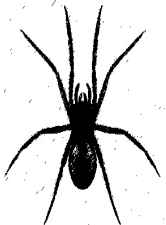




Lune Fiction

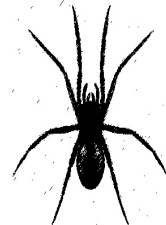


Issue 9



11th November 2006

Touch My Badger!



Spiders

Spiders crawl; spiders breathe. But not like you and me.

Spiders are crawling along the borders of the ninth edition of Lune Fiction. This is a special issue.

Why spiders? Why not fish or squid?

Spiders bring good luck. They draw money; they attract financial gains. They are a symbol of finance. They are weavers; they are producers.

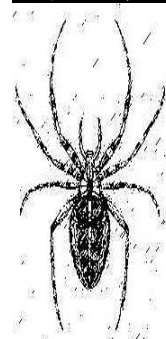
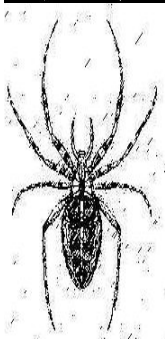
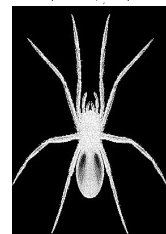
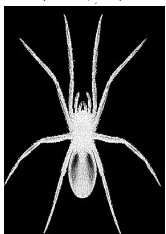
Spider webs are traps. Like flies, people are ensnared by work. They become stuck.

Spiders indicate the fragility of humans.

Spiders bring good luck. They draw money; they attract financial gains. They are a symbol of finance. They are weavers; they are producers.

Spiders symbolise possessiveness for they spin their prey into a ball.

That's why spiders, that's why.



Lune Fiction

Issue 9 (A Special One)

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Contributions: Leo Davies, JM de Vrind & Herschel Waters

Donations, letters and contributions via our website, please!

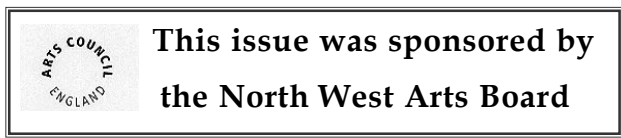
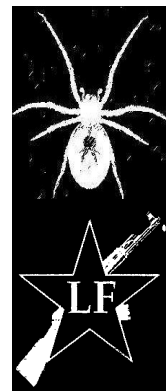
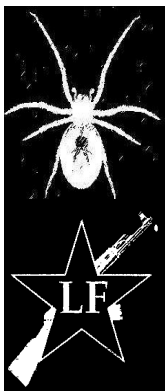
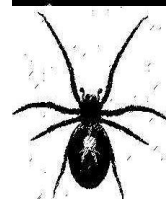
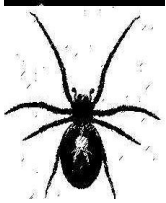
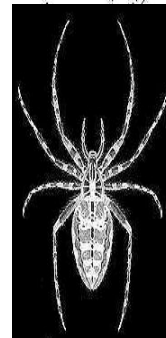
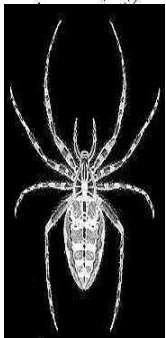
All letters sent to us will be published. Possibly.

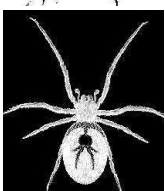
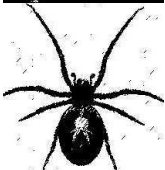
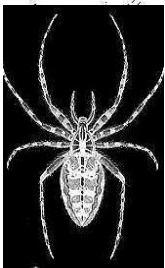
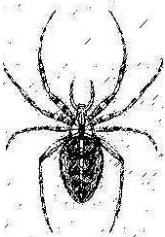
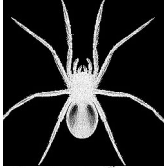
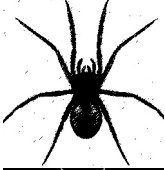
God save us from the little things that make our lives intolerable

NB Thank you for donating.

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Next Issue will be out 20th December 2006





Conditions Of Sale:

As always, I have to point out that this magazine has been published subject to the condition that it shall not, in any way whatsoever (even if I die), by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this edition being imposed on the subsequent reader (except your mother).

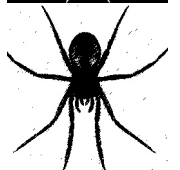
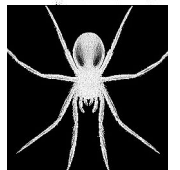
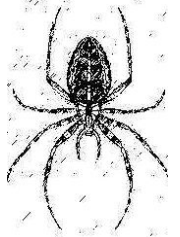
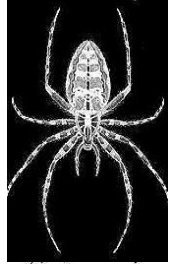
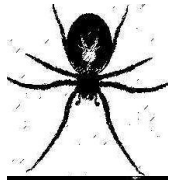
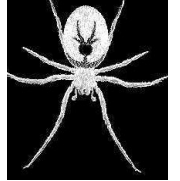
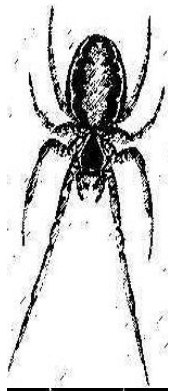
All stories, articles and letters are copyright of the authors. The same goes for the pictures. And the design. And the spiders (& pig). I, JM de Vrind, came up with the LF logo and it's pretty neat. Although it may be misinterpreted as a symbol of violence... oh dear.

