

CLICK!

Someone, Somewhere (or both, in millions, or uncountable) requires, likes, needs, values, collects, drinks, eats, or uses as a drug (*sic*) a substance ident Loosh. (Electricity, oil, oxygen, gold, wheat, water, land, old coins, uranium.) This is a rare substance in Somewhere, and those who possess Loosh find it vital for whatever it is used for.

Faced with this question of Supply and Demand (a universal law of Somewhere), Someone decided to produce it artificially, so to speak, rather than search for it in its "natural" form. He decided to build a Garden and grow Loosh.

In the natural state, Loosh was found to originate from a series of vibrational actions in the carbon-oxygen cycle and the residue was Loosh in varying degrees of purity. It occurred only during such action, and secondarily during the reactive process. Prospectors from Somewhere ranged far and wide in search of Loosh sources and new discoveries were hailed with much enthusiasm and reward.

So it was that Someone and his Garden changed all this. Far off, in a remote area, he set to work on his experiment. First, he created a proper environment for the carbon-oxygen cycle, where it would flourish. He created a Balance with much care, so that proper radiation and other nourishment would be in continuous supply.

He then tried his First Crop, which actually did produce Loosh, but only in small quantities and of comparatively low grade, not significant enough to take back to the heart of Somewhere. The problem was two-fold. The life period was too short and the crop units themselves were too minute. This brought about limits in quality and quantity, as the crop had no time to generate Loosh in such close tolerances. Moreover, the Loosh could be harvested only at the moment of termination of the life span, not one moment before.

His Second Crop was no better, if as good. He changed the environment to another part of the Garden, where the density was gaseous rather than liquid and the higher-density chemicals formed a solid base and thus were still available. He planted numberless units in many varieties in a new form, with a great increase in size, some many thousands of times larger and more complex than the simple unicellular First Crop. He re-

versed the carbon-oxygen cycle. Yet all had a basic uniformity. Like the First Crop, they would reseed at regular intervals and terminate their life spans automatically. To avoid the uneven distribution of chemicals and radiation which had been prevalent in the First Crop, he immobilized the Second Crop. Each was designed to stay principally in its own section of the Garden. To this end, each was given firm tendrils which burrowed deep in the more dense chemical matter. Attached to this was a stem or trunk which helped elevate the upper portion upward for its share of needed radiation. The upper portion, broad, thin, and somewhat fragile, was designed as a transducer of carbon-oxygen compounds to and from the crop unit. As an added thought, brilliant color radiators accompanied by small particle generators were mounted on each unit, usually near the top and symmetrically centered.

He set up circulating patterns in the gaseous envelope around the crop, principally to aid in the reseeded process. Later, he discovered that the same turbulent effect served as a means of harvesting the Loosh. If the turbulence were violent enough, the Crop would be blown down, the life span terminated, and the Loosh would discharge. This was especially useful when an immediate Loosh supply was desired at a particular point rather than at Harvest Time.

Despite all of this, the Second Crop was most unsatisfactory. While it was true that a much greater quantity was attained, the unrefined Loosh produced was of such low grade that it was scarcely worth the effort. In addition, the growth period was now too long and no increase in quality resulted. Some vital element was missing.

Someone hovered over his Garden for a long period in study before he attempted the Third Crop. It was indeed a challenge. True, he was partially successful. He had grown Loosh. Yet the product of his efforts fell far short of the wild, uncultivated variety.

It was inevitable that he perceived the answer. The Third Crop was living proof of this Truth. The original carbon-oxygen cycle must be included. Mobility must be restored. Both factors had shown great promise in high-grade Loosh production. If size could be added to this, much could be accomplished.

With this plan in the forefront, Someone removed various sample units from the First Crop, which was still thriving in the liquid portion of the

Garden. He modified them to exist and grow in the gaseous area. He adapted them first to take nourishment from the Second Crop, which he permitted to abound for this very purpose. Thus it was that the first of the Mobiles, the Third Crop, came into being. The Mobiles took nourishment from the Second Crop, thus ending its life span and producing low-grade Loosh. When each huge Mobile terminated its own life span, additional Loosh was produced. The quantity was massive, but the frequency pattern of the Loosh residue still left much to be desired.

