The General
by stephen hastings-king

Where the General is, the world is data and patterns and signatures. It is a map of interactions. It is continuous motion.

Were it not for his position, The General would marvel at its unlimited invisible extension and watch the unspooling of the algorithms that search for the signatures of danger across the everywhere.

Others tend to that.

Because he can, sometimes he sends algorithms in search of his children.

He examines their transactions and delivery times to be sure everything runs smoothly. He checks their gasoline purchases and estimates the mileage they get.   He follows their summer trips to the shore.

He compiles their communications.

He thinks: "The children communicate with others far more than with me."

They seem far away.

He alters the communication algorithm to include their interactions with him. The results reassure.

The General is a smiling cherub peering down from a balcony in the night.

But soon he is worrying again.

How much slips away.

He feels weightless.

He wonders what he is doing.