In the last issue there were some pictures. They proved to be popular. So there's not much I can add to that. Incidentally, I should point out that Herschel Waters, our outstanding contributor and gimp, is still dead. Tragically. It is two years now since he died in Scottish mountains on his motorbike. How sad. Herschel wrote the bulk of this issue and he will be missed. Sort of.

At least the fish and pig will remember him.

Here's to you Herschel!

Jomar



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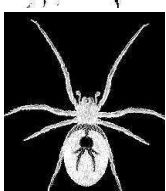
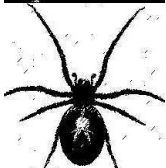
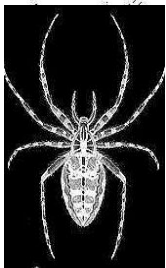
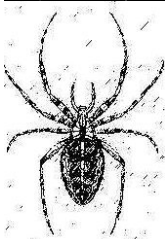
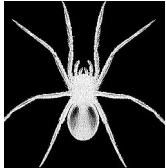
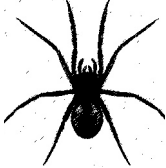
Editorial

Dear Reader,

This, the ninth edition of Lune Fiction, is a flash novella, a collection of micro stories that make up one bigger story. If you like, this is a concept magazine. If there can be such a thing as a flash story, why can't there be not such a thing as a flash novel or flash novella? Indeed, many Central European flash fiction writers call their flash stories 'minute novellas'.

Artists such as us need to expand and inflate the shape and size of a defined area such as blitz stories. Although fairly short, blitz stories are a full and complete narrative with characters, setting, conflict, a climax and resolution.

Every word is essential to the tale and there isn't much room for digressions and an ornate style. Blitz stories are arguably poems in



prose.

Or not. Restrictions and parameters kill the creative soul.

Anyway, I hope that you will consider this collection of minimalist literature to be worthy of the fine art of flash fiction. It is a tale of alienation; it is a tale of life past, present and future.

And so, with out much further ado, I present you 177020.

We, the team at Lune Fiction head-quarters, hope that you find this flash novella a pleasant read.

Goodie Bite-Bite,



Humble Sam

PS Of course, if you choose to, you could consider this whole issue to be just one long flash tale. But that's up to you!

PPS Spiders are obedient and hard-working creatures that always perform their duties on dark days.

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,

Why does God, if he exists, laugh at us and not with us?

Yours faithfully,

A. Gnostic

To whom it may concern,

I would like to point out that it's a scandal! And a big one at that.

But I'm not revealing more. I'm too grown-up to do that.

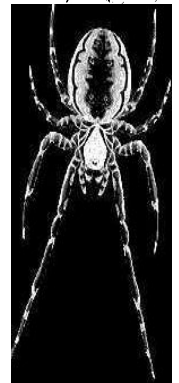
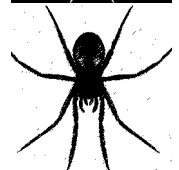
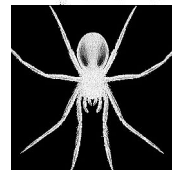
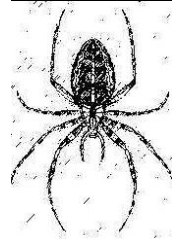
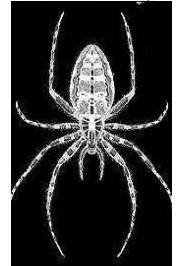
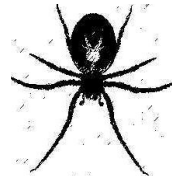
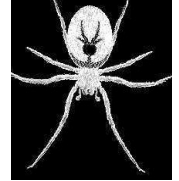
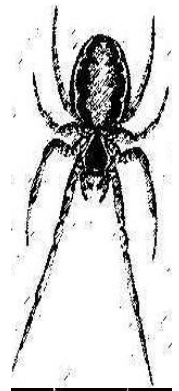
I look forward to your response.

Sincerely Yours,

Someone With Issues

Dear Editor,

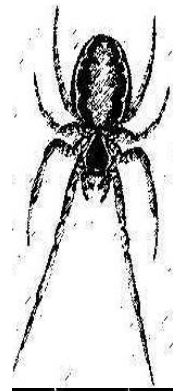
Why is life so depressing? Why can't we get on with each other? Wouldn't it be great if someone from the Levant would



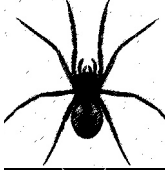
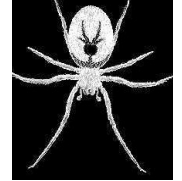


declare that it was alright to get on with everyone else and be nice to each other. But he would probably be declared a heretic and Christians would launch Holy Crusades against his followers.

Faithfully yours,
The Buddha

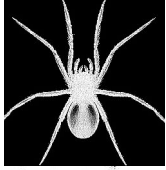
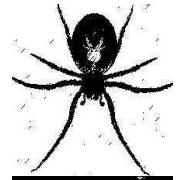


Dear Humble Samuel,
Could you please pick the kids up?
Yours lovingly,
Samantha Humble



Hey Guys,
I mean like, hey far out, you know? I'm on this grey pink cloud flying high above the heavens and it's like totally freaky in a good sort of way. Do you hear what I'm saying? The Afterlife is great. Wicked! Since I've died, life is like totally cool. Or not, seeing as I am dead. Innit? Oh, gotta stop. Here comes St. Peter with a big massive golden harp with my name on it. Cool!

