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The firmament's like an ass shivering. A mechanical storm erupts from the oracle of the Cape as the anointed supplicate themselves to the fiery belches of a foreign god. The steel phallus of the deity levitates slowly, rising in a spectral haze of cooked air.

There has never been a true miracle. The sun has never waned as it passed in its burning chariot, the statues have never cried animated tears, the mother of god has never spoken to children in an isolated European glade. There is no way to express a miracle. But they knew they were seeing one.

Inside the vessel of god, which was oscillating like an enormous dildo and lifting itself into the virginal recesses of the sky, they were bolted to his innards. They were isolated from his divine skin by sanitation suits and caressed him gently with trembling fingers. They were going to his home, the first of humanity invited for supper and, perhaps, a cocktail. They were weeping, pissing, screaming, dreaming. They could not see the worshippers bowing to the infernal power as the vehicle lifted itself away from their terrestrial lives.

They had begun to climb the invisible rings of Jacob's ladder. They passed the tower, a structure so confused it could speak only in twisted, pornographic tongues, and the clergy announced to their

congregation in voices inspired by the divine launching of the first interstellar obelisk that humanity was now synthetic angels, soaring on gasoline wings. The followers howled in pleasure, the tube of god was taking their envoys to see his thrown, decorated by constellations and quasars, to listen to his voice, a hole so vacuous it did not allow light to escape, to stare into his helium fusion eyes.

By now, the oracle had ejaculated its fumes and the projectile that had lifted off from its moist insides was a faint stream of fire writing the cursive of the lord across the sky. The pilgrims were finished clapping, finished watching, and it was the end of the miracle. All the worshippers were herded out of the oracle's protected grounds. They moved in a dreamy daze, staring in wonderful disbelief, as the protectors guided them towards the gate. They did not speak, but made eye contact with each other and silently assented.

There is no more sky. Space has been harnessed. Like time, it will be a tool for future use. Man has been initiated into the pantheon of the gods. He sits beside them, an equal, an atomic overlord, super-sonic seraphim, a creator, a destroyer, a janitor of nature, a fortune-teller, a miracle maker, and a preacher.

There is no future. It is already known, already engineered. But *they* don't know that. Only he knows. Even while he watches, it almost convinces him. His head droops into his arms, where he cradles it paternally. The screen repeats it like a stained-glass window, over and over again while the preacher repeats himself over and over again. He collects fragments in his palms. He listens to the somber, dependable voice affirming the images, like the gothic icons of graphic saints dying desperately for god's grace. By now, he has seen enough. They stand motionless, just behind him, passively watching. He sways towards the screen, his own image superimposed over the lie. The room is the same, as if he just noticed. They are the same. The phone rings as soon as the noise ends, one sound for another...