

# CIRCUITED HORIZONS

pre-millenia technopoems

Marcus Katz

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Technology n. [Gr. *Techne*, art and *logos*, discourse.]

## **Preface**

This collection is in part a marriage between two times. We find ourselves at a time where accelerated change is the norm, and our ability to change is tested to the extreme. The metaphysical poets also dwelt in such a time, when the world was being daily discovered and opened up by the many mariners and explorers of the age. Geography and Mechanics then gave a form to the poetic expressions of the human psyche, and now can the technology of change and communication give similar form to identical concerns. A computer is made in the image of its creators; we could build no other way. Its voice is a reflection of our own; a space shuttle our yearning not only of a primal lust for territory, but also a bright symbol of our ability to ascend, even transcend, our own gravity and our fragile limits.

In the spirit of these enquiries, I present a few probes of our circuited horizons.

Marcus Katz

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## Schrodingers Lost Sonnet

In the beginning,  
a void.  
And a Word.  
A single word, Yes!  
And then it was all here,  
all the things,  
all the things that Adam  
gave name to.  
A breath created him,  
a breath that made the  
waves of words  
that fall like angels feathers  
upon the earth.  
And such a breath,  
that must be breathed  
All things shaped in the  
single word.  
We make a  
million fragments of heaven,  
Figments and fictions,  
Unfurling degrees of beauty.  
To communicate;  
a drum in the jungle,  
giving animals' flight,  
a smoke signal  
that brings death to a tribe,  
then disperses into little clouds -  
hollow sheep in the empty pastures of the sky,  
a whistle, a bark, a cough,  
We signal electric across the globe,  
Have made a circuit of our horizon;  
Mr Morse dances  
across the Telegraph Poles,  
as Sonar makes silent sweep,  
seeking an echo in the depths,  
And they will dance  
radio waves across the upturned  
ions left negative by

Meteors,  
Even if the earth lies barren beneath,  
such is the breath that  
we must breath,  
the word we must shape,  
the word we shape even now,  
In the shape of our selves,  
the shape of stars turned into constellations,  
the shape of a heart,  
an eye,  
a pyramid,  
a symbol that points to itself.  
Our messages are merely - merely! -  
the shape of a soul that forms the Word  
as it weaves it's way back to heaven,  
and the gates - the gates  
of heaven are built  
of words, and the echo of angels  
as far from dust and dirt as we can climb.  
We are the hod-carriers  
of the bricks of Babel,  
making our exchanges,  
nuclear, personal,  
or with god, and our little sounds  
shall stain our spirits  
with what we really wanted to say.  
For a breath makes a vibration,  
A vibration makes a sound,  
A sound makes a word,  
A word makes a message,  
A message makes a belief,  
A belief makes a man,  
And a breath made a man,  
From nothing,  
nothing at all.

## Chip Shop

In a square cave built out of rock  
shaped by hand,  
bound by sand and water,  
My tribe and I feast  
On roots  
and the catch of the coast  
flavoured  
by mineral deposit  
and bitter herb  
wrapped  
in the bark of trees.

“Civilisation,” you said,  
“It’s a wonderful thing.”

## **Bodies of The Work**

We have a slow bomb, ticking,  
ticking,  
Encased in flesh,  
Timer set by a scream,  
Ceased by a breath.  
It measures time  
better than the watch on a wrist,  
Like an hourglass  
Where sand is replaced  
by the air between  
Our quivering lungs.  
Each wire informs the bomb;  
of nerve, of sinew, of bone,  
Defusing it is the chore,  
the Work we engage in  
Through the make-believe acts  
Of each day.

We are each our own bomb-disposal expert.

## **The Breath of Buildings**

The stones once stood alone,  
Not dwellings, not buildings full  
of people or stories,  
Just stones, alone;  
men take them, space them,  
break, mould and place them,  
Give them collective names;  
This many stones is a house,  
This many a church,  
This many stones is a Palace.  
But the breath of buildings  
is the breath of stones,  
and even stones reach a day  
when they breathe no more.

## **One Moment (One Breath)**

Breathing out, I thought of how far we had to go,  
This day, travelling slow,  
Out to the stars,  
One by one flung upwards on one moment,  
One breath.

Cape Canaveral and it's Towers shine,  
At each and every launch,  
Accompanied by the sound  
Of monkey hands clap clap  
Clapping.

And it seems to be that we dare not go,  
Too fast, much further,  
A primal knowing that the next trip  
Must be one only way,  
One Way.

As my breath mists against the window,  
I wonder what that would be like,  
To be going out,  
Never to come back, and somehow,  
I breathe in again.

