

ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND GREAT DEPRESSION

the new state-of-the-art jukebox in "the interval" is so vast and cybernetic that i have given up my vain attempts to play a song on it.

tonight i had stopped by for what was honestly just one drink when from what seemed like about a thousand speakers emerged the most impeccably clear and yet complex reproduction of "goodnight, irene" that i had ever heard. i felt about half a mile from heaven as i sipped my vodka-tonic and flashed on the messrs. steinbeck guthrie seeger alvin doe sandburg kesey haslam lincoln honig hemingway pollack ...

and how i sang it in a stage show as a cub scout,

and how my own little boy is now a cub scout,

and how inept i was as a cub scout,

and how my father had to earn all my merit badges for me,

and how now when my little boy has trouble doing some project for a merit badge, his mother has to show him how to do it.

and how i'm still so inept that i don't even risk embarrassing myself by trying to play anything on the state-of-the-art cybernetic jukebox,

and so i went back to flashing on the messrs. sam shepard and harry dean stanton and a zillion other micro-bytes of free and moving and noble associations,

and a man in a suit bellowed, "what's with the old stuff?"

and a woman with big tits called to the barmaid, "hit the reject button, mabel."

mabel said, "no, i think it's kinda purty,"

and a trucker glared at me with, "what kind of an asshole would play that sort of sentimental horseshit anyway?"

fortunately mabel explained that every twenty minutes the brainy and generous jukebox dispensed, for free, a random selection.