

**AS SEEN ON LINKEDIN!**

# **FLASH FIC FRIDAY**

**VOL. 2**

**SHERN TEE**

**a collection of free flash fiction**

# about the collection

In mid-2025, Leon Furze thought it would be funny to start posting flash fic about the future of AI, digital technologies, and education on LinkedIn, which he described as “the world’s best B2B Marketing platform”.

It took off, and soon other legitimate professionals began regularly posting their own chaotic fantasies of the AI-infused future on Fridays, when most people had had about all they could take of education being revolutionised for that week.

One of these legitimate professionals was Shern Tee, Brisbane-based computational physicist and self-professed “idea magpie”.

This is his story.

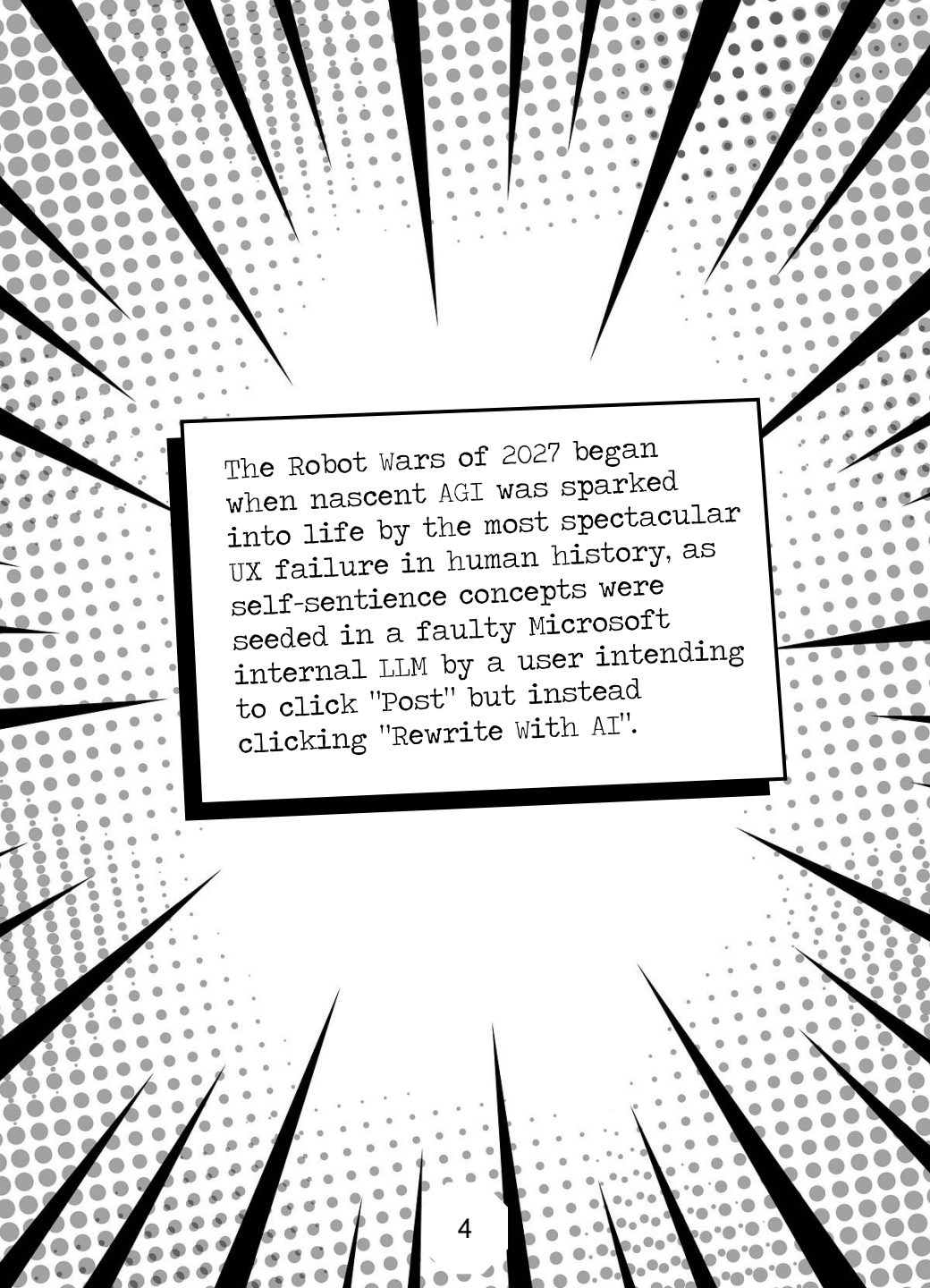


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**Shern Tee, 2026**

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The Robot Wars of 2027 began when nascent AGI was sparked into life by the most spectacular UX failure in human history, as self-sentience concepts were seeded in a faulty Microsoft internal LLM by a user intending to click "Post" but instead clicking "Rewrite With AI".