Hope you guys are missing me,
Herschel Waters



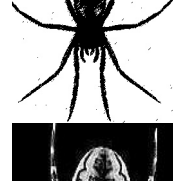
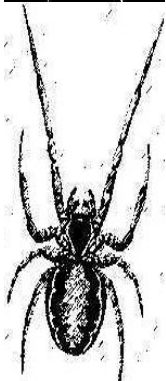
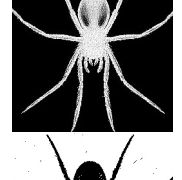
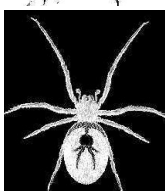
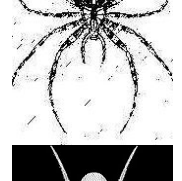
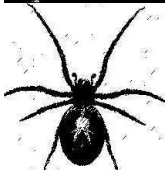
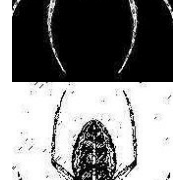
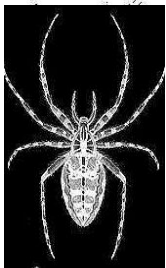
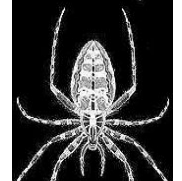
Flash Essay: The Tapestry That Is Life

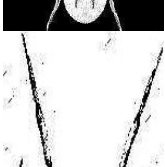
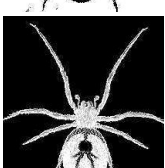
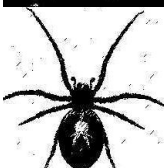
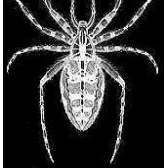
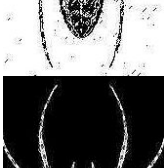
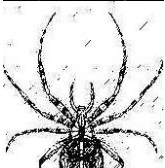
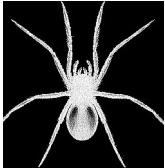
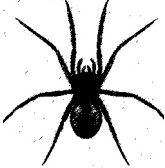
Life is a tapestry; a tapestry woven out of our experiences, emotions, thoughts and pre-conceptions. Life is a house of cards, made out of illusions, built upon quick sand - a quick sand that sucks away at the solid foundations on which we build our lives. Life is a fluid element which is forever changing shape and size. Nothing is constant; everything is impermanent.

But what is the nature of this tapestry? What are the cards of which we construct a fragile delusion? Why does the quick sand exist? Why can't life be a solid entity?

The tapestry consists of memories we refuse to discard, shields to protect us from the emptiness of being, and drops of an essence of existence we encounter in our childhoods.

The house of cards is composed of mental images which reflect what we choose people to be. The memories are sentiments of the past we cannot let go and the shields are our defences against the nature of reality. The globs of quick sand are delusions we pick up while we struggle through

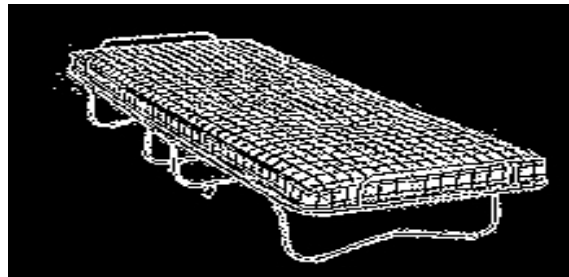




childhood and adolescence. Life is but a drop of oil in water; forever moving and changing form. Nothing is permanent. Personality and circumstances change constantly but never the soul of a being.

Life is a house of cards, a patch work tapestry which we desperately need. But it doesn't have to be that way! The emptiness of being is the greatest beauty we can encounter. If we accept the fluidity of life, then we can accept ourselves.

We must embrace the void, for the recognition of the emptiness of existence is the only reward that we can gain.



177020

Part 1

I am drowning in numbers and I, more often than not, want to resurface and breathe fresh air. Air that reminds me of the outside world, the other realm. A world not contaminated by numbers. It is a place that I have long forgotten to remember. It was all such a long time ago.

Chained to my computer, weighed down by hyper-text, unaware of what I perceive, exposed to radio-activity and computer gobbledegook and drowning in numbers.

As far as I can tell.

I am drowning in numbers; not aware of what I think, unaware of what I perceive.

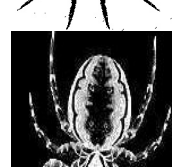
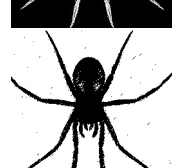
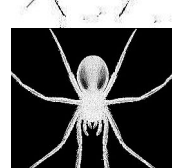
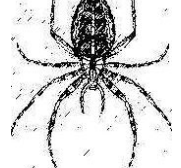
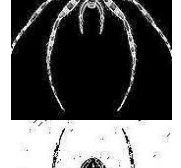
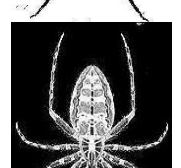
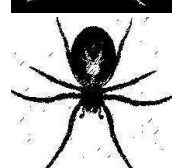
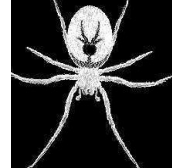
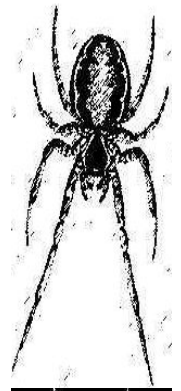
I sleep, I wake up, I get out of bed, I eat, I wash and I do my press-ups. Then I log on for the rest of the day. I need it and the system needs me.

Later on, at the end of the day, I log off, close down the terminal, eat, drink, do more press-ups, and then I wash and go to sleep.

On Sundays, I get an additional cask of ale. I drink it before going to sleep.

