

tunnel. A sort of wormhole where only the thunderous echo of my footsteps resounded. Asimov would probably claim that I was on my way to an alternate, mechanical universe. Thoreau would claim that through my current state of detachment, I had come closer to God. Huxley might argue that my adrenaline gland was working overtime, and that I was subject to an unprecedented case of transmethylation. Personally, I just wanted to get home.

The world I formerly adhered to and respected became a phantom. A lifetime of humble labor and scrutiny sped unchecked in my brain. The college degree I was so proud of, ensconced above my mantle under the veil of an expensive frame, seemed like nothing more than a sheet of paper beneath glass. The moderate yet respectable figure that rested in my checking account (which I would soon alleviate) was the pretentious scribbling of a jaded math professor. And the strange



variety of mechanical beasts and plastic idols in which I once found solace were the disgusting heaps that cluttered my conscience: television, washer, dryer, indoor plumbing, silver cutlery, plastic milk cartons, Teflon frying pans, rubber bands, paper clips, computers, processed meat, chemically saturated TV dinners, telephones, refrigerators, ice cubes, candy bars, cars, stereos, compact discs, videotapes, that artificial scent spewing forth from the air conditioner, individually wrapped servings of sugar and cream, credit cards, ATM cards, identification cards, phone cards, playing cards, chess boards, night stands, shower

curtains, toxic bleach cleaning supplies, rubber gloves, knife sets, spice racks, book shelves, books, condensed soup, kool-aid, lemonade, iced-tea (long-island), Jim Beam, Jack Daniels, Jack Russels, Basset Hounds, Scottish Terriers, German Shepards, bills, accounts, checks, money orders, pillows, blankets, vaporizers, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, furnaces, lapels, ties, penny-loafers, elbow pads, black socks, horn-rimmed spectacles, electronic shavers, shaving cream, hemorrhoid cream, sex cream, ice cream, whipped cream, cream of wheat, creamed corn, popsicles, swings, desks, book bags, doors (open and closed), windows (unbroken and gleaming clean), fresh air, stale air, clean air, smoky air, air, oxygen.

What did it all mean? As I sit here in my Hole, I still don't know. Doubt I ever will. Doubt I ever cared. Or did I? Perhaps. I will know soon enough.

I was an alien. The monsters that crowded around me were a species I could not identify. For the first time in my life, I had lost the reigns. I had no sense of myself, at least, the self I had nurtured and fought to maintain for so many years. I recalled the swarm of stale dinners and cocktail parties I frequented for the sake of professionalism. I would mill about, Carta Blanca in hand, all the while nodding and smiling to this or that professor or department head. Yes, yes that is quite true. The current student body does have a general lack of enthusiasm about that particular era. Perhaps adding the class would renew interest? Oh, yes, yes I do agree, my good