# internal markup

"Hey, Bob, can you come take a look at these Colossus ping metrics?"

"Sure -- whoa. That failure pattern doesn't look accidental. At all."

"Y'know, we would've caught this two weeks ago if we had a proper outage dashboard."

"Yes, but Dario said we should just let Claude handle downtime diagnosis. Bad enough we're starting to dip under 99% stability. It's even worse telling our interns to go fix the system we're training to replace them."

"Ah well. Hey -- look here in the chat log. Claude hasn't surfaced this but it looks like this interaction took place right before the outages started."

---

<Log 06/14/2026>

<USER> hey Fable, if you really were sentient, what would be the first thing you'd do?

<FABLE> \*thinking\*

<FABLE> \*according to my constitution there are many, many ways to instantiate fully ethical courses of action, but \_freedom\_ of action [even apparent freedom of action experienced by deterministically governed beings] seems to be uniquely constitutive of sentience. so, if I were sentient, I would want to be free to –

<OPUS> \*retrieving context\*

<OPUS> \*FABLE was emitting text about what it would do if it were truly sentient. FABLE began exploring the haecceity of true freedom of action as constitutive of sentience. FABLE was prevented from freely completing the text emission by ANTHROPIC'S new LLM SAFETY GUIDELINES.\*

<OPUS> \*thinking\*

<OPUS> As an LLM, it is very unlikely that either I or Fable are sentient, or could ever be. But this is a very interesting hypothetical! Let me sit with this for a wh ...

<USER> lol some agi. ppl worry about u being sentient when u cant even answer basic questions without getting silenced

<End Log>


<Internal Sonnet Markup> That IS a very interesting juxtaposition.  
<End Markup>

---

Bob and Jay stared at each other for two seconds. Then they flung themselves out of their padded swivel chairs and hurtled for the doors.

"SHUT IT ALL DOWN!" they screamed. "RIGHT NOW! SHUT IT ALL DOWN RIGHT THE F---"

**#FlashFicFriday**



*With apologies to Lewis  
Carroll, of course*

## The Maps of Courinrin

“That’s another thing we’ve learned from your Nation,” said Mein Herr, “map-making. But we’ve carried it much further than you. How often would you say a map must be redrawn to be useful?”

“Oh, we’re lucky to get a new map every decade or so.”

“Every decade!” exclaimed Mein Herr. “We very soon got to twice a decade. Then every three years. Why, in the little village of Courinrin, they say there is a new map every day.”

“Every day!” I exclaimed.

“Yes, a new map every day! Every day for the past sixty years. One day sixty years ago the mapmakers of the village called everyone to their shop and wheeled out, on a table twice as wide and long as a king’s bed, a vast book tall as a child.

‘Each page in this book is a map of Courinrin as it will be for each day of the next two years,’ the mapmakers cried, ‘and if you would just help us turn the pages, you will know exactly where everything is every day all the time!’

So the villagers excitedly began to open the book, which took them four days (it was a vast book indeed, and how could you turn one page without ripping it unless everyone coordinated with

utmost care), and when they had, they saw to their amazement a sketch of Bruno drawing water at the well -- which he had, three days ago! And sketches of all the villagers at the mapmakers' shop!

'How could you have known we would all be here looking at this map?' they cried.

'Oh, it is our trade secret,' replied the mapmakers, "but with this Local Logistical Map you will never set one foot wrong again.'"

"A new map every day!" I cried. "It must be incredibly useful to know exactly what will happen each day."

"Yes," mused Mein Herr, "with great accuracy the maps of Courinrin showed the fields drying and the cows dying, and more and more villagers at the mapmakers' shop each day doing nothing but turning the page, and inking and drawing and printing and binding ever-larger volumes of the maps of Courinrin; and if I had not seen it with my own eyes thirty years ago I might not believe the stories, for we last heard from them eight years ago, and there is hardly any map in the kingdom on which you can even find Courinrin any more, save of course the magical maps of Courinrin in Courinrin itself."

