

Two Machine Portraits

Flags and a taut fence discipline the mountain pasture
where giant upturned mushrooms gape mildly at the sky
catching otherworld pollen. Poppy-smooth or waffle-ironed, each
armature
distils wild and white sound. These, Earth's first antennae
tranquilly angled outwards, to a black, not a gold infinity,
swallow the millionfold numbers that print out as a risen
glorious Apollo. They speak control to satellites in high
bursts of algorithm. And some of them are tuned to win
answers to fair questions, viz. What is the Universe in?

How many metal-bra and trumpet-flaring film extravaganzas
underlie the progress of the space shuttle's Ground Transporter
Vehicle
across macadam-surfaced Florida? Atop oncreeping house-high
panzers,
towering drydock and ocean-liner decks, there perches a gridiron
football
field in gradual motion; it is the god-platform; it sustains the
bridal
skyscraper of liquid Cool, and the rockets borrowed from the
Superman
and the bricked aeroplane of Bustout-and-return, all vertical,
conjoined and myth-huge, approaching the starred gantry where
human
lightning will crack, extend, and vanish upwards from this
caravan.