

Small things remind me I am mad and The Fourth Bridge, or, AI



On the Edge, Paul Klee, 1930

Small things remind me I am mad

*Most men are in a coma when they are
at rest and mad when they act. –Epicurus*

Small things remind me I'm insane.

One time I lost my passport on a plane
Fleeing the fug of my befuddled land.
I spoon my yogurt from the biggest tub
–economy of scale cuts back on waste.
And though there's no big rush, I haste,
Since "at my back I always hear
Times wingèd chariot hurrying near:
And yonder all before us lye
Desarts of vast Eternity," so Marvell said,
Teasing his woke mistress back to bed.

Small things remind me I'm insane.

I seek without it much desiring fame,
The end in sight is surely glory,
But sighted end is end of story,
Whatever jackass neurons make it so
What I want is what I do not know!

–Apologies to W. B. Yeats and Andrew Marvell

The Fourth Bridge, or, AI

Q: Please write me a sonnet on the subject of the Forth Bridge*

A: Let us suppose the bridge to be the Fourth
(Not cantilevered above some Scottish firth,
Entraining passengers to Queensferry North),
Successor to First, Second, & Third on Earth.

First is what Tristram was so long a-doing;
Second is upgrowing at whatever age;
Third is, of course, the mystery of dying.

So what is *Fourth*, when do we reach that page?

The soft simulacrum in the sealed room
Posts piping secrets through her handy slot;
Unhandy demons, scheming in the gloom,
Wildly mistake the that that is for that that's not.

So long as machines puzzle—and men can be,
So long lives that; that that makes sense to me.

**one of the questions from the Turing Test devised by Alan Turing to discover whether a hidden entity, such as a computer, is able to think*