

hands are the assistants and he is merely supervising. He is very aloof and his hands are very involved. His face looms large in the great magnifying lens cast over the proceedings. He holds his head far back, farther than seems sound. The light on his brow is very strong and he spends quite a bit of time reeling it in or extending it—it's on a kind of armature. He also has a great deal of other kinds of equipment and sometimes he is trimming bonsai trees when I enter, which he does with his hands further inside the foliage than seems sound.

As he worked on my teeth, (and I have told him that I find the dental work relaxing, so he can take his time and answer the phone if he needs—in fact, once he left me in the dam to go snip a bonsai tree thing that was bothering him—I looked up and felt great pleasure that he felt at ease to travel around the room if he wanted—when I laid back down, I could see how content I was in the overhead mirror) as he worked on my teeth, I became very melancholy that I wasn't a computer programmer any longer and I started to tear up even.

You see, I had very flippantly deleted everything. My programs, (my code,) my blogs, my accounts, my words and stories. And what for? Oh, just because it was time to move on. Right?

I stared at the overhead mirror.

Boy, this is feeling manipulative. I should write like this. This isn't as important as all that. Tearing up—what a bunch of heart string manipulation. This is why I didn't like *The Book Thief*. What does an Australian guy know about living under the Nazis? (Gah, I don't want to be cynical. You can't call everything "cheesy," something has to effect you.)

Dr. Bloodcastle clicked off the light and I was done. He sat me up and said looks good. I took out my notebook. Wasn't much to write down this time. I asked him a question about mouthwash. Nothing big.

Then, he goes, "What's happening with the island?"

Hah. Well, okay.

So—since 1998, I have operated a private e-mail listserv from a machine called "georgie" which has lived its life in a number of unfinished basements across the United States. I know this machine well. It is an old, stalwart Pentium II in a battle-worn and unmarked grey metal box. Were the machine at hand right now, I think I could push the button on the 3.5" floppy drive, ejecting a beige disk labelled