

# The Technophobe and the Madman

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## 1. Do You Hear Voices? (Madman)

*Do you hear voices?  
Yes! I hear voices.*

*The voices of others when they speak... pray,  
sigh, moan, groan, curse and cry.*

*I hear the voices of the rivers  
of the sea, of the wind, of the trees.  
The voice of my past, my present  
history of time,  
the voice of space  
The voices of my ancestors.  
Yes, I hear voices.*

*Do you believe  
you have powers  
no one else has?*

*Yes I do.  
My powers are mine...*

*Do you see things that others can't?  
Well in my imagination I do.*

*Even you can if you have imagination about yourself...*

## 2. We Are All Code (Technophobe)

*We are all code,  
DNA spiraling endlessly,  
Bearing our secrets like water in pitchers,  
Even the hour and manner of our deaths.  
Everything has already been revealed.*

*We are the encoders and the code.*

### 3. Confessions (Technophobe)

"Confessions of a technophobe" ... that would be me. It all started a longtime ago, when I began working on computers. I have these thoughts I just can't get rid of.

The thing is, if computers were made to deliver the military goods, can you trust them? Are they capable of any good? Sure, you could say that the first punch card was made for weaving, but let's be real. We're talking about tracking enemy targets. I mean, these missiles can find their own targets by themselves. But maybe I'm getting ahead of myself. Smart bombs, soft targets, etc.; somebody's going to get hurt.

Take the language: execute command, abort transaction, fatal error. How can I get up from my mother's kitchen table, figuratively speaking, and execute a command, much less abort a transaction. I aborted a transaction once, but that was different.

#### 4. Inside the Upside Down Society (Madman, Technophobe)

*Marie use'ta throw kisses  
out of her window.*

*I caught them,  
but she never caught mine—*

*I holler for my love*

*To be returned*

*Time and*

*Time and*

*Time and*

*Time again.*

*I sag along Broadway*

*looking like a*

*reclusive, moody*

*Genius.*

*So intense and serious.*

*Last spring*

*I ran into Marie*

*Asked her*

*About*

*returning my love to me.*

*She just*

*laughed and*

*walked off,*

*I still long*

*For Marie*

*To return my kisses.*

Can you trust them?

Maybe I'm getting  
ahead of myself.

Smart bombs,  
soft targets—  
Somebody's going to  
get hurt!

*I, a robot in  
the inside upside down society.*

*Cursed by some Saturday night*

*blues singing enchantress.*

*Singing in flat.*

*The shadow*

*on Amsterdam Avenue*

*is*

*that of*

*John Jones.*

*Shadow still lying*

*on the*

*Upper Westside.*

*He died*

*of AIDS,*

*Untimely death.*

I have these thoughts  
I just can't get rid of.

I aborted a transaction  
once,  
But that was different!

*He was*

*Homeless,*

*Bisexual*

*Gay, transvestite*

*Straight at times,*

*Black, Hispanic, Asian, white*

*Confused,*

*Misused person...*

Fatal

Fatal

Fatal

Fatal error

## **5. Me and My Avatar** (Technophobe)

I invented her, or maybe she invented me. She was my alter ego, the mythical me. All my life, I wanted to be her. When I was a little girl, she was the nature witch. She charmed animals in the woods, tamed people.

She was a shape shifter. She was avenging angel, nurturing mother, Tantric lover and artistic genius. Alma, she was the encoder and the code itself, a goddess, immortal.

## 6. What's Your Order? (Madman)

*What's your order?  
Get me some  
Chicken legs, french fries  
With an orange soda,  
Some ketchup and bread, ribs and potato salad, candied yams.  
A scared face  
Rubs its nose against  
The cold, frigid windowpane of  
Sister Soul's Restaurant on Lenox Avenue...*

*Some one holler,  
"Get out of here,  
Scat!  
Get on out of here  
Before we whup  
Your  
Ass..."*

## 7. Club Hell (Technophobe, Alma, X)

**Technophobe:** Early on, Alma and I went to Club Hell, a performance cafe for bad computer metaphors and outdated aliases. It's not called Club Hell for nothing. Their proprietary software allowed you to put everything karaoke-spoken word form.

**Alma:** We met X there, leaning up against virgo@datbank.com. He looked good.

**Technophobe:** Alma didn't have my shyness. There was nothing to stop her. She was free, and this was better than a dream- more free will; at least for me and my avatar.