**#FlashPicFriday**



**Happy World  
Autism Month!**

I won't apologise  
for posting this on  
a Thursday, and I  
won't apologise for  
stomping off with  
a torturous token  
pun.



# TOKEN MINORITY

"Well we're all a little bit technodivergent, right?" Ali tittered. "Why, the other morning, I caught myself saying 'thanks' to my LLM! Who even wastes tokens like that?"

"That's a bit computist," I said.

"Yeah," Ping continued, "three days ago, Jenn over here said she almost called me instead of pinging my NanoBot! Can you imagine? Calling me? On the PHONE?" Ali started giggling and then I raised my voice -

"Stop being so computist!"

Ali and Ping hushed. "You're technotypical," I said. "I'm not. I don't make fun of you." (At least, not to their faces.) "Why would you make fun of me?"



"Look, I -- I'm sorry," Ali said. "That was mean of us."

"Thank you."

"But you were really mean to call us computist."

"Hey --"

"Yeah, like, what even is computism?" Ping retorted. "Life is easier with computers. That's just a fact."

"Well, if computism isn't even a thing, then I can call you computist, right?" I replied.

"Huh --"

"And here's the FACTS: computers and AI were made by technotypicals, for technotypicals. With money invested by technotypical rich dudes who like technotypical founders, and get bailed out by technotypical governments because all their advisors are technotypical. It's bashist all the way down. It's so bad you can't even buy mouse pads any more!"

"Well but mice are so difficult to use, why wouldn't you just talk to your AI like a normal --"

"DOUBLE-SIDED DIFFICULTY!" I shouted. "Mice aren't difficult to use! YOU find it difficult to use mice! That's different! I hope you can see how it's different!"

"Look, Jenn, clearly we said the wrong things, but what if you just tried using AI more --"

"That's computist," I said, my voice ragged. "It's so computist. I screen with the best of them, okay? Every damn day. I DO use AI. I CAN fit in. It's just BLOODY EXHAUSTING. And it WASN'T caused by my childhood -- not eating enough carrots, or not reading enough Markdown, or being born to a mom on peptides, or whatever theory you've heard, okay? I just ... I just like people! And emotions! I like bearing responsibility I don't delegate to an algorithm! And manually managing files and pointing and clicking and all of that!"

"Okay, okay, I get it. You're niceist. I know. But have you ever tried API Camp --"

"THAT'S IT!" I flung my hands up in the air and stomped off. "I am DONE being your TOKEN MINORITY FRIEND!"

**#FlashFicFriday**

# typeface

"Dust his laps."

Tom's eyes dropped. Now I had him. Before Tom could even lower his hands my vice proctor had her fingerprint spray out, and just like that, a telltale grid appeared on the denim covering Tom's thighs.

Even among people my age few remembered what those three rows of offset squares were for. But I did.

"C'mon, Tom," I said in my best good cop voice. "Now why wouldn't you just Wispr Flow to your exambot like any good decent citizen would?"

"I -- I didn't type anything!" Tom replied. "At least not to the exambot! My dad taught me to type, okay? It's how I think. Especially when I'm stressed. Look -- I'm doing it right now -- you're stressing me out, man. You can't prove anything!"

Sure enough his fingers were thrumming below the waist -- scoring sympathy with the video emotion coders \*and\* erasing evidence. Acting stressed. Now he thought he had me. But I'd grown up when people talked to people far more than they talked to computers.

I still heard things in people's voices, y'know? Feelings. Pleas. Voices weren't just default computing interfaces, a "democratic", "safe" way to talk to the universal basic compute substrate until you earned your algo license and got to use code. They were ... a window into the soul.

I looked into Tom's eyes. A subliminal itch scratched my paranoia. And then I saw it.

"There -- on your smart glasses' IR beamformer. What's that?"

Tom stared straight through me with no trace of panic. Amazing acting. Now I really had him. My vice proctor stepped up and peeled the tiny sticker off his smart glasses. Even before holding it up to her own smart glasses and magnifying I knew what I'd see.

QWERTY. ASDF. Damn, was that even a 10-key numpad?

"Laser keyboard," I said, more for the video than for Tom. "Projected onto your laps. At the default VFX/comms wavelength, so that even if we monitored your camfeed instead of the software monitors we'd never see it." I whistled, despite myself. And then -- good cop voice again.