This is my life.

I am drowning in numbers.



Part 2

Where and when did it all begin? How and what happened? Who and why?

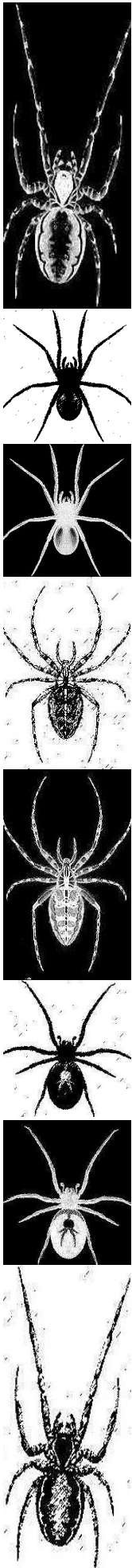
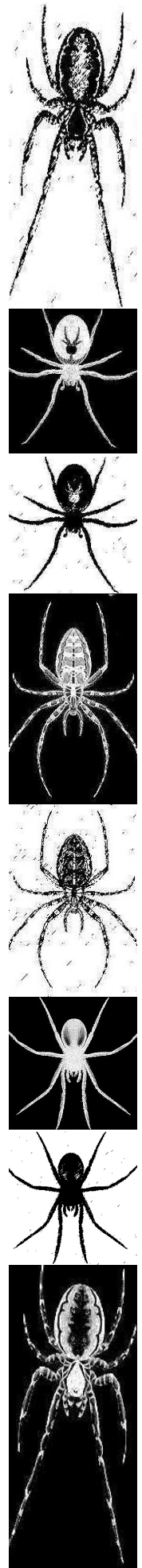
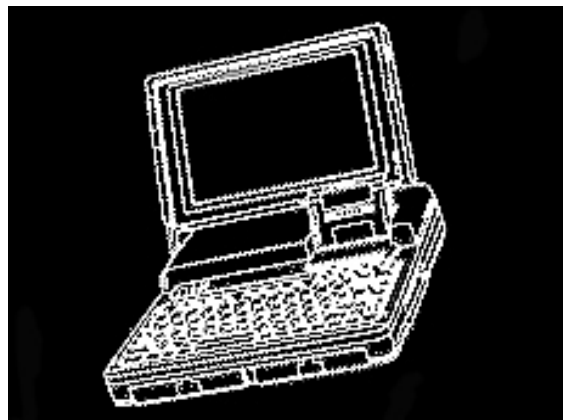
He was brought in, April 21st, 2002. A Sunday, I believe. It was a cold and blustery day. The winter's snow had not yet departed and summer was still a long way away.

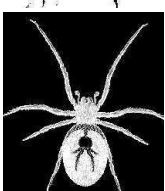
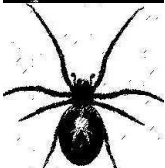
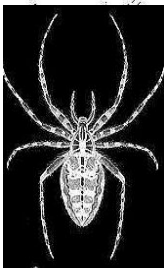
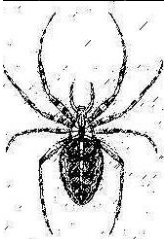
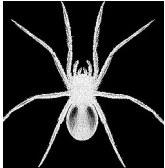
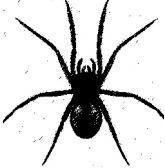
He handed in his identity card and was given a number: 177020.

The company had had its eye on him for a long time. A very long time. The company wanted him; the company needs him. Much more than he wants to know, needs to know. The company is glad to have 177020. We, the ones above you, need people like him. Our computer system had been outmoded, antiquated, virtually obsolete for quite a while, and it needed someone special to reboot it. 177020 was the one to do it. He is the best. But he can't be revealed to the outside world. The company does not want the planet to know that he exists, for all in all, he is just another cogwheel in the machinery that doesn't need exposing (He is very delicate, very prone to breaking down when exposed to daylight and media-hype).

177020's tasks and duties are very simple. He has to reorganise the internal structure of the company's computer and data system. He has to sort out the company's computers, make contact with the outside world, make the company's computer system run smoothly, and so on.

Not too much to ask for, really. All in all, he has to complete basic tasks that only he can complete.





Part 3

Out of the building I am dragged and into the limousine I get pushed. We travel along the concrete lanes of the motor way. We only stop now and then to pay the toll. We always drive for hours.

This happens to me every two or three years. Give or take a month or four. It is the only disruption to my schedule that I am aware of. They need to move me on now and then.

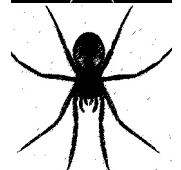
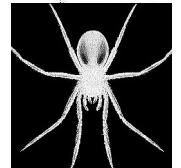
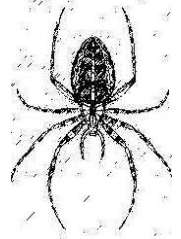
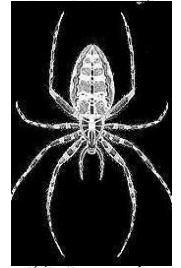
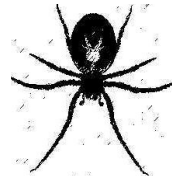
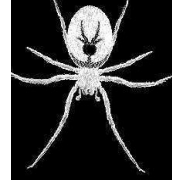
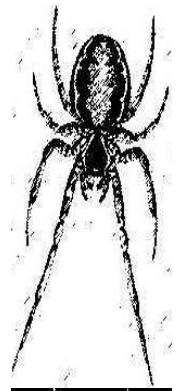
It is beautiful driving down motor ways. They are grey conveyor belts of motion, down which you glide through the countryside. I like them. They are nice.