She crooned in his ear in the club style,

**Alma:** Cascade me down your hub, baby. Turn on the slave server. We'll be some kind of twisted pair.

**Technophobe:** Well, that got his attention, all right. He got up off Miss v and sang back in a throaty sing-song,

**X:** Transfer my data packets, baby. Download me tonight. Power me baby, it'll be all right.

**Alma:** RAM me, ROM me, just don't pull the plug!

**X:** Okay!

**Technophobe:** And they/we laughed til we fell down, hanging all over each other.

In the background I could hear a spoken word performer laying it out, "You've been like a mother board to me... Let me be your daughter card. Oh, yeah."

## 8. Jackknifed Society (Madman)

*I,  
Running  
Wild  
In a jackknifed society  
full of  
pitfalls  
and  
obscenities.*

*I, in a runaway  
circus,  
circling the planet  
beyond  
life's imagination.*

*Keep going  
Keep going  
Keep going  
Don't stop!*

*Clown's costumes made.  
Would you like to try  
Your costume on  
Now  
Or  
Later...?  
The ringmaster  
Wears the mask of  
Crookedness.  
Deception.  
Would you like to become  
One of my many acts?  
HA,HA; he laughs.*

*Sounds of circus music and carnivals here!  
Jugglers here!  
Hungry flame eating monsters here!!  
Dancers wearing broken smiles here.*

*Tightrope walking time,  
Get shot out of a defunct cannon time,  
Practical joking time.  
Time for the show to begin.*

*Come join the bizarre.  
Join Coney Islands and Disney Worlds.  
Don't you think you are ready?  
Aren't you ready for your costume now?*

*Halloween here  
Road show here*

*Side show  
Showing you  
All made up and  
Choreographed.*

*You 'n' me here.*

### 9. Meet Me Tonight (Technophobe, Alma)

**Technophobe:** Alma started disappearing on me. I'd go on line and couldn't find her. I'd lose track of her for days at time. I programmed a daemon, so that anything she sent over the web, I got. I found out she had a lover—it was X from Club Hell. One day I opened a strangely encoded message, addressed simply, "Darling." It read, "Meet me tonight..."

**Alma:**

*My brain's on a toggle;  
I can turn thoughts of you on and off.  
Meet me outside the firewall tonight.  
We'll see if they can detect our heat  
In the small places.*

*RGB is my color,  
My race and creed.  
228 red, 179 green, 120 blue:  
[My beige,]  
Stunned  
By an electron gun from behind.*

*I'll meet you outside the firewall at midnight;  
It's still legal to speak freely  
In electronic pulses,  
If not completely safe.  
I've sent my alias on ahead.*

## 10. Shades and Shadows (Technophobe, Madman)

**Technophobe:** Nothing but shades and shadows inhabit this place. Vector, raster, holo. Comes to the same thing. They are symbols of symbols of signs, so far away from the real thing as to make the notion of authenticity a joke.

*[Note: These next two sections can follow each other—or—somehow overlap, alternate, or intertwine with each other]*

### **Madman:**

*The stories  
Come a long way  
From half-lives in older countries,  
And are passed,  
Hand over hand, down to you.  
The old religion  
With strange, exotic trappings  
Is unrecognizable to you  
Until the chant and melody  
Fell you with their power.*

*Brave new people  
Performing their pastless, rootless selves  
In non-places  
Called out by code.*

### **Technophobe:**

*One minute,  
She was the soul of my soul.  
Next minute,  
She was Galatea, My Fair Lady and Pinocchio  
all rolled into one and run amok.  
And I was Pygmalion, Professor Henry Higgins and Gepetto.  
My dream was ash.  
I was halved and grounded,  
Hollowed out inside.  
While she flew off with X.  
But get this!  
A twist on that plot!  
X disappeared.  
Alma couldn't find him. I couldn't find her.  
When I did find her,  
My avatar was fragmented, corrupted, broken,  
Unrecognizable, unretrievable.*

**11. Just Us (Madman)**

*Just us*

*Justice*

*No doubt about it.*

## **12. Death of the Avatar** (Technophobe)

I had to delete her. I was devastated to have to destroy her, even though she was slowly dying in digital terms, even though her existence depleted me. I left, and without looking back, erased all of Alma's files, including all her extensions and preferences.

Some dramatic epiphany of recovery here. God, I felt great again. The ache was gone, or almost.

**13. Prayer Song of the Madman** (Madman, Technophobe)

*Your love lifts me, from my despair.  
The essence  
Of truth  
It has bestowed upon me.  
A found spirit  
Of safety.*

*Precious love,  
Rareness a sacred blessing  
From the  
Heights of Heavens,  
Highest places of lights.  
Your love lifts me.*