

# The Ideal Person

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When we returned to the shop  
after lunch, we were surprised  
to discover the ideal person  
totally assembled, looking similar  
to some of our earlier designs.  
Hands, a bowtie, paper clips,  
tear ducts – things with, things  
without – all put to use. Who  
did this? we collectively asked.

No one answered, except the ideal  
person himself. “I’m guaranteed,”  
he said, “I’ve been given...,”  
His language trailed off, and other qualities  
he must have believed to be everlasting  
began to collapse around him.

“Let’s dismantle it, start over, locate  
what made it work in the first place,”  
I said. We all agreed  
it must be a parts problem --  
maybe this time a real heart instead of  
a spigot, lips instead of a spit valve.

And so we proceeded to again look  
at everything we’d collected,  
try to select the best possible parts  
to build the best possible person.

Yet the mystery remained. How did  
the ideal person get built without us?  
The famous Screw Instead of Nail Theory,  
and Wilson’s Part B, Second Cause of all  
Things Theory, were offered as possibilities.

When Paulsen raised The God Theory  
everyone laughed. We were makers,  
after all, had studied at the best schools  
with the very best makers of our time.  
Besides, if there were such a thing as a God,  
all of us would be trembling, wouldn’t we?  
I felt a little something in my hand. The others  
already had resumed the vast undertaking.