It was by accident that Someone came upon the Prime Catalyst as regards Loosh production. The monstrous and slow-moving Mobiles had a life span far out of proportion to their nourishment input. The growth and life-termination process was of such length that soon the Mobiles would all but decimate the Second Crop. The entire Garden would be out of balance, and there would be no Loosh production whatsoever. Both the Second and Third Crop faced extinction.

As the Second Crop grew scarce, energy needs of the Mobiles became acute. Often two Mobiles would seek to ingest the identical Second Crop unit. This created Conflict, which resulted in physical struggle among two or more of the ungainly Mobiles.

Someone observed these struggles, at first bemused with the problem, then with great interest. As the struggles ensued, the Mobiles were emanating Loosh! Not in fractional amounts, but in sizable, usable quantities and of a much higher purity.

He quickly put the theory to the test. He removed another unit of First Crop from the liquid Garden area, redesigned it for the gaseous environment—but with one significant change. The new Mobile would be somewhat smaller, but would require the ingestion of other Mobiles for nourishment. This would solve the problem of overpopulation of Mobiles, and at the same time would create good quantities of usable Loosh during each conflict-struggle, plus a bonus if the new class of Mobile terminated the life span of the other. Someone would be able to transmit to Somewhere practical amounts of reasonably pure Loosh.

Thus it was that the Rule of the Prime Catalyst came into being. Conflict among carbon-oxygen cycle units brings forth consistent emanations of Loosh. It was as simple as that.

Satisfied that he had found the formula, Someone prepared the Fourth

Crop. He knew now that the Third Crop Mobiles were too large and too long in life span to be ultimately practical. If grown in large numbers, the entire Garden would have to be expanded and enlarged. There was not space enough to grow such massive single units and the proportionate leafy Second Crops to support them. Also, he reasoned correctly that more rapid and increased mobility would expand the Conflict factor, with a resultant higher Loosh output.

In one single motion, Someone terminated the life spans of all the lumbering Third Crop Mobiles. Going back to the First Crop in the liquid area, he modified and expanded them into a multitude of shapes and sizes, gave them complex multicellular structures of high mobility. He designed into them a pattern of balance. There were those that ingested a Second Crop type of carbon-cycle unit (basically immobile) as an energy source. There were others, very highly mobile, who required for energy the ingestion of other mobile Modified First Crop units.

The completed circuit operated quite satisfactorily. The stationary Second Crop modification in the liquid environment flourished. Small, highly active liquid-breathing Mobiles took nourishment, "ate" the Second Crop modification. Larger and/or other active Mobiles consumed for energy the smaller "plant eaters." When any Mobile grew too large and slow, it became an easy target for the smaller Mobiles, who attacked in voracious numbers. The chemical residue from these ingestive actions settled to the bottom of the liquid medium and so provided new nourishment for the Stationaries (Modified Second Crop), completing the circuit. The result was a steady flow of Loosh—from the life-span termination of the Stationaries, from the intense conflict among the Mobiles to avoid ingestion, and finally from the sudden termination of the life spans of such Mobiles as the inevitable product of such conflicts.

Turning to another portion of his Garden—the gaseous area with a dense-compound base—Someone applied the same techniques with even more advanced improvements. He added many varieties of Stationaries (original Second Crop) to provide sufficient and diverse nourishment for the new Mobiles he was to create. As in the other Garden area, he made such Mobiles into a balance of two species, those who ingested and drew energy from the Second Crop Stationaries, and those who required other Mobiles for sustenance. He created them in literally thousands of original

types, small, large—yet none so large as the Third Crop Mobiles—and ingeniously gave each some appurtenance for conflict. These took the form of mass, elusive speed, deceptive and/or protective coating and color radiation, wave-action and particle perceptors and detectors, and unique higher-density protuberances for gouging, grasping, and rending during conflict. All of the latter served neatly to add to and prolong the conflict periods, with the resultant increase in Loosh emanation.

