

# 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*