

A VISIT FROM ST. BASIC

'Twas the night before Christmas. Throughout my computer room,
Not a creature was stirring — (That line you'd assume.)
The CRTs sat in a state of despair —
Just hoping St. Basic soon would be there.
The teletypes slept — computers in bed
While visions of "Do-Loops" danced through their heads.

Me in my P.J.s, my wife in her gown
Were rather upset 'cause the system was down.
When way down the hall there arose such a clatter
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.

In one nano-second (well . . . maybe 'twas two)
I was back to my hardware, my prized CPU.
The moon on the screen of my new CRT
Reflected so bright, like day I could see!
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But a *huge* floppy disc and a man growing near!

"Flying carpet from East," I murmured and cried;
But no, Saint Basic himself had arrived.
The huge disc was powered by micro's in a train,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name:

Now Imsai, now Apple, now Intel and MITS!
On Heathkit, on Kim, (and of course) Tektronix!
From the big IBMs to the hobbyist's SOL
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!!!

As human beings that, when hit with current, fly
When putting fingers in outlets, mount to the sky,
So down to my room, that company flew
With some software and hardware (and Saint Basic, too).

And then in a twinkling I heard on the floor
The squeak of his shoes as he opened the door.
As I drew in my head and turned it aside,
My computerist's room he walked right inside.

He was dressed all in jeans from his head to his toes
(Where he got all that denim, nobody knows).
Machine on machine he had stuffed in a sack
And he looked like a peddler opening his pack.

He was rather small — a runt, if you please,
But his eyes were lit up like big LEDs.
His hair was unkempt, but I didn't mind that,
I just sat there drooling at that big hardware sack.
His face was quite thin — like the rest of his bod
And pardon the word, but he looked like a clod!

A listing of length he had stuffed in his pocket.
I'm not very sure, but I think 'twas called ROCKET.
A program tape he held tight in his teeth
And it wrapped 'round his head like an Arabian Sheik.

He looked rather tired and needed a shave,
But all of these faults I quickly forgave.
A wink of his eye — A twist of his head
Convinced me right off I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word but went straight to his work.
Fixed all my equipment then turned with a jerk.
And closing the lid of his tool chest behumped
He picked up his sack — out the window he jumped.

He hopped on his disc — then input one line:
For Q equals one to a hundred and nine.
Flashed a huge CRT with a mighty big byte:
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!!!"

By Jon Gauger