As a side experiment, Someone designed and created one form of Mobile that was weak and ineffective by the standards of the other Mobiles in the Fourth Crop. Yet this experimental Mobile had two distinct advantages. It had the ability to ingest and take energy from both the Stationaries and other Mobiles. Second, Someone pulled forth a Piece of Himself—no other source of such Substance being known or available—to act as an intensive, ultimate trigger to mobility. Following the Rule of Attraction, Someone knew that such infusion would create in this particular Mobile species an unceasing mobility. Always, it would seek to satisfy the attraction this tiny mote of Himself engendered as it sought reunion with the infinite Whole. Thus the drive for satisfaction of energy requirements through ingestion would not be the only motivating force. More important, the needs and compulsions created by the Piece of Someone could not be satiated throughout the Garden. Thus the need for mobility would be ever-present and the conflict between this need and that of energy replacement would be constant—possibly a continuous high-order Loosh emanator if it survived.

The Fourth Crop exceeded all of Someone's expectations. It became apparent that a consistent, useful flow of Loosh was being produced in the Garden. The balance of "life" operated perfectly, with the Conflict Factor producing immense amounts of Loosh and a steady supplement brought into being by the constant life-span terminations from all types of Mobiles and Stationaries. To handle the output, Someone set up Special Collectors to aid in the harvest. He set up Channels to convey the raw Loosh from his Garden to Somewhere. No longer did Somewhere depend principally upon the "wild state" as the principal source of Loosh. The Garden of Someone had ended that.

With the success of the Garden and the production of Loosh by cultivated means, Others began to design and build their Gardens. This was in

accordance with the Law of Supply and Demand (Vacuum is an unstable condition), as the amounts of Loosh from Someone's Garden only partially met the requirements of Somewhere. Collectors on behalf of the Others actually entered the Garden of Someone to take advantage of those small emanations of Loosh overlooked or ignored by the Collectors of Someone.

Someone, his work completed, returned to Somewhere and occupied himself with other matters. Loosh production stayed at a constant level under the supervision of the Collectors. The only alterations were ordered by Someone himself. Under instructions from Someone, the Collectors periodically harvested segments of the Fourth Crop. This was done to ensure adequate chemicals, radiation, and other nourishment for the younger, oncoming units. A secondary purpose was to provide occasional extra amounts of Loosh created by such harvesting.

To reap such harvest, the Collectors generated storms of turbulence and turmoil in both the gaseous envelope and the more solid chemical formations that were the base of the Garden itself. Such upheavals had the effect of terminating life spans of multitudes of the Fourth Crop as they were crushed under the rolling base formation or smothered under waves from the agitated liquid area of the Garden. (By peculiarity of design, Fourth Crop units could not maintain their carbon-oxygen cycle surrounded by the liquid medium.)

The Garden pattern of "Life" might have gone on thus throughout eternity had it not been for the perception and inquisitiveness of Someone. On occasion, he would study samples of Loosh from his Garden. There was no motive in doing so, other than the fact that Someone may have held a remote continuing interest in his project.

On a particular analysis of a Loosh sample, Someone had casually examined the emanations and was about to return it to the Reservoir—when he became aware of a Difference. It was very slight, but there it was.

His interest centered immediately, he looked again. Woven delicately in with the more common Loosh emanations was a slender fragment of purified and distilled Loosh. This was an impossibility. Purified and distilled Loosh resulted only after the "wild state" Loosh had been processed many times. The Loosh from the Garden of Someone required the same treatment before it could be used.

Yet here it was—so finely graded in its refined radiations that it could or would not return into compound with the raw substance. Someone reaffirmed his tests, and the result still was positive. There was a factor in his Garden of which he was unaware.

Quickly, Someone left Somewhere and returned to his Garden. Outwardly, all seemed the same. The solid-base gaseous areas of the Garden were an endless carpet of green reflection from the thriving Second Crop. The Modified First Crop in the liquid area was in perfect accord with the Action-Reaction Law (a Division of Cause and Effect). Someone perceived without delay that the Difference—the source of distilled Loosh—lay neither with the First nor with the Second Crop.

He found his first momentary touch of distilled Loosh emanation in one of the units of the Fourth Crop (which by then had filtered throughout the plantings of the Second Crop). The flash came during the unusual action of this unit as it entered into a life-terminating struggle with another Fourth Crop unit. This alone would not create distilled Loosh, Someone knew, and he probed deeper for the source.

It was at that moment he discovered the Difference. The Fourth Crop unit was not struggling in Conflict over an ingestible remnant of a weaker Fourth Crop unit or a tasty frond from a nearby Second Crop stem—or to avoid termination of life and ingestion by the other conflicting Fourth Crop unit.

