, either. Introibo ad Altare Dei; he knelt at the altar and prayed there. Then, following an invocation, he kissed the altar. His hands trembled. The strange crowd in attendance followed suit.

"Kyrie Eleison," echoed by the mourners. Then "Christe Eleison," echoed by the mourners.

Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom Come (that we may commune with Thee), Thy Will Be Done (for it is mysterious) On Earth as It is in Heaven; Give us this day Our Daily Bread (O the soul needs nourishment) and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us (for we can expect to be forgiven, if we cannot forgive ourselves, you, one cannot conceive of forgiveness without praying it) and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen. The bread broken. The bread consumed, the chalice drained. Father Nathanael raised his arms for the blessing. There was a light swelling in the sanctuary. The shackles fell from his eyes.

Specious in Theory, Ruinous in Practice

A multitude of sins are concealed by theory.
supplanted the scribe, the information
management system supplanted the clerk, the
dive bomber gave way to the cruise missile, the
incinerator was crushed by the trash compactor,
the personal vibrator abrogated even the
need for the bachelors. Sex with a circuit
breaker to prevent orgasmic overload. Nature,
being too tough to manage, was bludgeoned by
the demons which slipped their fine and
tensile tentacles into every crevice in
our lives. Our Margaritas were Waring blended
or Osterized, our ice cream was electrically
metamorphosed, our children's lives were
movie or videotape recorded, we earned our
livings making pieces of pieces of larger pieces
of things we read about in the mass media
papers or saw on cable news broadcasts, and if
we tried to explain what we did to our kids or
our neighbors we soon found ourselves
soliloquizing against glazed eyes and slack
mouths. Best to keep it all general, and therefore
undecipherable. An entire generation grew up
not knowing of the old masters' contributions to
society. To paraphrase Ken Kesey, you were
either on the techno-bus or off it, and if you were
on it the scenery changed quickly enough to
prevent introspection. But if you were off the
bus you were left standing in the debris and
horrified at what the next arrival of the bus or
train would bring. You searched for the brake
handle to bring that screaming locomotive to a halt.
Walt Whitman must surely have been
electrically cattle-prodded by the demons to have
written these words to that beast:

Fierce-drawn beauty!
Roll through my chant with all the lawless
music, thy swinging lamps at night.
They madly-whistled laughter, echoing,
rumbling like an earthquake, roaring all
law of thyself complete, thine own track,
firmly holding.

How ominous! Particularly that “Law of thyself
complete.” Killer satellites directing the mayhem.
The decision to make one or not to make chews
over by some digital thing running a program
written by some white kid with thirty-nine pens
in his pocket and scotch tape on his glasses!
Jacques Ellus in The Technological Society
cried, “Technique has run amok, has become a
Frankenstein monster that cannot be
controlled.” The real horror was how
completely we were taken in. Man wedded
machine in the bliss of industrial love. In
Stephen Crane's The Bride Comes to Yellow
Sky, the protagonist rides into town on the
train, a traitor with his mechanical bride, body-
snatched by the engineers, lovestruck by pistons
in their sleeves.

He was stiffening and steadily, but yet
somewhere at the back of his mind a vision of
the Pullman floated, the sea-green velvet, the
shining brasses, ivory, and glass, the wood that
gleamed as darkly brilliant as the surface of a
pool of oil — All the glory of the marriage, the
environment of the new estate.

His subconscious yearning for the communion
of flesh and steel seizes him, seizes us. Imagine
comparing organic, natural wood to a pool of
ugly oil! What are we to do? The mushroom
cloud forms in our minds, if not on the horizon.
Do we, as the Life cartoon many years ago
showing two golfers faced with the same cloud,
have time to squeeze in two more holes?