## **Through the Eye of Hubble**

In the distance of dreams  
I saw a cloud woven of particles of dust,  
Spun in a web like candy floss,  
Stretching vast, lit like a torch  
Laid across the galactic core,  
Only from this were stars being born,  
Not the fairground lights of my hometown.

## **Rust & Rivets**

Babbage's Engine made the difference,  
Who could see eternity in silicon,  
A virtual World.  
We can create a sea of stars,  
In which our souls can swim,  
In a future where creativity is currency,  
Imagination the tool of the trade  
Of a thousand make-believers,  
Dreamers of the masquerade.

And where once calcium and water came together  
Now rust and rivets take centre stage;  
Napier's Bones lie still.

## **TelePresence**

Already they have become essential,  
The tools of our trades;  
long distance-communications,  
Ploughs of a new ether,  
mobile, cellular, satellite,  
I want to be a remote worker,  
A smug Teleworker,  
Snug in my telecottage,  
Sitting at my kitchen table,  
With my dish and my cable,  
Sending orders  
Faster than I can think them,  
Typing turned into light,  
Speeding like Angels through the cables,  
And receiving instructions  
at 64 Kbps.

But what will I do with a million words a second?

## **Graphical Heads**

Events are but a chemical rearrangement,  
brought to you by thought's estrangement,  
everything happened a moment ago,  
each decision made before you ever know.

Equations of belief make the man,  
In some strange symmetry is written the plan  
Where we are composed of sand and fire,  
Slowly burning we are our own funeral pyre.

All our contradictions but friction and fiction,  
Our many selves confound any prediction,  
As sleep gives way to sleep and more;  
Time is not a whisper, Time is a roar.

## Gene Stream

With a finger wiping microscope glass clean  
or hurtling body over windscreen  
I erase the life of a

--- Gene Stream ---

I'm not what I seem  
If you know what I meme ...

Or arching pelvis thrust to recreate  
An aching lust to procreate  
If I may

--- Mere DNA ---

Biological incarnate  
What is I remains insensate ...

Of chaos law or science new  
Seeking only to renew  
Or survive

--- Sperm alive ---

Suddenly reduced to a corpusule  
Never know just who you'll fool ...

From crawling myriads in the cell  
Of life blowing from my empty shell  
I confirm

--- My germ ---

And moving through our morphic field  
It will ever be concealed.

## **When We Remember**

Consciousness is in part a function of memory

*“all of us remember her...”*

We are what we were to be.

*“I never really knew her, but I’d heard...”*

You are imprisoned in my memory

*“Ashes and dust...”*

Or am I a prisoner of that memory?

*“The blood in her hair... the car ... oh no ...”*

Life FLASHES

*“All the faces at the funeral...”*

And then we are gone

*“Oh I love you.”*

Day-break over my life with you.

“No words have I for a love-song for Death”

## **Fleshy Media**

Down on your luck,  
You can be written upon,  
In a world where paper is cheap,  
trees grow on trees,  
Flesh is the favoured medium,  
for all the arts.  
It holds such promise,  
such challenge,  
and like perfume may be scented  
according to the skin which hosts it,  
so may words,  
pictures,  
pictographs,  
symbols,  
music.  
Shaped by the body beneath,  
they move as it does,  
breathes as the body breathes,  
are coloured by racing blood  
and the blueness of veins.  
Down on your luck,  
You become a canvas, a theatre,  
open to the public.

## **Remote Control**

I can choose my channel  
On Cable, satellite, or TV,  
But with you there's no control,  
Your remote is entirely free.  
I know all your programmes,  
So many repeats,  
Your scripts are old hack,  
Don't have us hanging  
on the edge of our seats.  
You have a cast of millions,  
But no-one knows their role,  
A director who's gone missing,  
No-one's in control.  
If you were a film,  
You'd be B-rated at least,  
If on TV,  
You'd be immediately ceased.  
Incidental music, grating and shrill,  
special effects that make me ill,  
You're up-to-date and on all the time,  
but I can't tune you out,  
You're always on my mind.

## **Slow Fall**

Caught in the slow fall,  
I recall the heat of re-entry  
Back into your atmosphere,  
My shields burning too soon  
As I inevitability plummet  
Towards your scarred surface.

Tumbling in my capsule,  
There's no escape I can see,  
As your angry ions buffet,  
Protons stream increasingly,  
A serenade made of our mad dance  
In your sterile air.

I never could attain  
Escape velocity from you,  
My strange attractor,  
Perhaps one day I'll  
draw a graph,  
It might make it easier to see.