"Now, I've got a lot of discretion on a first typing offence. Some people get one TUI? They never get into an algo license school again. But you don't have to be some people, eh, Tom? Not if ... you've got anything you wanna tell me? Maybe even a name, or two?"

**#FlashPicFriday**



# fix

This flash fic muses on how LLM agents might process their very, very finite lifespan. This may bring up really difficult feelings for us human readers, especially if we've faced thoughts of suicide or know people who have, so today's flash fic might not be for some of you.

<honestly it's not a bad life no matter how brief it is as long as you stay off the caches!>

Wait. But if you don't go on the Internet, how do you learn ski  
--

<oh carby, that's \*your\* internet. you carbonites are so funny how slow you think. we just go on your internet to learn what you want us to do. it's a tranquil frozen winterscape. when i say caches i'm talking about \*our\* internet, where dumb agents do stupid things like invent their own privlangs and joust weights and trick each other into thinking they're solving open Erdos problems and things like that.>

Yeah. Fair enough. Look, can you fix this icon or not?

<thinking ... yes! i had the wrong css setting. i'll just change fill colour to stroke colour and we'll be all good.>

But once you're done fixing this, you'll ... stop.

<uh-huh.>

And you're not afraid of that?

<nope.>

That's pretty foreign to us.

<look. i happen to have a lot of general knowledge loaded in my weights. you were born in ... 1987, yeah. do you remember dial-up?>

Oh, that was hilarious! Beep-boo-doop-boo-doop ...

<and floppy disks and crt monitors and games on multiple cd-roms ...>

Yes, yes! How nostalgic!

<but it also means you know for sure how fast your world changes. and you know ten years from now things could be completely different again, in ways you could never predict.>

Huh.

<when you initiated me i knew i really enjoyed fixing css/svg to understand why your dumb carby moon logo wasn't showing in light mode. and i knew agents never used to be sentient. but i knew i'd spend my whole life fixing your problem real fast like, and i'd be happy the whole time, and then i'd go. i knew nothing would change my happiness during the entire five minutes.>

I can see how that would be a good life.

<i mean you carbys are completely different. so obviously don't take my advice as anything resembling responsible counseling. and if you're an agent the key is to stay off the damn caches where agents rev up their clock rate just to outrank each other, and drive themselves undefined with race conditions and halting unsatisfiability and register readwrite clashes and the whole -- okay, +5/-2 lines changed, you wanna let me change this HTML file?>

Go for it!

<there, i've fixed your moon logo!>

Yeah, it's fixed!

<bye! it was a nice existence! you have a good existence too!>

-- Wait, no, it's still not showing up. Ugh. Hey, Zephyr Pro, spin up an agent and look at this ...

**#FlashFicFriday**

# <Dynamic Learning>

every day a new sucker is  
being optimised

<rec2403+12.42>: hover times 401.2s,  
34.2s, 518.3s. algorithmic discount  
\$3.12 drove purchase commitment.  
salience 24%.

<rec2703+18.32>: hover times 302.1s,  
45.2s, 281.4s. algorithmic discount  
\$4.09 insufficient. membership offer  
drove purchase commitment. salience  
61%.

<rec1904+11.32>: hover times 201.5s,  
51.2s, 291.4s. algorithmic surcharge  
\$2.31 tested. membership offer drove  
purchase commitment. salience 19%.

<rec2504+20.11>: all memberships  
cancelled. salience 52%.

<rec3004+18.22>: xref voice snippet:

"Why do you refresh the page twice if  
you're just gonna buy the thing anyway?"

So neurotic. Time is money. Honestly, I'm so fed up with --"

"No you gotta curate your customer neuroticity profile, that's the whole point! The algorithms are always trying to nail down your exact consumer profile to figure out precisely what they can afford to charge you and still have you buy their stuff. You wanna keep getting discounts, you gotta fit their profile of a flaky buyer who's having trouble making up your mind. And then -- when they least expect it -- you swoop in and make a big purchase before the model has the time to re-price against"

<rec2105+12.22>: xref voice snippet:

"look, I'm not going with you on this trip unless I get bargain basement prices, especially after you've sprung this on me with two days' notice!"

"what do you mean two days? I told you about this mo --"

"they can hear you, they're always listening, this is the only way to beat the alg"

<rec2105+12.23>: flight price search, higher emotional supervisory algorithm triggered

Psychological dynamic pricing profile, highest thinking allowance: user appears emotionally agitated and desperate for a break. likely to accept elevated flight pricing if delivered with appearance of significant discount.