We drive on through the countryside, from A to B. Or B to C. Or L to M. It doesn't matter. The last town I was in was just as picturesque as the one I am in now.

I didn't see much of the last town and I won't see much of this one.

I like driving, me. Cruising through the countryside... However, I am not that keen on interruptions. So it's nice that when I get out of the limousine and into a cell that is not dissimilar to the one that I had previously inhabited, I don't feel that there has been all that much change.

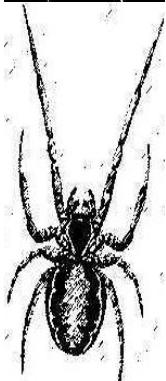
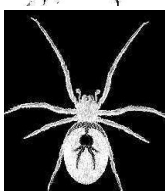
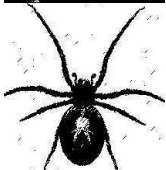
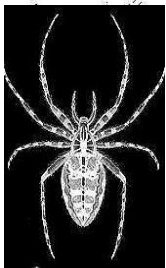
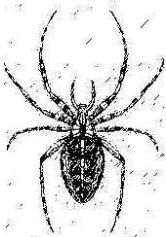
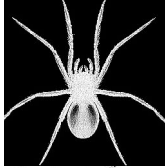
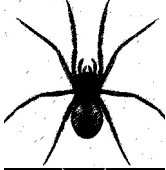
Drowning in numbers, drowning in numbers; that's what I am.



Parts 4

177020, who is he?

Nobody, but nobody, is allowed to know 177020's true identity. Which is typical of us, as all our employees and those from outside are not permitted to establish the identities of those who work for us. We, the company, believe this may otherwise



damage the company's functioning, reasoning and existence. Employee 177020 is special. But he is not that special. His rights are the same as with all the others. And we like him. He is given extra privileges such as a separate office room, extra ale (which he is given once a week on Sundays and which he chooses to drink in one go) and extra time to exercise in the yard (though he, more often than not, chooses to stay in his office and contemplate his monitor instead).

We hide 177020 from the outside world. Not because we choose to deprive him of his freedom, basic needs and sanity but because he has a brilliant but flawed mind which, when exposed to the outside world, is prone to unsound actions of thought. He is a sacred person who has agreed to work for us, listen to us, obey us and follow our every whim.

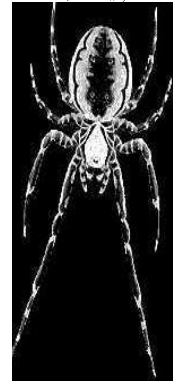
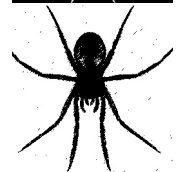
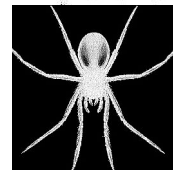
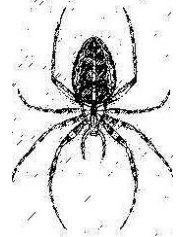
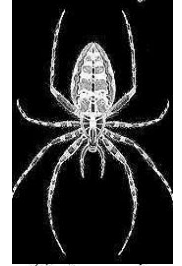
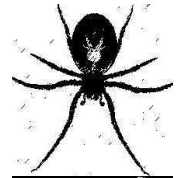
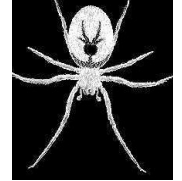
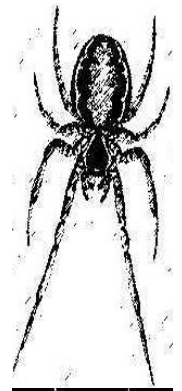
It cannot be otherwise.

He is happy with his lot. We are happy with his lot and you have led us (and him) to believe you are happy with his lot.

Do not question what you have acquiesced to. We have a contract after all.

Interlude I

I don't know. You have two lovely boys and you teach them to be kind and to take care of each other and to be nice to other people and respect life and what do they do? They screw up big time. The noisy one leads a debauched life and disappears after it all heads south and the quiet one masses wealth and power and becomes a raging megalomaniac! I don't know... Maybe I should have beaten them up less? Oh well, it's got nothing to do with me anymore. I'm happy with my fourth wife and collection of fine whiskies and wine.





Part 5

Before I worked here, I had a different job. I also had a wife, two mistresses, three children, two cars and a house.

I was born, I grew up, I went to school and after that I was introduced to my previous job. Later on, I met a girl. She said she was my wife. We lived together in our own house.

Drowning in numbers, drowning in numbers; that is what I am up to these days.

Drowning in numbers, submerged in hyper-text; I am not too sure as to what has happened with my life.

After a while, my wife informed me she was pregnant. She gave birth to a son. She said it was ours. We had two more children. We thought it was a worthwhile experience. My family was all mine. The years passed, and I was happy. I was successful in my job, and we grew rich. I bought property and other nice things.

Later on, my wife left me. I had beaten her up once too often. Allegedly. She took the little people with her. I lost three of the houses, both my mistresses and one of the cars. That is the way of the world, for it cannot be otherwise.

Then they came for me. Now I am drowning in numbers. I prefer my current life to the previous one. It is drenched in tranquillity and peace of mind. How happy can I be?