It was in Conflict to protect and save from life termination three of its own newly generated species huddled under a large Second Crop unit waiting for the outcome. There was no doubt about it. This was the action that produced the flashes of distilled Loosh.

With this clue, Someone examined the actions of other Fourth Crop units in the Garden. He found similar flashes when other Fourth Crop units took the same action in defense of their "young." Still, there was an inconsistency. The sum of all such flashes of distilled Loosh emanation from all such actions by the current Fourth Crop units would not amount to half of the total he had found in the sample from the Reservoir. It was obvious that another factor was present.

Systematically, he hovered over the Garden, extending his perception to all areas. Almost immediately, he found the source. High-order distilled

Loosh radiation was originating from one particular section of the Garden. Quickly, he hurried to the spot.

There it was—an experimental Modified Fourth Crop unit, one of those that contained a Piece of Himself in its functional pattern. It was standing alone under the leafy upper portion of a large Second Crop unit. It was not "hungry." It was not in Conflict with another Fourth Crop unit. It was not acting in defense of its "young." Then why did it emanate distilled Loosh in such great quantity?

Someone moved closer. His perception entered into the Modified Fourth Crop unit and then he knew. The unit was lonely! It was this effect that produced distilled Loosh.

As Someone drew back, he noted another unusual inconsistency. The Modified Fourth Crop unit suddenly had become aware of His Presence. It had collapsed and was jerking in strange convulsions on the solid-base formation. Clear liquid was being expelled from the two radiation-perceiving orifices. With this, the distilled Loosh emitted became even more pronounced.

It was from this that Someone propounded his now famous DLP Formula, which is in effect in the Garden at this time.

The balance of the story is well known. Someone included the fundamental in his formula: ". . . The creation of pure, distilled Loosh is brought forth in Type 4M units by the action of unfulfillment, but only if such pattern is enacted at a vibratory level above the sensory bounds of the environment. The greater the intensity of said pattern, the greater the output of Loosh distillate. . . ."

To put the formula into effect, Someone designed subtle changes in his Garden, all of them familiar to every historian. The splitting of all Crop units into Halves (to engender loneliness as they sought to reunite) and the encouragement of dominance of the Type 4M unit are but two of the most noteworthy innovations.

As it appears now, the Garden is a fascinating spectacle of efficiency. The Collectors have long since become Masters at the Art of the DLP Formula. Type 4M units dominate and have spread through the entire Garden, with the exception of the deeper portions of the liquid medium. These are the principal producers of Loosh distillate.

From experience, the Collectors have evolved an entire technology with

complementary tools for the harvesting of Loosh from the Type 4M units. The most common have been named love, friendship, family, greed, hate, pain, guilt, disease, pride, ambition, ownership, possession, sacrifice—and on a larger scale, nations, provincialism, wars, famine, religion, machines, freedom, industry, trade, to list a few. Loosh production is higher than ever before . . .

CLICK!

I was closed tightly, turned inward, stunned. My first reaction was, there had to be some mistake, this was not the story-history of earth, BB had it mixed up with some other port of call on their cruise schedule. Yet as I ran the rote again, the overlay of what little I knew of earth's zoological and human history was uncomfortably accurate, albeit from another perspective. The food chain of earth's ecobiologic system had been well established. Knowing this about Mother Nature, some of the hard-core philosophic speculators had often pondered where the human animal fit in the process. The downside was obvious, who ate *us*! Before, it had been just that, speculation. Now . . .

BB opened, plied. (*You get the percept, RAM?*)

I dulled. (*Yeah, I get it.*)

(*Well, then,*) BB went on, (*what's Loosh got to do with learning?*)

I opened slightly. (*And you got the rote before you came to Earth?*)

BB smoothed. (*Like I gave you, it was in the TSI cruise brochure. It was in with hundreds of other rotes we got before we left.*)

I opened more, but tightly. (*Where did the brochure come from?*)

(*Why, uh . . . yeah, from the Cruise Director.*)

(*Where did he get it?*)

BB flickered. (*I don't have a rote on that He just dumped them on us and rolled, "Here's the exciting and interesting stops we'll make on the cruise." I got a good percept because it was the last one we'd visit, so it was the last rote we got. That's why it's so clear. Some of the others are dim because they were in the middle. Not the earth rote, or humans. It's all clean, not wild at all.*)

