



Destructive Environment

- Ridwan Rahman

It was my senior year and I had a grand scheme.
 I would make the robot of everyone's dreams.
 I would enter it into the robotics contest.
 I would make sure mine would be the all-around best.

I would need unique stuff to optimize my design,
 But there were impeding constraints in the contract I'd signed.
 This proved to be an obstacle, but my robot would live.
 Just nothing too dangerous, nothing explosive.

With this in mind, I gathered all my supplies,
 From wood, gears, and springs to some borrowed glass eyes.
 But as I threw in the duct tape, I realized that
 A shape for the robot was the material I lacked.

I sat in my thinking chair, and I fought with my thoughts,
 But the only decent idea I got was a simple dot.
 But that dot soon ballooned, took shape, and grew bigger
 Until it was distinguishable as a large sphere.

So I started on this gigantic robotic sphere.
 I gave it three glass eyes and two noses, but no ears.
 The exterior was easily finished, but the inside
 Was where the first-prize-worthy stuff would reside.

I sat again in my chair and thought of rubber tires.
 I pondered on teeth, on cameras, and liars.
 I thought about cleaning and sources of pain.
 How were these integrated? Allow me to explain.

First was the jack and convenient spare tire.
 Very handy for cars when a nail goes haywire.
 Next were the toothpaste and the toothbrush,
 To keep teeth from becoming painful pieces of mush.

A camera was placed behind each glass eye
 As helpful surveillance to catch those who defy.
 And if they try to deny it and hide what is real,
 The lie-detector would make the truth hard to conceal.

With these functions inside, I just had to win.
 I couldn't wait for the competition to finally begin.
 I folded down my backseat and placed padding everywhere.
 The prize-winning robot would be sitting there.

After a long drive, I came to the contest hall.
 Registration complete, robot set up at the wall.
 Final adjustments made, I surveyed my creation.
 Now to just sit back, gloat, and be patient.

But my careless self overlooked the clumsy fool
 Whom I'd sat beside. His programmable mule,
 With a mechanized bray and a rock-hard kick,
 Sent my masterpiece flying; I began to feel sick.

The fool muttered an apology and went after his mule,
 But I was deaf to his words and my warm feelings had cooled.
 I stared at my late robot, all in pieces and shattered.
 With all potential gone, nothing else even mattered.

I tried to repair it as well as I could,
 But it all came completely up to no good.
 As I sadly looked back at the fool I'd sat beside,
 I realized the mistake that had cost me my prize.

I left the hall before the contest even began.
 I carried my poor creation to the back of my van.
 I fell into my seat, and my mind was made up then:
 I would never sit next to such a fool again.

*Choose wisely the ones with whom you associate.
 For those who choose wrongly, destruction awaits.*