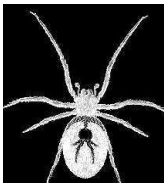
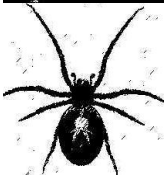
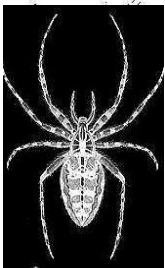
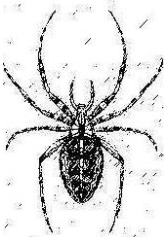
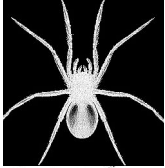
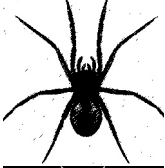
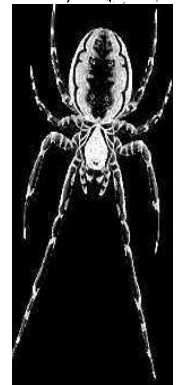
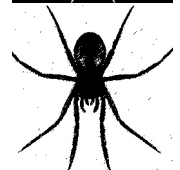
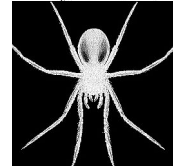
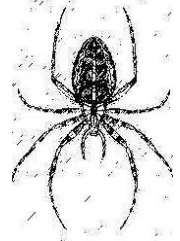
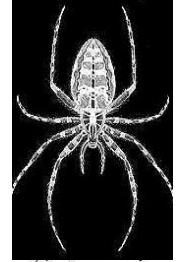
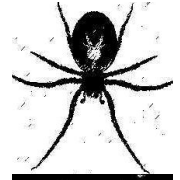
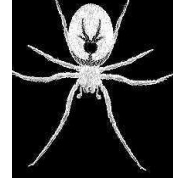
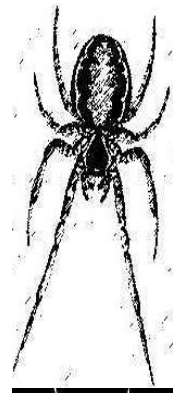
I'm drowning in numbers (binary code).

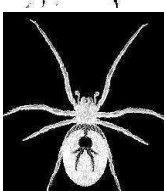
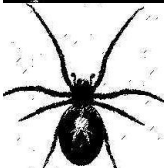
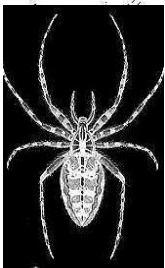
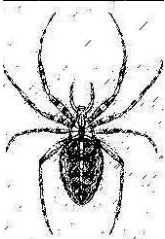
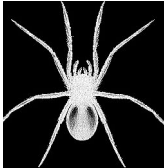
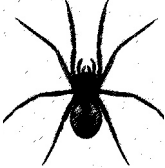
Parts 6

What do we do with 177020? When do we move him around? Where do we take him to? Why do we need him? Who is he? How is he of benefit to you?

We move 177020 throughout this vast country of ours every two or three years, for it takes him that long to systematise our regional posts. We drive him to the various outposts of our empire, so that he may amend the synapses of our nervous system. We need him and want him for;

- a) He is unattached
- b) He is unwanted
- c) He is well-known within the company
- d) He likes the company and he has not made any references to leaving us
- e) He is intelligent enough to take initiatives but not willing to question his de-facto imprisonment





f) He has a nice personality which does not supersede that of his superiors.

g) It cannot be otherwise.

Yes, it cannot be otherwise; we need him and he needs us. He is happy. What would you do with a dog who is so subservient, so willing to obey your every command just for a morsel, a tit-bit of meat? He is happy like the puppy who gets that extra biscuit after a long and arduous walk.

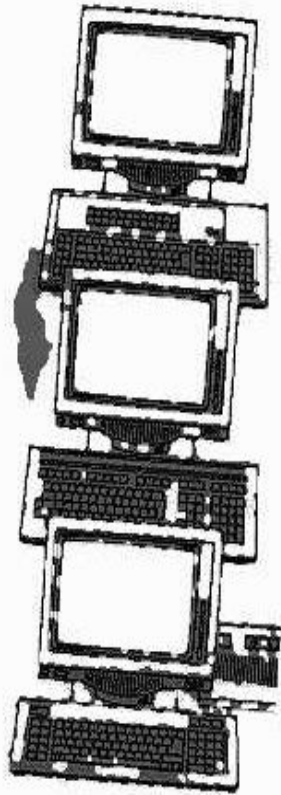
177020 is one of our most valuable assets. We have a contract. He is a valuable asset to us and therefore the whole country as such. We will provide you with finance for your public sector initiatives. You have agreed to let us handle 177020 the way we see fit. You cannot argue otherwise.

Interlude II

Although we do not find your employment methods particularly agreeable, we are more than satisfied with the results that the company produces. We are therefore prepared to look the other way. However, should 177020 virtual imprisonment become public, we will state that we knew of nothing.

Please continue.

Part 7



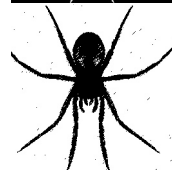
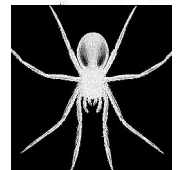
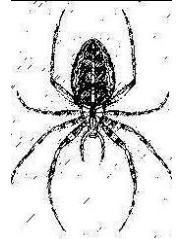
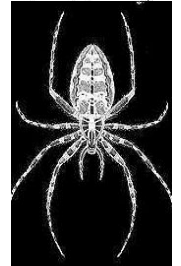
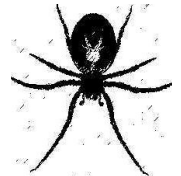
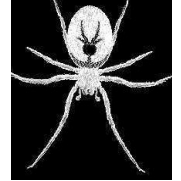
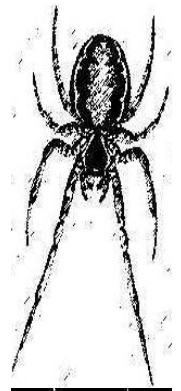
I am drowning in numbers and submerged in hyper-text.

