

Industrial revolutions (1978)

“I sell here, Sir, what all desire, Power”
Said Matthew Boulton, of himself and Watt:
And power men bought, to build with steam a tower
To reach the skies. “What if the navies rot?”
Their grandsons saw a Crystal Palace full
Of every patent thing that steam had made
For use, ornate, or simply cock-and-bull.
And Faraday’s babe* was hardly even laid.

Now electronics rules the alphabet,
With “Mu for micro-, n- for nano-, p- for pic-“;
Will there be whiskers at “the Crystal” yet?
Or will the ship of State spring such a leak
That superseded brains will see the sense
Of trusting to machine intelligence?

* “Mr Faraday, of what use are your experiments?”
“Madam, what us the use of a baby?”