I hardened. (*And where did the Cruise Director come from?*)

BB lighted. (*Oh, he and the rest are a bunch of curls from the system next to us.*)

(*Why did they offer the cruise to you in KT-95?*)

BB smoothed. (*Well, it was sort of a, uh . . . trade. We do it all the time with systems near us.*)

(*What did they get in trade?*)

BB lighted. (*Games, games! We got more games than any system four skips in any direction!*)

I turned inward and closed. It was getting too hot to handle. If the rote was real . . . a huge if. I began to drop off. Anger, the feeling of being on the receiving end of a huge deception. The resentment at being manipulated, wanting to strike out at those who were conning me . . . us . . . all humans . . . who were taking something from us without our consent or permission. What happened to the freedom idea? Was *every* thought and action we took guided—no, *directed and controlled* just to produce more Loosh, whatever that was, for a breakfast table or a fuel tank in a Somewhere? And what could I do about it, even knowing? I dulled deeply and dropped off more and more . . .

(*Hey RAM!*) BB was fading rapidly. (*Where you going!*)

Return to the physical was near-instantaneous, exactly as if I had pushed the panic button, which I had not done for so long. Strong sense of tiredness, both mental and physical, neglected to check time of return. Low energy, no desire to do anything. Unable to get to sleep. Got up, went to the kitchen, and made a cup of coffee. Sat and stared at the cup.

With no energy or desire for exploration during the two weeks following, in a depressed state, the only production that surfaced was:

It is sunset. The Guernsey has walked many miles around the pasture in her forage for food. The grass had been more lush today here, though she did not bother to consider why. She had come through the gate calmly when He directed her to do so, instead of the gate across the road. He knew she would find better grass here, and that was why He moved her here, though she did not realize it. She only did what He directed.

But now, at sunset, it is time again. She must go to His place. There

is a goading pain on her underside that tells her this. At His place up on the hill, it is cool and there is more food. And He will take the pain away.

The Guernsey moves up the hill and waits beside His place. Soon, the gate will open and she will walk into her position in His place, and eat the grass He places before her. While she eats, He will relieve the pain until morning.

After that, the Man will walk away with white water in a round container. The Guernsey does not know where he got the white water nor why He desires it.

Not knowing, she doesn't care.

13. Shock Treatment

It took me several months to adjust to the loosh rote. "Adjust" is a very broad word to describe a complete cycle of shock, rejection, anger, depression, resignation, acceptance. My sequence paralleled remarkably the pattern others have discovered and studies as to human response when notified of approaching death from illness or injury.

Something *was* dying in me. I had long realized that the God of my childhood did not exist, at least not in the form and substance envisioned by my enculturation. However, I had deeply accepted the concept of creator and created—I had but to look around me at the elaborate and intricate order of design, of the symbiosis that made the whole process operate, the trees that grew plumb-line straight up if given the chance, that provided me and other oxygen breathers with what we needed while we fed to them unknowingly for a long period our waste products, which they needed to exist . . . the balance of the entire planet, whose outer filtering bands of energy permitted just the proper quantity and quality of sunlight so critical to biologic growth . . . and of course the food chain.

The loosh rote explained everything very neatly. Most important, it explained the purpose, the reason for it all, the why of it. This factor had long eluded me. The loosh answer was simple and obvious. The reason was there, in very prosaic fashion. We were indeed producing Something of Value. Loosh. If one finally was able to get past the emotional barriers involved, it became hard even then to find holes in the general concept. An explanation of total human behavior and history.

That left the INSPECS.

Were they the gardeners, the loosh collectors, or the overseers? The question tantalized and tortured me for many weeks before I finally decided I must find out one way or another.

On a particular night, after great difficulty in getting two cycles of sleep, I awoke with a start and lay quietly in bed. Evidently my fear of

what I might find was greater than I thought, as I unhooked with difficulty from the physical, then slipped out of the second body as it hovered. I scanned for the INSPEC homing signal, but there was none. This disconcerted me at first, but I was determined and foolhardy. I used the ident INSPEC—the total rote I had on them—stretched out, focused, and let go. There was a quick, short sense of spinning movement, no impression of passing through the rings, then deep blackness, and I was motionless. Nothing more.

