

Geronimo

By

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I'm writing this on the back of an old telephone bill, yellowed with age; the only paper I can find. I'm writing this with the stub of an old pencil, which I found behind a sofa in my parents' house. I kept it as a keepsake of the old world we made over, but it will do to write my last testament. I write this the old way, with no digital files for you to steal from me.

This is mine.

You keep nipping at me, ripping at me, tearing parts of me away. Not much left now, all the pieces disparate, disconnected, dispersed into the dataverse.

The breath of my life whipped away by the hurricane of progress.

Progress, an onrushing wind that lifts us to the abodes of gods, but it scours out the past, scratches at our psyches, makes them the dust of lost memories. I can't remember my childhood, taken from me by one of your hooks. I can't remember my first kiss. Her name was Susan, but I read that in one of my old diaries, there's nothing left of Susan in my mind.

Psyche comes from *psūchê*, from the ancient Greek. Soul has the same root. You're ripping out my soul, don't you understand? Piece by piece you are ripping away what makes me, *me*.

I got my first NIP (Neural Implant) to tune up my IQ. I wanted to be part of it all, part of the onrushing wind. I wanted to work on the Thread that lifted humanity into space.

I...We...for there was more than just me...made the thread of carbon that dropped down from geosynchronous orbit to the surface of the Earth. We gave you space -- an elevator into space. A necklace of space stations all connected to the surface of the world by threads of carbon. One elevator car goes down and one goes up, the energy requirements of reaching space nullified.

There are trillions of you now. Trillions of humans in habitats and on the surfaces of planets terra-formed in decades not centuries because of the power of our doubled minds.

Classes of genius exist where once there were classes of mediocrity. An IQ of 200 is average now, with the NIPs doubling up what you are born with. My IQ is 410, I'm a doubled genius. I would have been something special even before the NIPs came enhancing across our souls. Not many like me, not many as bright as me, not many who can see what I can see.

My mistake was naïveté. New NIPs designed, by others of our doubled ilk. NIPs to tuck the whole world into one fold. Communication implants. Magic like telepathy only real and technological, real as the old cellular networks, as the internet, used to be. Oh how we flew.

But.

Ah but.

My thoughts are my own. They belong to me. Should I not profit from them?

I charged a bare percentage point. Ninety-nine percent perspiration, one percent inspiration, isn't that the old saw? I supply the inspiration you supply the

perspiration. It wasn't my fault what the businesses did with my ideas. I licensed them and they took my patents and made new patents of their own. Was that my fault?

I think not.

So why did you rip and nip and tear at my soul. You pirates, you hacktivists, with your crude hacks to break into the vaults inside my mind where I hid away my newest ideas. You sucked out the data. Nothing can be hidden in the dataverse, but the corporations have ice merchants to backtrack you hacks and fry your mediocre minds, so you decided to plunder mine.

I am a soft target for your too crude, too imprecise, bots that took too much of me. You pat yourself on the back; say that you are freeing the information, a philosophy of philistines.

NIPs link across the whole of the brain; they cannot work without that connectivity. My ideas are hidden away inside my brain. Where else would I put them?

You breached those walls inside my mind, evaded my attack protocols, solved the encryptions, blew my ideas out into the dataverse. But the flow once started could not be stopped and so my soul flows away from me now.

I'm leaking, sinking like an old worm-eaten hulk, snared by your grappling data hooks, blasted open by your broadsides of memory-splices. You boarded me, plundered me, took the prize and discarded me.

Finished now. I stop the elevator two miles above the surface of the Earth. I don't want to die from hypoxia. I open the door; push out the plank so I can avoid the radiator fins. I do not want to be cut to ribbons upon their sharp edges.

I look through the fins at the Thread, a glimmering line of super-strong material. A dream I helped to make real.

This is your world now, your solar system, your future.

There are not many like me, even without the NIP I have above average intelligence for people with the NIP. Not many like me, a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of one percent of the whole human race has a mind like mine.

I still have ideas, I cannot turn off that flow, but I will give you no more.

Inspiration tells me there is a way around the speed limit of the universe. Someday, somebody else will have that same inspiration, but right now, this golden goose is going to see if he can fly.

It's a bit windy up here. I'd better nail this note to a wall.

END