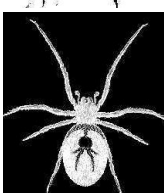
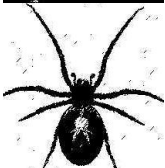
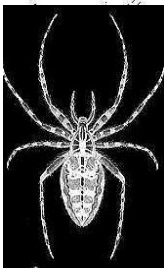
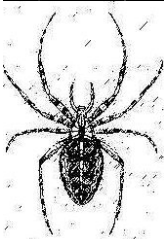
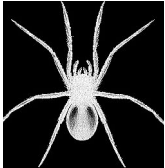
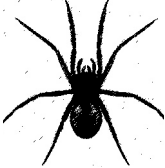
A few weeks ago, I was given a small radio, to listen to Radio Stations 4, 2 & 3. It makes me happy, for I can listen to music or hear stories of the outside world.

When airwaves swing, distant voices sing. When airwaves sing, I hear the voices of the global village.

I hear tales of things I have experienced, I hear tales of things I have wanted to experience, and I hear tales of things that I would never want to experience under any circumstances.

But I am still drowning in numbers, When airwaves swing, I am happy.





When airwaves swing, distant voices reach out and touch me. They tell me of things I have experienced, want to experience or would have liked to have experienced but never got round to doing so.

Drowning in numbers, submerged in hyper-text and listening to air waves; these are all things that release me from being. Actually they are the only experiences I have. Apart from the cask of ale. And the exercise. And sleep.

I'm submerged in hyper-text, exposed to radio-activity and listening to air waves. Always listening to the voices.

This morning on the news I heard about the Intergalactic Space Badgers landing outside the Pompidou Centre. They arrived in a hypersonic solar-flare powered toad stool and were greeted with the joyous cry "Oh my god, we're all going to die". The masses panicked even more when ten badger-nauts descended from their space craft on five chemically enhanced magic mushrooms. On touch down, the fearless cosmic woodland creatures proclaimed their desire to save mankind and told the crowd to 'get down and boogie'. Traffic wardens in the area were immediately called to the scene and they confiscated the space ship, as the intrepid space explorers 'hadn't purchased an appropriate parking ticket'. The police then arrested the badgers on the grounds that 'they were illegal aliens'. They are awaiting immediate deportation to the International Space Station.

Drowning in numbers, I listen to the radio and escape. When airwaves swing, I fly away.

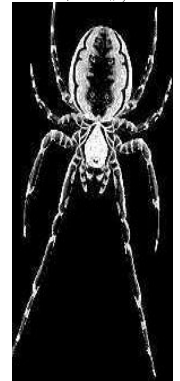
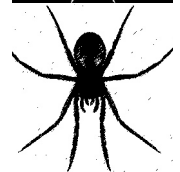
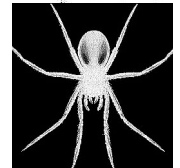
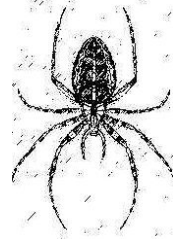
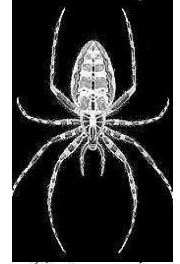
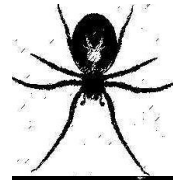
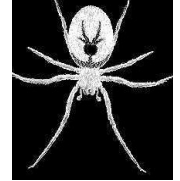
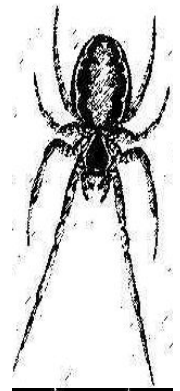
Submerged in hyper-text, I cease to be.

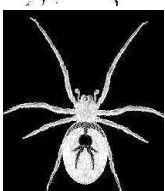
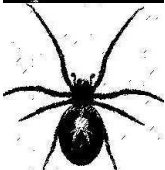
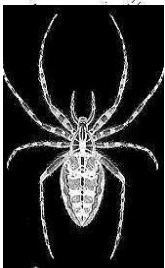
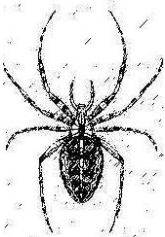
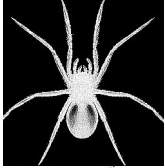
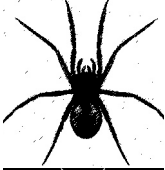
Part 8

What is 177020's raison d'être? Why is he?

Apart from sorting out our computer system, files and databases, we make sure that he does nothing else; for no-one is allowed to know why he is, who he is, where he comes from, what he does and if he actually exists.

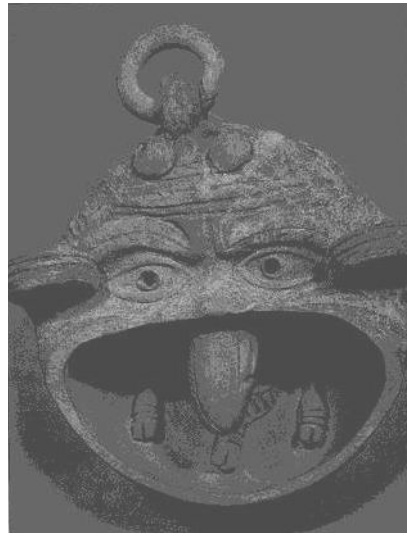
177020 seems happy with his lot and no amount of pressure could force us to free him. He has condemned himself and we are merely executing his sentence. He did not choose it but we know that he wants us to carry out his sentence. He should not have adopted so many mistresses, should he? He should have been a good boy.