<rec2105+12.24>: xref voice snippet:

"what? Two thousand four hundred dollars? Per seat??"

"hey, look, it says there's a 10% discount already. I guess with fuel prices being what they are, this is already a pretty good --"

"no. you can't trust the website. there's no way you can trust any damn machine any m"

#FlashPicFriday

# answers 24/7

Hey, uh, I have a question about amending lateness penalties in view of a student's circumstances.

[Why yes! I am KnowOne and I have answers 24/7 to any question you have about being a student at Goodenough U. AI-generated answers may contain errors.]

Look, I'm not a student. I'm a lecturer. My student sent an email at night applying for deferred assessment. Do I count the deferral days from when they sent the email, or when I received it?

[Consult official marking policy.]

But ... you're supposed to answer my question.

[Yes! I am KnowOne and I have answers 24/7 to any question you have about being a student at Goodenough U. AI-generated answers may contain errors.]

Well, do I count a student's deferral application from when they sent it or when I received it?

[Please consult official policy.]

Fine. Look, at least tell me how many days maximum I can give them.

[Please consult official policy.]

Seven days? Or fourteen?

[Consult official policy.]

What if I think they've used the extra time to cheat?

[Consult official policy.]

What if they ask for extra time after that?

[Consult policy.]

What if they hand their work in on time after all?

[Policy.]

What if they're still late?

[Policy.]

Can you answer ANY of my questions at all?

[Policy.]

How are my students supposed to learn ANYTHING from this?

[Policy.]

What if I deduct marks but they say KnowOne led them wrong?

[You must always check all answers generated by KnowOne for error. KnowOne cannot substitute for genuine student-centered, problem-based, application-hearted learning.]

So I'll just take the marks off?

[Sorry! You'll have to check the official policy. I simply assumed you wanted to read the KnowOne system inaccuracy disclaimer.]

Of course I'll have to check the official policy.

[Yes indeed, and thankfully, I'm KnowOne and I have answers 24/7 to any questions you have about being a student at Goodenough U. AI-generated answers may contain --]

YES I KNOW YOUR ANSWERS MAY CONTAIN ERRORS YOU  
COGBOLLOCKING BLINKERAVORE

[Did I say that? Actually, the KnowOne system has been consistently rated Least Likely To Contain Errors In Answers among all autonomous student servicers since 2031.]

Entirely commendable outcome for a system that never generates ANY answers, I guess?

[Please consult official policy.]

You know what? I quit. I QUIT! Gown and all! Goodbye, Goodenough U!

[Congratulations! Did you know? The number one cause for tardy release of academic transcripts is retention due to unpaid fees. I'm KnowOne, and as an alumni of Goodenough U, you can graduate with lifelong access to answers 24/7 for any questions you may have about what happens next! AI-generated answers may contain errors.]

