

Deus ex Machina

Erika Saunders

In the machine –

He-hey! They all
slay the dragons,
the beasts. Each
night, robins fly
against greed,
need, tyranny in
fantasy. America,
my America, for

I Am-eric(k)a wears
the face of Enron,
Omicron, Amazon.
Exxon's boots
and barbed wire
stamped across
the land, primed
and pumped, ready

for overflow. I
watched, and said,
"I must go." But
couldn't find my
feet to stand,
so accustomed
to sitting at the
machine. Building

fantasy worlds
where we slay
isolation and longing.
Groundhog Day
should have been
filmed in '84
because this
is a love song,
after all, my love.

Let's all be the god
in the machine.
The web unfurls
in space to spy
on time. All the red
and blue pulsing
wires, shielded

as they are from
the su(o)n. It sees
red. We all see red.
It takes the human
eye to translate
the image to cooler
tones like those
of You and Me. Who

wouldn't want to be
the god swinging
from the rope?
I absolve you,
my child. Let's build
our fantasy world,
mining databases
and taking the average

to stay away from
entropic exhaustion.
(Lord Kelvin would
approve.) Because

this is a love song,
my love, the kind
of love song where
the protagonist

grows a heart. Do not
fear, for all love
is transformative
according to Disney.
I run my hand up
the back of your shirt
to feel silken skin against
silken skin, even as we're

shielded in synthetic
cotton. Let the oceans
boil and the plastics
pop. Do you hear it,
my love? The dog
is always scratching
at the door. Never
wanting in. Always
wanting out.