

THE SOUND AND THE PICTURE

Peter Austin

Back in the days when it mattered to vote,
'Big Eye' existed but lacked a remote;
Buttons were all that you got, on a panel—
Turn on and off, choose the volume and channel.

Surfing was done at a close-quarter crouch,
Not with your feet up, at ease on the couch;
Even migrating from Falwell to Springer
Tortured your haunches and blistered your finger.

Came the remote—with a cable, back then,
Able to take on the shade of your den,
Blend so convincingly into the flooring
As to be tripped on and ripped from its mooring.

Gone is the cable, replaced by a ray.
It wouldn't get in a walrus's way,
And the most novelty-hungry of gluttons
Couldn't complain of a shortage of buttons.

Most are as useless as strings on a flute;
That, though, could never be said of the mute.
Ah, to lie prone on the sofa, inertial,
Waggle a finger and gag a commercial!

Doesn't that seem like the acme of bliss?
Soft, though: *one* button outdoes even this,
Earning unparalleled freedom from stricture.
It puts an end to the sound *and* the picture!

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