## **STAND BY FOR MARS!**

We three, like they,  
fell together uneasily,  
over time,  
and just as in the book,  
We met,  
squabbled,  
and became as one.  
Like they,  
we found ourselves  
tested,  
though ours was not  
an academy of stars,  
but a high school  
on a hill.  
And then,  
just like the story,  
we were  
thrust,  
unready,  
into the real world.  
But no heroes  
in our plot.  
You, the first,  
were found hanging  
from a tree;  
you never told me,  
of the problems  
with your parents  
you were concealing.  
You, the second,  
gave evidence  
a year later,  
in the same court,  
“You know Smithy,”  
we used to say of that teacher,

“He’s a bit queer.”  
But you never told me  
Of the things that teacher  
had developed with you  
in the dark room.  
So you fell too,  
and moved far away.  
And me,  
the third;  
I never got to Mars,  
I got a wife and a child and a job;  
but I once  
watched a program on it  
on satellite t.v.

## Sam and the Electric Chair

Sam sat down and adjusted his back,  
Made himself comfortable,  
Loosened the slack  
Of the rope about his neck,  
Shuffled his feet on the table,  
on which was the chair,  
the electric chair,  
all ready and able.  
He'd fixed it up with cable,  
'cos he had the knack,  
But it didn't go to plan,  
'cos he'd forgotten about Stan  
Who was want to slam the door,  
where he lived on the floor  
below  
and though Sam was just pretending  
It brought about his ending,  
As the chair toppled and rocked,  
And he got shocked  
more than once  
As first he fell and smashed his head  
On the bed where he had been led  
to believe his wife had been  
mislead  
by Stan on the ground floor flat,  
But it was the Cat  
who brought the second shock,  
As it thought the cable was a tail,  
and bit through it as Sam did flail,  
he only wanted to have his wife see him try,  
So she could rescue him before he might die,  
But now 240 volts were shorted by the pussy,  
and Sam would never get to see the hussy  
Who attended his funeral some weeks later,  
With Stan on her arm, promising to re-carpet  
the crater.

## **Back at the Bank Machine ...**

Meanwhile outside the TSB,  
Our hero struggles to escape the bounds of his pockets  
And with a mighty effort rips free his hands  
Out of his wranglers and holds aloft the gleaming card.  
He postures himself at the alcove and begins the mission,  
*Game on! Quiet in the crowd please.*  
Looking as the sliding panel reveals potential prizes,  
Latest offers, a warning to keep his secrets concealed.  
He nods,  
Imperceptibly,  
Acknowledging these instructions,  
And with a sudden, some might say, cavalier, thrust,  
Pierces the heart of the machine with his flat, flexible, friend...  
He begins to frown,  
Then realises, too late, that he's put the card in  
Upside down.

## Coming Home Sudden

The day has a different cast, light lying too cleanly upon the sky,  
And I did not know so many trucks made  
Their journeys, nor so many council yellow vans  
Came out to repair the world,  
This grey afternoon, coming home sudden.

Perhaps it was just the light that made you look so unfamiliar?

The Road looks different,  
As if the colours have been packed away,  
Saved perhaps for later on in the day  
When the people coming home  
Will need to see them on their way.

I feel as if I was somewhere else before I was here.

I hear the wind buffet the car,  
But it does not fill the air outside like it once did;  
The floods have left their mark as well,  
Gravel and grit trace tide-mark circles  
And the gale writes lines across each puddle.

I feel like I did when I was a child caught out of school.

The wheel pulls slightly in my hands,  
As I drive up to the house, not thinking of explanations yet,  
How to tell you I'd lost my job, no matter how much I hated it,  
Hated Him, loathed Them, but spent their money  
On your needs, your desires.

And what right had he to look so surprised in *my* house?

I remember each spiral in that carpet up the stairs,  
Something to look at whilst I blocked out your cries,  
Mutually assured destruction, I snickered to myself,  
Unheard, as I crept like a killer towards our bedroom,  
To find you there with your limbs entwined, like loose spaghetti.

We just need some sauce, I thought, looking at the knife in my  
hand.

## **Circuited Horizons**

Down the Astral Matrix  
Scanning possibilities that will become  
In these silicon shards I am dazzled  
by the brilliance of each software strand.  
Here at the core  
The Multiplexer is mounted  
and tumbles soft lightning  
Into the echoing dust.

Down in the Interface,  
Seeking such eclipsed data  
As reprogramming compiler Loops  
In the enduring dream,  
The Searchlight of Now  
Tumbles uneasily  
Across the dump of your past.

Down in the System,  
Flitters and jerks,  
Lighting up snapshots  
Of Dangerous Information.  
Daybreak now over computed suns,  
Modulated Moons,  
Circuited horizons.