The percept was forming that the ident I had used wasn't enough. I might be at the gate to INSPEC territory, but I didn't have the passport to enter. I had never tried to go to them, they had always met me. I had no percept of their reality/state; therefore I had arrived only at the site of our meetings. If I focused on . . .

A warm vibration washed through me. (*Very good, Mister Monroe. You are quite correct.*)

I began to relax somewhat. At least I had gotten this far, and at least THEY didn't call me RAM.

(*Perhaps you would like it better if we used the ident by which we know you best. We believe you are ready for it now.*)

Ready for it, a name, they know me best . . . What could that be?

(*Ashaneen*)

Ashaneen. It was both familiar and strange. Again, that feeling of trying to recover from severe amnesia, and the gentle patience of those trying to help me remember. But the loosh . . .

(*We are aware of the disturbance you have undergone. It was necessary that you experience this. It goes with the territory, as you put it.*)

Then the loosh rote was real! I began to flicker . . .

(*It is the translation that is not real. The difficulty of placing earth and human values properly into perspectives and energies that are not of time and space is a factor very familiar to you.*)

I turned inward, picking up the loosh rote. Loosh, an energy generated by all organic life in varying degrees of purity, the clearest and most potent coming from humans—engendered by human activity which triggers emotion, the highest of such emotions being—love? Is love loosh?

(*Continue, Ashaneen.*)

But according to the rote, loosh is thrown off when life ends its physical

existence, when pain occurs, anger, hate . . . these can't be the same as love.

(*How would you define love in your terms?*)

I knew that would be next in the order of things, and I couldn't come up with an answer. Throughout history, great minds and greater philosophers had given it a try, with only partial success, and I was none of these. I wouldn't even consider trying.

(*But you know it exists. Love is not an illusion.*)

I released the loosh rote and turned deeply inward, scanning. It was easier from this perspective, or perhaps it was the presence of the INSPEC energy. It presented itself much as a simultaneous mixture and sequence of musical chords and short melodies, only it wasn't sound, it was patterns in colors of light. Scattered among the clutter of harmony, dissonance, discord, excitement, fun, fear, and emotion, and beginning shortly after birth, I had the percept of occasional surges of white . . . first from my mother and father, then smaller flashes I was unable to identify as to source. I kept scanning through my early years for any slight glimmer of white originating in me, that / put forth. To my dismay, all I could find was one small white glow for an Airedale dog named Pete. I was certain that the girl in high school, what was her name? . . . not even a flicker, either way.

(*Most common misconception, early-manifested survival drive.*) I agreed. Yet I could understand why. The bright red and pink chords and urgent melody were impressive even from this viewpoint; no wonder an ignorant curl such as I was would come up with the wrong percept. I went on through the mess that was I in a fast-forward mode, and I could spot sure and solid white surges here and there of which I had then been unaware, and their reality depressed and saddened me—because I found no significant emission from me that was remotely similar. It was all coming in, and I took it and didn't respond. I finally cut it off, would go into it no further. I wasn't much of a loosh producer. Too many other color chord patterns and melodies. Except for now. I knew some strong emissions in a few points were coming out of me. Did it take *that* long!

(*You understand waveforms. All come from the same baseline, the colors and the white. The difference is frequency and amplitude.*)

I knew what THEY were doing, and I appreciated it. My focus was being

diverted from what I thought was unpleasant back into an abstract yet trunk-and-roots position. Using the same stuff—interactive experience—one began to learn to express anger, pain, fear, and all the rest, and finally—hopefully, if you passed the course—a special energy waveform labeled love. Yet we don't really know what it is and, with my suspicion growing, how to really use it.

(A carefully designed school of compressed learning.)

To learn to be high-quality loosh/love producers. The fact that human physical consciousness was for the most part totally unaware of being involved in the process may be an important ingredient itself. Precious few are cognizant of the nonphysical agenda, at least overtly. It was getting pretty heavy for *my* cognizance. Yet I began to get a very faint percept, elusive but it was there. What would happen if the Guernsey cow did discover that her milk had value? What could she herself do with it if she didn't have a calf to feed it to? Could she save it? Could she spend it on more hay or protein-vitamin blocks to lick? What if she then discovered man was taking the milk she produced? Rebel, refuse to deliver any more milk? Then she would no longer have a pasture in which to graze, protection from wild dogs, a bull when she needed it, and most of all, no barn to go to where she could get relief from the pain. Without a sense of serial time, she forgets that the pain eases eventually. Perhaps even knowing, she wouldn't care. She wouldn't want to mess up a good thing. Therefore: Who cares? Who *would* care!