II. The Split and the Sutures

I am treated to one more view, however, one
last bit of schizophrenias as I stand on a narrow
walkway 120 feet ready to be launched into
Columbia. On my left is an unimpeached view
of the beach below, unmarred by human interests
on my right the most colossal pile of machinery
ever assembled. If I cover my right eye, I see
the Florida of Ponce de Leon, and beyond it
the sea which is mother to all. I am the
original man, if I cover my left eye, I see
civilisation and technology and the United
States of America and a frightening array of
wires and metal. I am but one adolescent in an
array which has received its marching orders.
Neil has entered the spacecraft, and I am next.
Michael Collins, on boarding Apollo 11, is mixed in
Carrying the Fire

It's certain that most technophobes are
surprised to read these works of an astronaut,
particularly as set off from the portrait painted by
Tom Wolfe in The Right Stuff. However,
although a tiny minority, there exist within the
framework of engineers, physicists, mathematicians,
programmers, chemists, and the like, many who
stand astride the two cultures, products of a sort
of modernist (or post-modernist) mixed estate.
Now, it is, of course, a terrible conceit to believe
that this Renaissance type exists only in our
lifetimes; clearly this sort of individual pervades
history. But because their numbers are so small,
it is often difficult for them to communicate
effectively with the audience they so richly
deserve. One exception in our own history, as
related by Collins elsewhere in his book, was
Benjamin Franklin.

We all know examples of unexpected by-
products of research (such as penicillin) and
man's serendipity in a new environment, but
my favorite story goes back to 1783, when
Benjamin Franklin witnessed the first public
launching, in Paris, of a hydrogen balloon. Of
what possible use was this new invention?
Skeptics asked Franklin, and he replied, "of
what use is a newborn babe?"

Truly, if we can wonder, we can hope. Franklin
in his long life contributed an enormity of
inventions, most of which seemed rather silly or
useless in their time. But what would it portend
for man, for evolution, if we shied away from
knowledge, even potentially destructive
knowledge? The thing unknown is undefended
against. However, this is not to say that these
aren't silly and generally useless inventions,
some of which make large sales to the public.
(Remember pet rocks?) But more on this further
on.

Why do we not heed wisdom such as
Franklin's, or at least give it an audience? Why do
we become suspicious of such versatile persons?
We seem so easily taken in by dogma, by
polemical expression, slogans and neat solutions.
It would be nice to think that we are a scrappy
bunch, but it seems that man has, as a massing
animal, a severe reluctance to make decisions
based on his own careful judgment. In short, he
is too lazy to think for himself. Too harsh?
How is it then, in our ultra-sophisticated, disco-
maniacal world, that we still have failed to
understand the flux of life and catch up to
thoughts of those which more accurately
reflected the nature of the universe and man's
place over a century ago? How is it that our
own nature is so alien to us?

I agree that man is an animal predominantly
constructive, foredoomed to conscious striving
for a goal, and applying himself to the art of
engineering, that is to the everlasting and
unceasing construction of a road — no matter
where it leads, and that the main point is not
where it goes, but that it should go somewhere,
and that a well-conducted child, even if he
despises the engineering profession, should not
surrender to that disarm case which, as
so well known, is the mother of all vices. Man
loves construction and the laying out of roads,
that is indubitable. But how is it that he so
passionately disposed to destruction and chaos?
Tell me that! But on this subject I should like
to put in two words of my own. Doesn't his
passionate love for destruction and chaos (and
nobody can deny that he is sometimes devoted
to these; that is a fact), arise from his
instinctive fear of attaining his goal and
completing the building he is erecting?

—Lisa Livingston

Feodor Dostoevsky in Notes From Underground

If we complete the building we are erecting and
then stop, it becomes our tomb. The natural
world shows us that: stasis is death. Naturally,
this obsession with the trip at the expense of the
destination is dangerous. However, the reverse is also true. If the destination really becomes the sole goal, then the "sloth" settles in, evil grows, and we are left with the static, dying world we richly deserve. If the destination really becomes the sole goal, then we will inherit the good enough? Didn't we do all the bad stuff to ourselves? Who among us is responsible? Here is one engineer who sees right where the cloak of responsibility falls.

We are told that it is "all the fault of the front office, the sales department, market research," etc. But the final link, the consumer, who in this case is the man who fills the trough for the crimes committed by the miscreants swilling in it. Yet Papanek believes that there is simply not enough "merit" to say "Thank you." The stars face stars in the sky, the lights in the commune shine on our family. We are told that in some subtle way extremely refreshing. It exposes the frailties and limits of being human, and that in some way, in some way, we can still move away from the blaring advertisements and listen to our hearts. High technology races quietly away from the blaring advertisements and misguided tool-makers. If we let the maker of tools — and to become the slave of tools — and to become the slave of tools and misguided tool-makers. If we let the desire to explore fade, if we kill the space program? Well, of how much benefit would the fruits of the space program? Well, of how much benefit to the poor is deodorized mink droppings? The facts are there for us to read if we want to read them. Today the amount grows ever smaller. True, we must quantify such things for the accountants must always have their say. But let those who benefit from this technology, and those who find pleasure in it have their say, too. The poor people and philosophers shouldn't feel left out, either, for there is much consciousness-raising, beauty of expression, critical thought they can contribute.

