

Simon says, when I was a child I salted a slug. Its death was harsh; it rolled and steamed. I did not think about the humid world I killed in it. But now that I am a robot, I think that the world lives in slugs as in children, in bushes, in leopards. In robots. A death is a death. But this is not altogether an obituary.

Simon says, tell a story. Say that a boy falls down a well in a robot's head and comes up in his heart. (Define a heart as a place where a system of organization meets the complexity of the world.) Say that the robot says, "Call me Simon," and he is; and I am. This story was Simon's story, but it became mine, and now it is yours as well.

Simon says, look at this page, salt-white. The vocabulary of this story is stirring there: "robot," "Simon," "headhunters," "salt," "fumes," "story." Simon says, pick up a handful of parts. Test them. Are they fair, intact, gleaming?

This is a laboratory, so experiment. Simon says, revise this story, or make a better one. Title it "Simon Says."