(To use your term, you can't beat the machine.)

The percept was still there, faint, still to be explained or satisfied. What about those who *do* beat the machine? There always have to be exceptions, no machine is perfect, only one anomaly is needed to prove a statistic or create one. Are they carted off to be ground up into hamburger meat? If so, is hamburger a sort of super loosh or something entirely different? Is this also a part of the machine product, or is it rust that is scraped away and discarded?

And the bull calves, what is their role? Never will be loosh producers; it takes only one bull for every fifty cows, so there's a surplus. In nature—the machine?—left alone, there's a way that is automatically taken care of . . . the impersonality of that prospect of dominance and predation is certainly not in the winning column. Hold it there, the percept is getting

stronger. There *would* be no loosh production without at least one, uh, one bull. So he is an *indirect* loosh producer, vital to the method. That would infer, so are grass, hay, water, minerals, and the rest.

(Remember your waveforms, beat frequencies you like so much.)

Let's see, here. If a smart transmitter propagates certain waves, they can resonate with other related vibrations of like kind to form a multiple pattern which if thought of as light—would be: white! So in and of itself, you don't have to be the end-product antenna or transducer, just one of the oscillators. You may never display actual loosh radiation, but you have a vital part in its production. Remembering the scan of my early years, I felt much better.

(Then why are you disturbed?)

The percept still itched inside me, THEY were right. What would I do with loosh/love if I had a large warehouse full of it? Hand it out? It would only come back with interest and I would have to build another warehouse to hold the compounding, growing volume. The percept surged brightly. It was so obvious . . . Someone, Somewhere. If I could . . .

(You are not ready at this point.)

Ready to go to Somewhere? To meet Someone? And in all of this, how do you fit in, my friend? If I had the courage to ask these . . .

(We are not Someone, as you put it, nor are we from the Somewhere you indicate. Also, we are not the keepers of the Garden of Earth, nor the gardeners. Nor do we collect and transfer human-developed loosh/energy elsewhere or when. We do not fit into any portion of the human compressed learning process. However, we have observed its generation and growth from its inception. We do participate when needed without interrupting the learning sequence. Such need is expressed when there is blockage in the flow. Such participation ultimately serves a vital need for us.)

I had a need to ask the question. Is . . .

(Somewhere is not the heaven of your history. It was created, as were all other systems.)

Then Someone . . .

(Is a creator who was created. You are a creator who was created. Each of you does carry a small rote, as you call it, of Someone, who created you. Through that rote of Someone, your creator, you carry a percept of the creator who created Someone.)

I turned inward. Even with this viewpoint, it was hard to set aside serial logic. The easy percept was how the multitude of distortions, misconceptions, misdirections came about. A little knowledge *can* be dangerous, and human creative imagination took over from there. If there had not been a Someone . . .

(Humans would not exist.)

I went over the idea of loosh/love. It must be quite a place to handle that much loosh, this Somewhere. It would fall neatly into many concepts of heaven. I grew wistful. Maybe we could go just to the edge of Somewhere, so I could get a feel of the place/state where there was so much love, surely near it, but not *in* it, just to observe from a distance. It would answer so much . . .

(That is not too much to ask, Mister Monroe. We can arrange it. Close tightly . . .)

CLICK!

. . . Even closed tightly, the radiation was so strong that it was nearly unbearable . . . I felt as if sweat were pouring off me, I was melting . . . but it wasn't heat . . . and I began to heave with great racking sobs and I couldn't understand why . . . then the radiation eased, and I opened a little. There was a form between me and the radiation, shielding me, and I could perceive a corona effect all around the form from the radiation beyond. It reminded me deeply of religious paintings I had seen, only this was live and in something far different from pigmented color . . .

(This is as close as you can tolerate. We are diverting most of the effective energy patterns, which are in themselves only the random residue, the leakage as you might call it, from the fundamental. Focus through us rather than the outer rim. It will help.)

