
THE TOY MONKEY / *Robert L. Smith*

Someone's gift, the box was gaily wrapped
In Oriental paper. The directions
Ended with three glyphs I took to be
Japanese. The fur was false, soft,
And brown; the eyes brown with startling yellow
Iris. A place to press brought it
Alive. It knuckled to a chair and up.
Its head turned left right left right,
Its orange muzzle opened as to speak.
'A Talking Toy' so I said "Hello!"
Close to the head. "Hello!" it answered back.
I laughed and tickled his stomach-fur with
A finger, and he wiggled and said "Hello!"
Curious, I removed the head
And looked: springs and levers, spool of tape,
And a set of batteries.

What sort

Of pet would a real monkey have been? Why,
Perhaps to eat and bleed and snap at guests.
But this was more a small slow child that held
My finger when we walked about the room,
Or, on my shoulder, clutched my head with dry-furred
Arms. I taught his tape to say "Idiot!"
And "Crimintilees!" and "Thus I refute
Berkeley," and he would play in his stiff way
Shambling through the rooms a-chittering,
Making queer designs with shredded paper,
Staring through the windows at the children.
Then, as if he needed warmth, he'd clamber
To my lap and seem to go to sleep,
Although the yellow eyes could never close.
At night I turned him off, and put him in
A little bed I'd bought. But every day
The time required to wake became a little
Longer. Once I went away a week,
And, turned on again on my return,
Four hours passed before he recognized me,
As if an exile from his power source
(whatever it may have been) left him lifeless.
I could have changed his batteries, I suppose,

