

## 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  
moneymen'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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