

## INSULTING MACHINES

It is a graceful degradation, bristling with paths not taken  
Supercharged by Taylor's one best way  
with all the zeal of the monotheist  
Where Schumpeter shoves, Kondratiev waves and Gladwell points  
All in hot pursuit of singularity.  
Behold the strange phyla as they stalk their makers  
They too can walk, feed, talk and – some say – think.

We create devices and then they create us.  
Narcissus-like, we gaze into a pool of technology and see ourselves.  
We acquiesce in our own demise, setting out as participants  
and metamorphosing into victims.  
The diagnosis is serious: a rapidly spreading species' loss of nerve  
Tacit knowledge is demeaned whilst propositional knowledge is revered.  
Who needs imagination when there are facts?

A human enhancing symbiosis ignored  
whilst a dangerous convergence proceeds apace – as human beings  
confer life on machines and in so doing diminish themselves.

Your calculus may be greater than his calculus  
but will it pass the Sullenberger Hudson River test?  
Meantime, the virtual is confused with the real  
– as parents lavish attention on the virtual child  
whilst their real child dies of neglect and starvation.

Potential and reality are torn apart as change is confused with progress  
With slender knowledge of deep subjects  
– you proceed with present tense technology,  
obliterating the past and with the future already mortgaged.  
The court of history may find you intoxicated with species arrogance  
recklessly proceeding without a Hippocratic Oath.

Thus the deskiller is deskilled, as a tsunami of technology  
rocks our foundations.

The multinational apologist solemnly declares: 'We should have the courage  
to accept our true place in the evolutionary hierarchy  
– namely animals, humans and post singularity systems'.

Now the sky darkens with pigeons coming home to roost  
and the mine canaries topple from their perches unnoticed.

That distant sound grows louder.

Is it the life affirming energy of Riverdance  
or the clacking hooves of the Four Horsemen?

That music, is it 'Ode to Joy' or is it 'Twilight of the Gods?'

As the embrace tightens into genteel strangulation – will the seducer  
in final deception whisper 'Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day?'

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