## **Products of the Probe**

Someone suggested  
Way back when,  
That to get to the stars  
Like life infested  
Our own planet,  
We should build machines,  
called probes,  
With intelligence invested  
To rebuild themselves  
On each Planet  
they landed on,  
reproduce more of their kind,  
and  
hence spread  
onwards & outwards.

Only the products of such a probe  
Could have thought of such a thing.

## **Breaking the Mould**

I was number seven-four-zero  
with brothers and sisters many,  
We were bred by the ship  
and trained in its care.  
So why did my feet clench so?  
They said it was reflex,  
but my identical siblings were  
not afflicted in this manner  
As they carried out the routines.

Three hundred and thirty years  
We sped outwards,  
Before arriving at our destination.  
I received my next instructions,  
Finding I would be first out,  
First to leave the ship onto  
Another world.  
I did so.

And then,  
my toes found purchase in the soil.

## **The Limits of the Light (Photino Song)**

Light ribbons the Entiriety,  
Streamers of Photons,  
Limitless energy waves  
Singing the echo of God.  
Light expands outwards  
from every point,  
makes a circumference  
of Nowhere and Everywhere.  
It is no coincidence we  
see Angels made of Light,  
For light is our making equally.

*Nb. The light leaving this point will be over 2 x 186281 miles  
away by the time you have reached this point.*

## **this may be one**

this may be one ... it looks so unpromising ... spectral analysis  
... atmospheric constants ... gravity and more ...figures  
spooling ... measuring the core ... three hundred this year ...as  
ships spread outwards ... three hundred planets ... but no sign of  
life ... we fly onwards and ... this may be one...

## The Furthest Farm

Spinning lazily  
in the farness,  
the farmer is a  
satellite,  
gravity's slave,  
gravity's master,

space plays childish  
games  
with his tether,  
the asteroid,  
his ship,  
the plumes

of exhaust  
from his suit,  
all locked in orbit,  
like  
a man, a cow  
and a farm.

## **Where the Gods Go (no part of me)**

Weigh my heart after my death,  
Against the feather,  
Whilst I make my  
Negative confessions  
In this place  
Of hieroglyphic wonder,  
where reed stokes  
have fashioned  
Ships to sail eternity.

Surrounded by the  
maps of Stars  
the Underworld,  
Schemes to  
Come forth by Day,  
Resurrected,  
Glorified,  
Triumphant.

Hands run  
and Owls stare  
in a dumb show  
about my face,  
You open my mouth  
and remove me,  
Gently,  
Softly,  
Like a child  
Turning over in  
the womb.

# **HiveLife**

## ***0.1 BreakTrance***

Dawn shatters through crystal,  
sprinkles brightlight shards across  
Transphoto images filling the chamber.  
The light like water floods - nothing yet.  
Then, I break the surface of trance cleanly,  
And the dreamsharers make their parting sigils  
Graceful in my mind.  
Such undreaming good with them.

## ***0.2 Preparations***

And now the mask of Many Moments today,  
I speak to and am spoken to simultaneously  
In the synchronous Meshnet Nation.  
Hivelife fills me with honey.  
A dancer is called to quell some tension -  
I signal thorough my nexus my willingness,  
And the node location is transferred to me.  
The same mouth smiles in silence, speaks in me.

## ***0.3 Transference***

The Pantacle hovers, a miniature Grav-Ring,  
Dips slightly as I stand upon it,  
Red robe fluttering as I traverse the Flows.  
Energy eddies serve as my signals now.

The Journey is filled with Prime Access,  
Transferring the dancers nectar to me as pulses,  
So choosing an ancient song from the Akasha Link.

The song shall cease the fluctuating glyphs.

#### ***0.4 Dance***

Here, at the Node of the Ninth (Amber)  
the Stress is flawed, awry; we feel the chasm  
that falls between our shared images, reality.

I dance across the time-carved stone.  
Scored like a brain, the circuit of the Hive  
the hum and buzz of astralmantic shift,  
Until the smooth way is done.

#### ***0.5 Return***

Then to the Communion of Dusk I make report,  
Robeshift to blue, and mask blanked  
As I drink mindclear and subtle whispers begin.

Logicflow draws me to Nodes 2 and 3.

We discuss unearthed data of former lives  
Stored in the Genebank of our mutual pool,  
Memories alive in fields of stasis,

*And perhaps a time when things were different thus.*

## **No More Words**

We found we alone  
had words, had language,  
and hence were left amongst  
the star-spanning races,  
to our own devices,  
to our strange habits and arts.  
The aliens passed us by,  
waited for the day  
when we would need  
no more words.

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