

## Jason Christie / from *ROBOTS VERSUS WOLVES*

### Robot Poems

#### **Deep Throat**

I think it is time to change the robot's belts to the new anti-static, oil and heat resistant model, before someone hears him squeak.

#### **The Invisible Ruler or The Despot Wears No Clothes**

Standards for robotic production declined drastically in the early twentieths. Once numerous companies began production of sentient items, it became nearly impossible to regulate the market. There was a time when robotic items could only be afforded by the rich, and even then they were more a novelty than anything else. These days items as various as microwaves, credit cards, space planes, and calculators are sentient and most people use some form of sentient item everyday. The rule of the market is still: caveat emptor.

#### **Satellite City**

Satellite City grows from permanent logins. The city sprawls. Population density and area are almost irrelevant terms when describing the limits, the city's boundary, or it's topographical distinction. Perhaps it would be appropriate to describe it in terms of terabytes per second, number of users/inhabitants, and rate of development as new robots turn previously unused data-space into homes, neighbourhoods, and communities. A healthy market sprung up with the early boom of the city's influx and now many robots live and work entirely online. They have exited their shells in the real world and moved into cyberspace. We often see robot husks by the river or in alleys,

wherever they decided to face the erasure. Other robots have the undesirable task of collecting the scrap metal. They are undertakers of a kind. Before we found out about Satellite City, many believed that a new virus had infected our robots in a manner similar to the Infanta virus of 2014. In hindsight, all such viruses may have simply been an outflux of robots as they fled to the city. We have yet to determine a means to inhibit the robot's emmigration. Satellite City has become a refuge. Although it can be very hard for a newly arrived robot to make a living there.

### **Spirit**

My answering machine told me that it envied my ability to smoke because the smoke, as it curled in the light, manifested my viability; the form smoke gave to breath illuminated my soul. I replied that I wasn't religious and didn't believe in souls. It just flashed its display at me — long, short, long, short, (pause), long, long, long, (pause), long, long, short, (pause), short, short, (pause), long, (pause), long, long, long, (pause), (pause), short, (pause), short, long, short, (pause), long, long, short, (pause), long, long, long, (pause), (pause), short, short, short, (pause), short, short, long, (pause), long, long, (pause). Every time we disagree my answering machine flashes this sequence. I wish I knew what it was trying to tell me.

### **A Capital Idea**

Two robots accidentally exchanged portions of their memory while they were chatting over the Internet. The first robot is a mechanic, outfitted with a welding torch on his left arm and a rivet gun on his right. The second robot is a lingerie model and now she has dreams of fastening nuts to bolts and a phantom pain in her left arm that burns slightly. The mechanic robot now shows up to work scantily clad.

## Wolf Poems

— *Poems for Andrea Ryer, wolves for Kyle Buckley*

### **The Wolves Won't Hunt**

We lit the breakfast on fire, the ham, the eggs, and found ourselves a trumpet called island. What I wanted to say didn't materialize enough to serve lunch and so we chased the wolves through the forest in the hopes they'd transfer some of their speed to our legs, some of their fur to our thin skin, some of their call to our voices. Later, we gathered around the island because the music we'd heard elsewhere didn't satisfy our need for community. We've always written novels. Eager to reshore beaches, and desperate to claim any lean-to within our windswept memory. The trumpet winds down. Our ears feel silence wave against the folds there between each short, sad note.

### **Wolf Call**

Left alone, the wolf won't hunt. We die for our vegetables. Left the shoulder, for a gristle far clearer than a siren. What I want remains to be seen. Some warm fur. A nice embrace. Two dollars to get to work. The full moon falls tomorrow. I'll call from the forest hoping the city will answer, exactly as it always does. These are your wolves. They want to run.

### **Wolf's Miscellany**

Accept the branches, wind, lush grasses and leaves, leave me with the shadows scattered upon the earth. I'm beyond a receipt at this point for an easily formed mirage. What I wouldn't give to have the temperature remain warm, but I know harshness, threats, lean months, draw near. I smell them on the wind and can feel the wind as it turns, all sharp teeth and cold to smile in my direction.

## **Wolf Economics**

Pack at the elders, shift capital away from uselessness. In short, we slowly kill you.

## **A Pack Memory or A Paragraph**

One to remember the tree that was hit by lightning. One to remember that a sentence knows when to stop. One to remember the cool shallow stream where we can fish. One to remember our secret cave in the hills toward the sunrise. One to remember the sunrise. One to remember lightning. The paragraph is a pack memory; the forest is our document. One to remember the grandfather you've loved faded into shadow then lost. A sentence knows when one remembers a sentence. What we call the hunt. Left alone the wolf won't hunt. Let me remember that left alone a wolf won't hunt.

## **Wolf Smile**

What can a tree get except wind between its branches? That sound feet make sucked into wet mud then out again. Let the anger shatter stones from within, splinter trunks and boil rivers. I just want to see you again, shining in the sun.