

Dollar Dazzle

The New York Times, Nov. 9, 1998:

It has been almost a year since Egghead Software, a fallen leader in software retailing, announced that it would close the last 80 of its stores to begin anew as an Internet-only operation. Now the company says it is ready to start over -- again.

The New York Times, Aug. 16, 2001:

Egghead.com filed a Chapter 11 petition late today, according to a docket sheet in United States Bankruptcy Court in San Francisco. The company also dismissed 200 employees.

Where have all the Eggheads gone?
Like yesterday's air--to the winds.
I knew their store in Chicago
on Dearborn
near the First National Bank
(which where has also gone?),
knew it as well as my family room.
The clerks there were hard to find
and mostly smart-alecky quick
when asked a question.
Brightly-inked, their software boxes
shouted "Buy me" at browsing retinas.
The unquiet phone by the register
preempted not-so-patient lines of
customers holding plastic gold.
Store policies bristled with
selfishness behind an ostensible
wish to please and a logoic egg.
Where did all their profits go?

I think all the Eggheads have gone
where all the CompUSAs are going,
and all the Dells and the Gateways,
each company captive in a summary
spreadsheet managed by some
moneyman's mind who will someday
wave his magic tongue and say
"No more."
Then employees' families
will crumble and groan,
receiving dread notice
oh so once again.
Grandiose
is Mr. American Moneyman
in his plans, ruthless
in his recklessness, stonehearted
in his layoffs.

Yes, Eggheads have all gone
where yesterday's air is now,

but on and on proceeds
the fiscal mayhem like a rodeo,
each new company out of the gate
a strong bronco that few CEO's
can ride but any can sell off
or shoot dead.

Strip away the dollar signs
and what remains but ego?
Mightn't we just agree
on having a decade or two
of calm cooperation?
After all, we do have us,
right here, this moment.
We're a complex bunch,
but we each
came equipped with
yes, a heart--
oh my but yes,
a heart.

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