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The Wonderful Family Machine

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Mark Katzenberger

THE WONDERFUL FAMILY MACHINE

Long live the wonderful family machine!
Government inspected, factory selected,
 Dr. Spock corrected.
Pre-sanitized, sanforized, absolutely analyzed
Complete with a sixteen year guarantee of satisfaction
Plug it into a convenient suburb
 and start it functioning.

Insert a nice neutral newborn.
From the first sound of bleating,
 appear pastel plastic pacifiers
 bought on a grocery store shelf
or a Playtex Baby Nurser,
 most like mother herself
—but not quite
You see, children must be protected at an early age
so, when complete, they will slide over
 to the neighborhood drug store
 to secretly savor silicone beauties
 on the shiny paper porno magazines
At the “correct” times, it is furnished with:
alphabet blocks in all the sixteen colors
 of a box of Crayolas
A little record of the syrupy sweet story
 of a sadistic killing, under the guise of
 “Who’s afraid of the big bad wolf?”
mass produced pencil boxes, with a list of
 presidents on the top,
 Required for the pre-fabricated school system
The benevolent color TV,
 where Big Bird teaches the alphabet,
 Mannix shows murder,
 and Johnny brags why he only has only one cavity.
an electric security blanket
 called Mother
a six to eight-thirty weeknights plus Saturday and Sunday
 puncheared timeclock
 called Father

But after the guarantee expires,
 you will find that the once solid base
 is just a plasterboard shell
like the giant chocolate easter bunny
 that's hollow.
and those blue sputtering sparks are the false precepts
 shorting out the common sense module.

OH, that wonderful family machine is falling victim
 to truth decay.