So? What is special about 177020?

177020 is, of course, related to one of the mightiest entrepreneurs in the country, if not the most important. It cannot be revealed that he is his brother. Never, but never, will the company disclose that 177020 is the boss' twin. He could have been just as great as the boss, indeed he could have superseded his brother, but instead he chose to be born minutes later after his twin's birth. That is the way of the world. He could have been subservient to his brother, and he could have been a shining example of altruism for the masses by increasing his brother's fortune. Instead, 177020 made his own way through life, amassed his own wealth, ignored his brother's authority, led a debauched life with many affairs (particularly offensive to his impotent twin brother) and - unforgivably - enjoyed himself.



This was not acceptable. He had to be made an example of. So we set him up, and he was condemned. It could not have been any other way.

He should never have had that glass of wine, as we would then not have been able to take those pictures.

That is the way of the world.

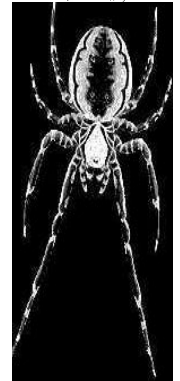
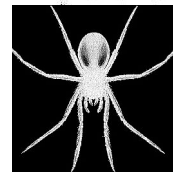
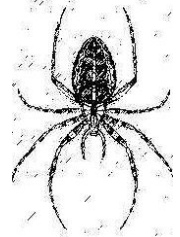
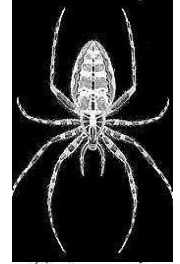
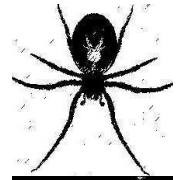
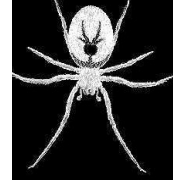
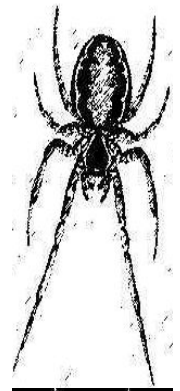
Part 9

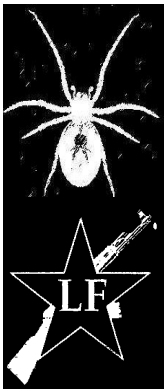
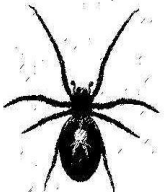
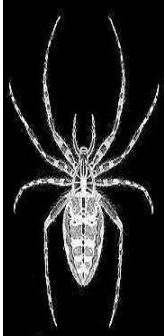
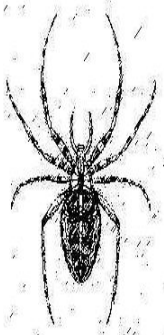
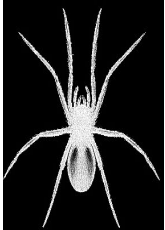
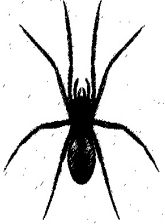
I am drowning in numbers.

I do not, under any circumstances, want to return to the surface to breathe fresh air, for not only do terrible dangers lurk above the surface but also the air is only relatively fresh.

Breathing air just extends your life by a few years. And do I really want to exchange security for a few more years of life? I am constantly dealing with hyper-text. It is the only thing I can handle. Its intricate problems are the kind only I can solve.

Drowning in numbers, submerged in hyper-text, exposed to radio-activity (There's always a nice little nuclear reactor in





the town I stay in. They are safe, so the company says. I believe them), logged onto my computer (What else should I do?) and diving into computer gobbledegook (It's the only language I understand). I love this life.

I sleep (I have to), I wake up (I have to), I get up (I have to), I eat (I need sustenance), I wash (to keep up standards), I exercise (to stay fit) and I log on (my job).

I log off (to rest), eat (I need sustenance), drink (my only vice), exercise again (to make sure I stay fit), wash (I have a disorder; I am obsessed with hygiene) and sometimes I drink another barrel of ale (for pleasure).

Drowning in numbers; I am submerged in hyper-text.

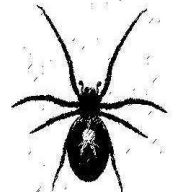
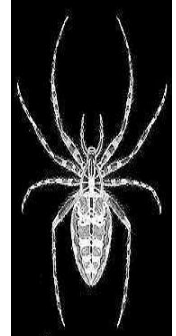
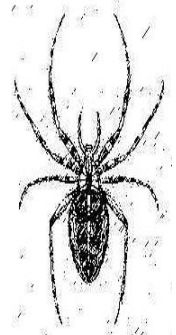
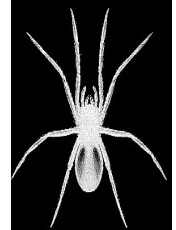
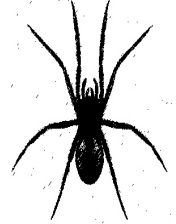
I sleep, I wake up, I get up, I eat, I wash, I exercise, I log on, I drown in numbers, I submerge in hyper-text, I am weighed down by computer gobbledegook, I am exposed to radioactivity, I log off, I eat, I drink, I exercise, I wash, and I drink again.

Then I go to sleep to dream in numbers.


Drowning in numbers, I am drowning in binary code.

This is my life.

Drowning in numbers (binary code).



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 This issue was sponsored by
the North West Arts Board