

Manuscript found in a Tape Canister

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Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over a quaint and curious program written long before,  
While I nodded, nearly sleeping, suddenly I heard a beeping  
From my console; bugs a-creeping, creeping in the system core.  
'Twas some misstroke I had entered, errant thumbstroke not  
    well-centered,  
Just a typo, nothing more.

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,  
When each dying disk pack member's fate was listed on the door.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow. Hopefully I'd seek to borrow  
Program guides to ease my sorrow, from the dump piled on the  
    floor.  
For my small glitch had created endless loops of cosines, fated  
To be rooted evermore.

Deep into my console peering, long I sat there wondering,  
    fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams all mortal programmers had dreamt  
    before,  
That some subroutine, much needed, had my core space just  
    exceeded,  
And was therefore rudely weeded, banished from the system core,  
Exiled to where none can forage, software limbo, federal  
    storage,  
There to languish evermore.

Had this ghastly curse befell me? CPU time now would tell me.  
Missing code could very well be anywhere... I must explore.  
LIB.FORTRAN, LIB.CARDDECK, even secret LIB.STARTREK,  
All these DSN's I queried. To the last they came up poor.  
One last hope, a final member: biorhythms for November,  
Only this and nothing more.

But I knew there was insurance for my toil and hard endurance.  
Nervously I sought assurance, hopefully I did implore,  
Day and hour, nay, each second, when the grand machine had  
reckoned  
I had backed up all my labors safe within the system core.  
For eons it did cogitate, then printed out that fateful date:  
Quoth the console: "Nevermore."