

Manuscript found in a Tape Canister

John A. Kogut

Printed in Datamation, January 1980

Shared by



Home of **DistilPure™** MSM Crystal Flakes
<http://www.pinemsm.com>

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over a quaint and curious program written long before,
While I nodded, nearly sleeping, suddenly I heard a beeping
From my console; bugs a-creeping, creeping in the system core.
'Twas some misstroke I had entered, errant thumbstroke not
 well-centered,
Just a typo, nothing more.

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
When each dying disk pack member's fate was listed on the door.
Eagerly I wished the morrow. Hopefully I'd seek to borrow
Program guides to ease my sorrow, from the dump piled on the
 floor.
For my small glitch had created endless loops of cosines, fated
To be rooted evermore.

Deep into my console peering, long I sat there wondering,
 fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams all mortal programmers had dreamt
 before,
That some subroutine, much needed, had my core space just
 exceeded,
And was therefore rudely weeded, banished from the system core,
Exiled to where none can forage, software limbo, federal
 storage,
There to languish evermore.

Had this ghastly curse befell me? CPU time now would tell me.
Missing code could very well be anywhere... I must explore.
LIB.FORTRAN, LIB.CARDDECK, even secret LIB.STARTREK,
All these DSN's I queried. To the last they came up poor.
One last hope, a final member: biorhythms for November,
Only this and nothing more.

But I knew there was insurance for my toil and hard endurance.
Nervously I sought assurance, hopefully I did implore,
Day and hour, nay, each second, when the grand machine had
reckoned
I had backed up all my labors safe within the system core.
For eons it did cogitate, then printed out that fateful date:
Quoth the console: "Nevermore."