III. Pointing the Finger and Shouldering the Burden

Papanek may be unduly harsh on the designers, for to what end would their labors have been on these products had there not been a clamoring public anxious to purchase these goodies in lieu of feeding Blafran children, or adding the poor in their own communities? It is hard to indict the man who fills the trough for the crimes committed by the swine swilling in it. Yet Papanek does not shrink from admission of complicity, and he is thoroughly correct in believing that the engineer has the ability to nudge human consciousness-raising, beauty of expression, critical thought they can contribute.

Victor Papanek in Description of a Red World

Papanek believes that there is simply not enough time, material, or talent to be spent on useless, wasteful, or low-quality items. And he believes in mimicking the way man has always lived in natural conditions — organic technology. Two-thirds of the world's population lives in poverty. Does that mean kill the space program? Well, of how much benefit to the poor is deodorized mink droppings? The space program is precisely the road Dostoevsky described. If for the motion alone, it should be continued. Though it may seem a purely Western, linearly directed, apocalyptic-visions belief that directs us, it is a universal wonder which fuels the need. The fallout too can have universal appeal. Safe drinking water, sanitary facilities, disease control, infant survivability, and much more have benefited directly from studies allied to or commissioned by space programs. There is a great deal at stake here for all mankind, and the real dollar results are a real bargain. The big problem is the perception most of us have of the cost, and that is our problem, because the facts are there for us to read if we decide to think for ourselves instead of through the filter of popular hysteria. As of 1974 when "Carrying the Fire" was published, the total NASA budget was less than one-thirtieth of the then-HEW budget. Today the amount grows ever smaller. True, we must quantify such things for the accountants must always have their say. But let those who benefit from this technology, and those who find pleasure in it have their say, too. The poor people and philosophers shouldn't feel left out, either, for there is much consciousness-raising, beauty of expression, critical thought they can contribute.

But in the so-called underdeveloped lands, the gratification of helping people through technology is still expressed in art with unabashed enthusiasm. Take, for example, these verses from a contemporary Chinese poem.

The stars in the sky are crowded as sesame seeds. The lights in the commune shine on our family. Mama carries little brother in her lap. Under the light she learns reading and writing. Stars face stars in the sky, Under the beam of every house hangs an electric lamp. The stars are dim and the lamp lights, The electric lights shine in everybody's heart.

How naive such verse seems to us in our overpopulated, over-air-conditioned, overpowered homes. Yet it is naive like the primitive painting of a Grandma Moses, which means that in some subtle way extremely refreshing, it mirrors the old Wmominneque hymns of optimism that still reverberate deep within the engineer.

Victor Papanek in Description of a Red World

This is our planet, our technology, ours, our people. We are the ultimate arbiters of good sense in technology, we are the only beings truly sensitive to our needs if we can simply move away from the blaring advertisements and listen to our hearts. High technology races toward. To ignore it is to repeat a thousand evils. To be seduced by it through the advertisement unjudged, the self unexamined, is once again to forget that man is homo faber — the maker of tools — and to become the slave of tools and misguided tool-makers. If we let the desire to explore fade, if we kill the space program, and yet continue to buy doggie mood rings and hotdoggers, then we will inherit the static, dying world we richly deserve.

These bubbles produce gross filthiness in the lower bowel, resulting in a not-so-suitable and pervasive accumulation of odors reminiscent of a mixture of wet dog and marsh gas. It seems degrading for Columbus to reach this stinking-old-man stage, I prefer to think of it as a ripe mango ready to fall from the tree — but in any event, we must get it to the shore, to end the indignity of having bowel movements in public, and sooner the better.

Collins recognizes that Columbus is but a machine, yet he has a collective world-ending machine in the same way that a shark is a mackerel-beer can-anemone-hanging-man-license plate-center pin-snapper-fountain pen-cod-eating machine, but rather a whole being with machine servants whom we sometimes let run the estate. Often we forget who-created-who and seek solace from our own kind, which is a most grievous state. This is when we are most easily victimized. We should never throw up our hands and give up because the "computer screwed up." Likewise, we shouldn't depend on the machine to take care of all our needs. That's expecting the impossible. The computer runs whose sole purpose is the digital electronic "brain" is not some new mutant of the electronics age. His counterpart has existed as long as the machine.

