

The Philosophers' Problems

by Sean Ferrell

The day the thinking factory imploded everyone for miles knew there was a problem. The sound of the walls crumbling in upon themselves was heard for miles, or perhaps it wasn't. Who's to say except those who heard. Nevertheless, the destruction of the factory brought ruin to the town which had previously only conceived of ruin as the opposite of un-ruin. Now they knew different.

The philosophers, now without a place to work, wandered the streets. Their beards held bits of debris: pencils, unfinished logic puzzles, errant thoughts. A sapling tree lay on the ground near the site where the factory had stood. Bits of dialogue echoed off the neighboring warehouses. Inside, behind their large windows, lay the last boxes of forms and principles that the factory had produced.

Where once the assembly line had kept each school of thought in its place, now all wandered across each others paths. Philosophers with nothing in common met, reached out for help from each other, found nothing recognizable. Aristotelians angered the Platonics. Heideggarians refused to acknowledge the Neitzcheans. The tautologists struggled to agree with anyone but themselves. From out of nowhere a Freudian wandered by, calling for his mother.

Conversations broke down in games of oneupsmanship, useless attempts to out philosophize the other.

"What are we going to do?" Asked one.

"What are we going to?" Responded the other.

"What are we?"

"What are?"

"What?"

"Go to hell."

One of the materialists waved to the others and said, "I have an idea." An idealist punched him, hard, in the teeth.

"This is no time for sarcasm," he thought.

Each of them gathered a brick and held it close to his chest, pushing it, as if trying to bring it close to his heart. As if replacing his heart. They moved among each other, looking down at their bricks, each unwilling to acknowledge the others, each speaking quietly to their bricks, certain that if they spoke low enough, quietly enough, the pieces of the building might hear and understand, and spread the word to the other pieces, and rebuild into something better than before.

