

## The Poet in the Software

I speak directly to my microphone  
and the program sometimes freezes,  
but it can thoroughly enjoy  
my plosives when it pleases.

The manual says to train my system  
to know my speech from repetition.  
“Obedience to your enunciation  
will increase with composition.”

## II

I say, write a poem  
The screen displays: Write a porn  
Venus de Milo,  
    Venus Tomato  
This is romanticism,  
    Prevent the system.  
Send mail;  
    Sent whale  
Please resend,  
    Fleas descend  
I thought I could write;  
    I thought I code right  
Pay attention,  
    Way more tension  
...worship,  
    ... horseshit  
... who represents me?  
    ... whore presents me?  
I'm trying to be analytical,  
    I'm vying to be elliptical  
Listen as I think aloud,  
    Listen assey, stink allowed

### III

Even becomes Ivan -- surely a poet's name.  
I despair my poet will never learn  
that too, and to and two  
are not at all the same.

Correct that, I cry; Ivan offers nine choices  
He's been polite enough to erase  
my swear words, sneers and  
epithets from his database.

Correct that! I assert my prerogative;  
but Ivan merely grows uncooperative

*Words not found in text*  
is what he displays next

### IV.

I'll be succinct  
    We are synced.  
How do you field?  
    How do *you* feel?  
I'm all write.  
    I'm all right.  
Act you ally, I'm feeling a hole.  
    Actually I'm feeling whole.

Now it's been a month  
since installation, maybe to  
My voice is horse, my patience tin,  
but I am less tents, Ivan two

Ivan doffs his Caps, he toes each  
line, he nose each vowel to steel  
I think its fare to say I've  
brought Ivan to heal.

**Shauna Singh Baldwin**