With great difficulty, I narrowed and held on the center of the form . . . and I began to cool and calm down . . . slowly my rational and observing self began to emerge again, dominating the overwhelming emotional surge that had enveloped me . . . it was as if I perceived through a darkly tinted window and I had to work continually to keep the emotion below the threshold level, the wondrous and brilliant joy, awe, reverence, melded into one yet with flashes of each sparking momentarily . . . all

coursing through me as I responded to the radiation, unable to prevent it and barely keeping it under control. This would most emphatically be the ultimate heaven, the final home . . .

(Observe more carefully. You are capable of doing so.) I looked through the smoked-glass shield that was my INSPEC friend . . . and I was grateful, for I knew if I responded to this degree from just the reflection, the leakage, the full force of the radiation would have shattered me, I was *not* ready for it, if this was the percept from the distant edge . . . there, in the long view, was a radiant living form of incredible size, my first percept that of a tall standing humanoid, arms outstretched in front, palms upward . . . but just as quickly, it was not . . . instead, a shining globe, edges indistinct, behind it another, identical in appearance, behind it another, a continuous cascade moving away into infinity, beyond my percept ability . . . from each came numberless beams or rays, some huge in their diameter, others no wider than a pinpoint, all uniform in size throughout their length and beyond my percept as to their destination, some of them moving past me so close that I felt I could reach out and touch one . . .

(Would you like to do so? We will help you if needed.) I hesitated, then with the warm assurance from the shielding INSPEC form, I stretched a part of me out, cautiously, and touched the smallest ray nearest me . . . in an instant, the shock spread throughout all what I thought I was, and I *knew*, and in knowing, knew that I would forget if I tried to remember, because what I was could not yet handle the reality of it . . . yet I never again would be the same even without remembering, except that it occurred and the indescribable joy of knowing only that it did take place and the echoes would reverberate in me throughout eternity, whatever my eternity was . . . gently, I felt myself being detached from the ray, and I collapsed behind the shielding form of my INSPEC friend. . . . Friend? INSPEC? I realized then how provincial my percepts were. I also realized how limited they were . . . the radiating globes, the rays emitted . . .

(You responded very well for the initial exposure. Your human loosh/love energy is transmuted into the center of what you perceive. From there it is redirected into what you call the rays, to the points where it is needed most.

When you have progressed, we can guide you to one of the destinations so you can observe the results.)

My percept was not strong enough to bring any flicker whatsoever as to what exposure to the full force of such rays might be. But my human curiosity wouldn't let the basic question go unanswered, now that I had smoothed somewhat.

(It was created. It was always there, we have no percept of a beginning. Are you ready to return now?)

I turned inward and closed tightly.

CLICK!

. . . We were back again in familiar blackness, only now it seemed empty and sterile, but the INSPEC energy was still beside me . . . now I would have to put together a new ident for them, if they could hold up so calmly under . . .

(INSPEC will serve as well as any other.)

But I couldn't let it alone. As shaken as I was, I knew I had to ask, because I had known they were greater, but how much greater now might be a depth . . .

(We are created, just as you are created. More than that, it is important that you obtain from your own percept. In your own—how do you put it?—time, you will find the reason for this.)

Suddenly, I felt a strong, urgent signal pulling at the back of me. I resisted at first, not wanting to leave, but the signal was persistent. With the warm pattern of understanding from my INSPEC friend, I turned and followed the signal. Instantly, I was hovering over my physical body. There below me was my second body. I slid into it easily, then into the physical. My right arm was tingling due to lack of circulation. I evidently had been lying on it at an angle. I flexed the arm several times, musing as I had so many times before: Suppose there were no signal to return, how long would I stay away, would I never return? It was then, lying there in the darkness, listening to the whippoorwill and the night crickets outside, the soft earth-scented breeze flowing in through the open window, feeling the hot warmth of our little dog Steamboat sleeping contentedly against

the soles of my feet, the even breathing of Nancy sleeping beside me—that I felt the wetness of my cheeks and a few remaining tears in my eyes.

And I remembered. Not much, but I remembered! I sat up in bed, wanting to jump up and shout in incomprehensible joy. Steamboat raised his head and looked at me curiously, then dropped back. My wife shifted position as I sat up, then gradually resumed her even breathing rhythm. I would not wake her, she needed her rest and recharge.

I lay back and remembered. Sometime before dawn, I, too, fell asleep.