The joy of engrossment in the mechanical, like all the pleasures of life, has all the potentialities of becoming a destructive obsession. That Builder of Bridges, a long-forgotten play that graced the London stage during the first decade of this century, Edward Thornfield, resident engineer, tells his boss, Sir Henry, that he does not wish to go to Rhodesia on an engineering project because he is planning to get married.

EDWARD: I'm in love. Chief.
SIR HENRY: So was I, once, but I shut myself up for a week, and worked on an air-machine. Grew so excited I forgot the girl. You try.

Samuel C. Florman in The Existential Pleasures of Engineering

This is the danger of and to each side of the argument, the two sides of the wound. On the anterior portion we have the technophile who can only relate to the mechanical (for electronic, essentially the same phenomenon). On the other side we have the witch-bunt mentality that holds that some of the evil of this type surfaces one must eradicate the "cause," say the air-machine or the computer, without seeking the true source of the trouble, which is man's nature itself. It is as though we are afraid to recognize the demon within each us, that we fear the fact that, with a different set of breaks, each of us could have been a Von Braun, a Schirra, an Oppenheimer, or a Whitman, Wallace Stevens, or T.S. Eliot, or a Hitler, Stalin, or a Pilate. When we attack the machine we are anthropomorphizing the evil incarnate in ourselves, as Dostoevsky saw. The machine is neither a savior nor a scapegoat.

Sometimes it reaches a point that we forget the foibles and limits of being human, and that machines cannot always accommodate us, yet we will blast the machine, again forgetting who made whom. We do need to dwell in a biologically centered world, even with all our machine helpers. As Collins discovers in the last two days of April 11, for all man's technical prowess in the execution of the hardware and software and the mission, we remain biological creatures.

Meanwhile the fadulous man and his equally picky companions must slope about in crowded and ever more smelly surroundings. The drinking water is laced with hydrogen bubbles (a consequence of fuel-cell technology which demonstrates that H2 and O join imperatively to form H2O).
This is my World

Her legs had no motives as she ran
across the Easter morning grass to the wood's edge
with an abandon unknown a month before,
beyond the parent world into the vast,

and she did not sense,
so ensorcelled was she by the distance's call,
that a father followed after; she did not know,
as she turned to look back and froze,
dumbfounded by the largeness of it all—
a huge no breast had hinted of—
her guardians stood behind, seeing with her eyes
the crowd up on the rise, the volleyball game,

the house beyond, the trees beyond the house,
the beyond yet farther on, the horizon's homelessness;
nor could she grasp with hand and mouth, as I did then
with fresh eyes she had taught, that in this moment,

made to order for the flashbacks of her dreams,
the Earth had plotted to make her yarn
(that is to fear) that the world need not be so void,
that her presence need not be so scant

in the midst of time she must fill;
nor will she understand when this green lawn
this Easter haunts her being with fulfillment's ceaseless wish
that all longing is a Sunday morning's quest-ion

and her answer must be yes:
this is my world.

David Lavery

Platonism for Parents

That she can identify, upon request, her ow-
room's plain window
curtained in yellow gingham, the gooseneck by
her parents' bed, the Van Gogh on the stairway,
her nose, her navel,

her tiny white chair and table, her miniature
sneakers,
hers stuffed duck and our ventriloquised
quacking;
that she knows to smell the scented images of
flowers in her book,

this does not astound us; for we have taught her
with smiles and applause which praise—
the rewards of recognitions—her pointed
response.

But that she recognizes at first meeting and
without introduction,
out in the mystery beyond her home, each and
every window,
even bay windows trimmed with lace, tiffany lamps,

Chinese landscapes on scrolls, a grandmother's
nose,
others' belly buttons, directors' chairs,
a picnic table by a lake, all the shoes at Kinney's
ducklings fresh from the egg; that she can smell,
on bended knees, real roses,
that the world we have not taught her is given
names,
this does amaze us, makes us
philosophers—parental Platonists.

David Lavery
Drop Some Rock on Some White Folk Today
Stephen May