

Acute Amusement

by Bill Yarrow

Nostalgia is irrational. There's no good reason why I miss rotary phones as I do. Or toll booths. Or super 8 film. Or correction tape. Half dollars. When I was ten years old, my father gave me globules of mercury to play with. I used it to shine nickels and quarters and Roosevelt dimes. Endless fun dividing it with a stick and watching it recombine, smashing it into droplets, squishing it in my hand, the little silver bubble no longer imprisoned in a thermometer but liberated to roll anarchically over glass countertops and ash floors. When I was tired of playing, I'd push the blob into a test tube, put it in my top pocket. The proximity of mercury is inductively comforting.

