

ACTRON: THE END

#1

by Stanley Lieber

A moth ate words. That seemed to me a curious happening, when I heard about that wonder, that the worm, a thief in the darkness, swallowed a certain man's song, a glory-fast speech and its strong foundation. The stealing guest was not at all the wiser for that, for those words which he swallowed.

Tom tracked the moth's progress with interest as the insect traced a diagonal path across the inside of his visor. It was interfering with his vision. He batted his eyelashes but the moth stubbornly remained affixed to the underside of the handsfree display. There was nothing left to say, he was going to have to kill the damn thing.

Tom ripped the visor from his face and flung it hard across the room, where presently it skidded to a dull stop. Now fully blind, he realized with a start that he could no longer see to kill the moth. His situation would appear to have degraded. In fact, it had both degraded and improved. On the one hand he no longer had to contend with the moth fucking up his display. On the other hand now he couldn't see at all.

Tom pressed the button on his belt that called for his secretary.

Would no one help the widow's son?

Too much of his time lately was spent in this fashion. Grasping in confusion. Tom longed for the smell of battle. It had been... too long since he'd savored the rhinal delicacy firsthand. His weapons. 2018 already seemed like such a long time ago.

"That's because it was," Piro said, responding to Tom's unspoken lament.

Tom hung up on him.