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## A Visitor from the Provinces

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Authors	Stephenson, William
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## A Visitor from the Provinces

See, feel. My skin maps my journey. This scar?  
A gift from the orbital wire. These Keltic knots?  
Ink, pricked in with a treadle-driven needle  
by a shaman in a studio near Mankestar.  
This burn? Sparks; a Sheffeel foundry fire.

Look how I shimmer. Northers' faces flicker,  
glitchy as CGI, but all seems digitized  
beyond the ring road frontier. It's like one  
borderless low-res monitor, from horizon  
to evening star. I've watched stormclouds

shuffle like touchscreen icons over Kumbria,  
seen crowds on the terraces at Old Traffer  
fracture into pixellated planes and angles,  
fizz like the scrolling streets and jungles  
of a Microsoft-era first person shooter.

Yet Northers are flesh! We laugh, shout, sigh,  
chatter in Yorktongue, Brummagem and Jordi.  
Our blood's rusty. Our tears taste of the sea.  
I know, for last summer, I kissed raw salt  
from the woaded cheek of the lass

I left in Rockdale. My Trace. We married;  
keyed vows into a consecrated laptop  
preserved from the petroleum age.  
Our son, Arun, is already a novice priest,  
learning to subroutine, firewall and hack.

I have trekked leagues on fur-wrapped feet,  
crossed the M25 kill lanes, climbed the wire,  
shed skin, to transmit to you this heresy:  
*The North is real, Lunnan the simulation!*  
*Your city is a matrix of zeroes and ones.*