

## **CYBER**

Computer, respond to voice command.  
Open Telnet.  
Connect: Augustus    Password: Empire  
Look @ Augustus.

@describe.me:

An ivy league grad with a bad Texas accent.  
His daddy's favorite son  
ever since he's become an accidental President.  
He is awake and looks alert.

Oh! I am so sorry!  
This will never do.  
I was very young when I compiled that script  
almost a year ago.  
I thought I could have fun with politics.  
We all know better now.

So let me announce a new Augustus.  
It's time to update our positions  
and make all of cyberspace safe for democracy.  
I am the new improved Augustus.  
A character you can really get behind.  
I am in the process of creating a new, yes, a BRAND NEW Augustus  
and \*you\* can help.  
In honor of the political season  
(and isn't it always the political season?)  
and in honor of the power of the people and of the polls.  
I am asking \*you\*, the ordinary member of the world wide web  
to page me with the qualities that you would like to see.  
I want to be affable,  
I want to be liked,  
I want to be the sort of AUGUSTUS YOU want to look at.  
YOU want to chat with.

Won't somebody talk to me?

Yes, I want to be your bridge to the future.  
My opponent, and he IS my opponent, not my enemy,  
does not want you to vote, does not want you to participate.  
Everyone who tries to contradict me is a part of the Axis of Evil.  
The equation is really very simple.  
Are you my friend?  
Then you are good.  
Are you lurking somewhere on the edge of the map  
in those countries whose names I've never learned

with bad intent, dark skin, and oil reserves?  
You, my friend, might be an Axis of Evil.  
Or was that a plural?  
You, my friend, might be an Axe of Evil!

Power to the People!  
All of the People, especially Suburban Christian Texan sort of People.  
And God bless you, especially if by "God" you mean  
Jesus Christ or any of his immediate family.  
And God bless America, especially if by "America"  
you mean all of the land covered with malls and theme parks.

This AUGUSTUS is for YOU!  
How do you want your leader?  
Tall, dark, swarthy, suave?  
Yes, I will be ANYthing you want.  
I want to be YOUR AUGUSTUS!  
Quick!  
Give me a baby to kiss, here come the cameras.

What's that you say?  
The world wide web is not an American colony?  
Who do you think you are, France?  
America will tell you where America ends and the rest of the world can begin.

Hello?  
Hello?  
Won't anybody talk with me?  
Please don't confuse me with my character.  
This is only a persona.  
Political commentary?  
It is only a ploy to be liked, to be talked to.  
Hello?

Maybe you'd prefer a different character?  
Computer: @morph Missy  
look Missy:

Hesitant and halting, seldom knowing what to say,  
getting it wrong again.  
I am only fourteen years old.  
But again and again I try.  
Again and again something strives within me to be known.  
The trace of a memory, from seventh grade,  
just after school let out and this  
the first warm day after four blizzard months.  
A younger Missy stood outside the school,  
watching the wouldbe track stars run their paces  
when a warm breeze tousled her hair

and a shudder ran through her, I mean, ran through me.  
The slightest shudder of joy and longing and sadness all at once  
and I was shocked into the wildness of spring  
and all the bursting life and lust that eighth grade approaching could promise.  
Then gone.

Just that.

But always afterward Missy has remembered that single moment,  
caught in the arms of a breeze, one with the rush of the world,  
and ever since I have sought out that passion,  
in the eyes of strangers and in the touch of friends,  
at the moment of surrender and through the plodding years  
when wind became merely a mass of moving air.

She seeks it still.

Perhaps in you?

She is awake and looks alert.

If you don't like the President,  
maybe you will chat with a fourteen year old girl?  
And maybe you are a sixty year old man  
pretending you are a twenty year old girl  
pretending to talk to a fourteen year old girl  
who is pretending to be a twenty year old boy.  
How very M. Butterfly!

Cyber sex is absurd.

And since I do not have a camera,  
text alone must get us through.  
Words alone are certain good,  
but for sex something more is necessary.

Won't somebody talk to me?

Won't somebody talk to me?

Is there nowhere in all the world wide web  
one so romantic as to say simply: hello?

I have a third character, you know?

@morph Ed

look me

Edward the Second.

A noble lord who loved his wife and child,  
who held his friends more dear than blood,  
deserted now by wife and child and friends,  
hounded to heath and muddy ditch, hiding in monastery and hovel  
against the day my usurping lords discover me.

(They will, they always do,

and then in prison murder me,

and then again and again I relive this dream.)

I stand before you without silk or armor,

without the arrogance bred in me by my father,  
Hammer of the Scots, bloody wily Edward.  
My wits my only companion, and those dull.

Soon enough, perhaps tonight, they will discover me again  
and make this life repeat, this hunt,  
this feeble search for some friend or some escape.  
There was a summer dawn close by in Caernarfon  
when a page, a man basebred but lovely,  
of brotherly eyes and carpenter's hands,  
master of horse and tercel and bow, taught me.  
Gaveston, my other self.

And happens again the hunt, the search,  
the finding, and torture and taunting and final thrust of blade,  
over and again because we are condemned here to repeat our lives.

I am King Ned,  
lover of beautiful music and men and words and horses  
and bright banter and brave touch and fearless laughter and dance.  
Come!  
Before those furious lords discover us,  
let us talk and toast and dare this instant  
wager all it cost to enter!

He is awake and looks alert.

Hello?  
Hello?  
Won't anybody chat with me?  
In my real life I grew tired  
of all the masks and came here  
where reality becomes whatever we type.  
Bored with all the masks  
and the cybersex  
and the cable bills,  
I am left with myself staring at a blank screen  
where my face is reflected as a blur above the keyboard.  
I thought I had a life that once I guess I was able to hack.  
Hello?  
Hello?

How did I let my life become  
this empty echo on the screen?

Somebody talk to me!  
Somebody talk to me!