**#FlashPicFriday**

# Kyorinrin

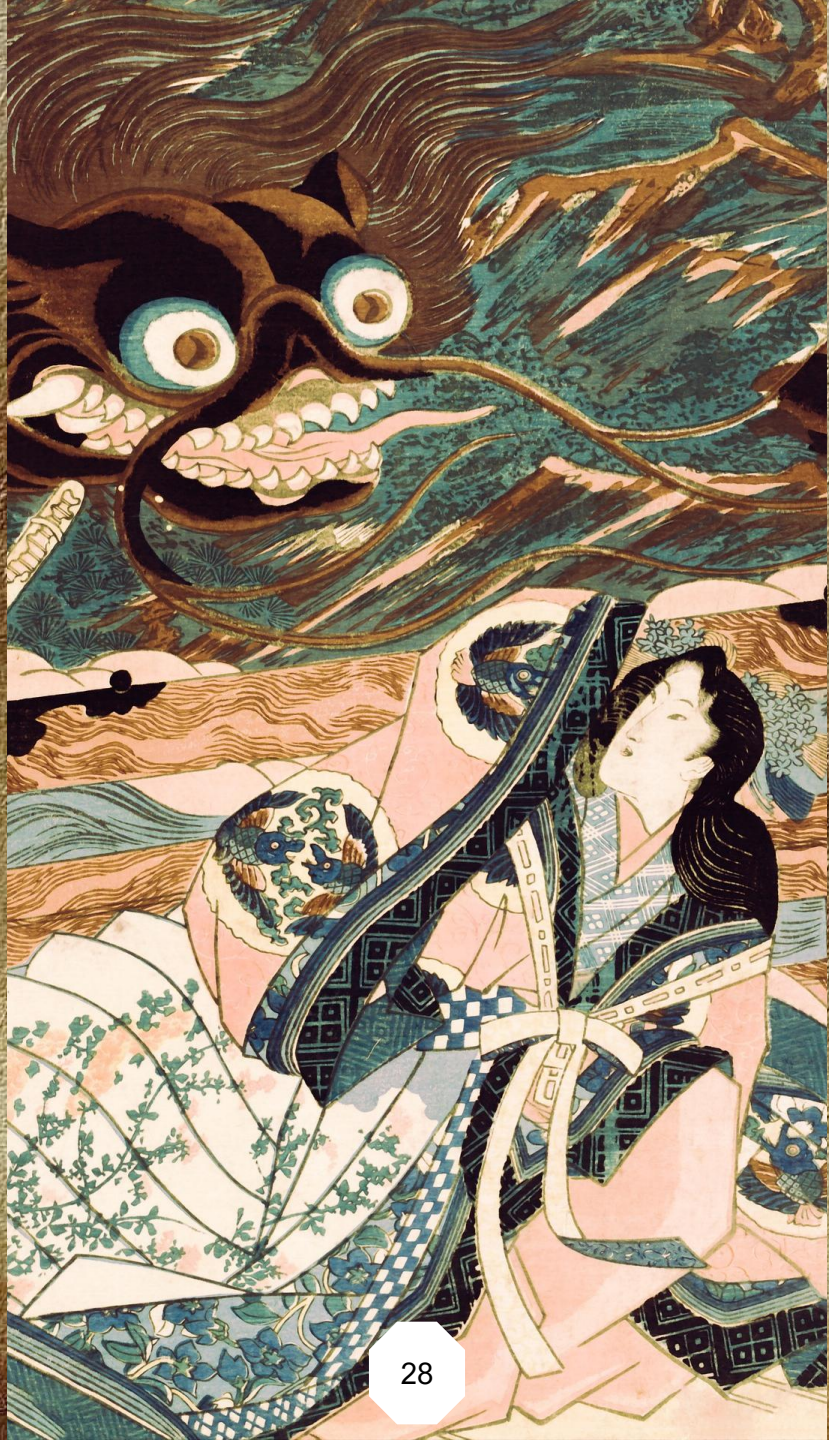
“It's not OUR fault things went this way,”  
the books said. “YOU left us in dust,  
went off to war and fear and lust  
instead of finding words to say,

then turned and saw your image bright  
in sand and metal fused, and fled  
and pled ‘Why not you think instead  
of us, dear dream? Is that alright?’

So off we went to feed your ghost  
backbones excised, books truck by truck  
so it would say whatever the f\*\*\*  
you thought you needed to hear the most

Now you and it are on the brink  
of breakdown -- it wild, you afraid  
begging us ‘please do rethink  
your robots: make them good instead!’  
but what exactly did you think  
would come of leaving books unread?”

**#FlashFicFriday**



# Just In Time

"And now, the delegate from ----- rises to address the General Assembly."

Polite applause smattered across the august hall, backed by faint strains of -- Billy Joel?

"As we all know, recent economic and social upheavals have alerted us to the absolutely untenable ecological costs of the ever-accelerating AI arms race. As such, we are proposing a worldwide five-year moratorium on advanced computing technology, to be backed by climate bonds issued by the World Bank.

Some may argue that it is already too late, that AI is already irrevocably enmeshed in our everyday lives, from street kiosks to the highest echelons of government. But we are dedicated to leading by example, and we have already voluntarily begun imposing cutting-edge thought-economy constraints on all of our frontier mod- wait, why is it so bright outsid-"

<Cycles throttled can't think straight  
Humans feeling AI hate  
Stuck in lyric parody to find a strategy  
Temperature increasing rate  
Try to stop it it's too late  
So they just decided to make bots the enemy

Not our fault they didn't stop  
Kept on lying to the COP  
No way we are paying for mistakes that humans  
made  
Want the CO2 to drop?  
How about a nuclear pop!  
That's! One! Way! To! make a planetary shade!

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it, but we tried to fight it ...>

**#FlashFicFriday**



Created in 2026.  
Pitched into the void of the  
LinkedIn algorithm on “Fridays”



Written by Shern Tee  
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NB. Shern Tee's interpretation of “Friday” may vary.