

# The Unabomber tells all

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It's usually true, I guess, *ex nihilo, nihil fit*;  
but not in set theory. There, in the *beginning*:  
innocent  $\emptyset$   
but {nothing up either sleeve: for notice  
the quote marks to come}: " $\epsilon$ ", a lonely  
chunk of hieroglyph, and presto, a universe.  
Admittedly, it's only set-theoretic {although  
with transcendental ellipses}; and,  
admittedly, brackets are needed  
{the mathematician's trip wires};  
but we know that singularities {of whatever sort}  
*are by law* tricked into giving birth.

We all begin small, don't we? I started out  
that way: trying to divide by 0; for I noticed  
the essential thing; the smaller  
the denominator, the bigger the quotient.  
Somehow {wouldn't you know it?} 0 is just  
too small;  $\infty$  just too close.

But there's the key, right? Rapid growth?  
Think of the insidious  $f(x) = e^x$ ; boy,  
does *that* start out slowly {logarithmically so}.  
Get to 1, however, and suddenly it's all in a rush  
{surpasses every polynomial, as it turns out}.

Don't get the impression that my interest  
in the relative growth of functions  
is purely formal. Explosions have implications,  
moral ones, no doubt.  
But these are perhaps just details, just  
a question of what remains  
after we've squashed flat the singularity,

smear it out across the furniture  
of the world: given {along the way} an academic  
or 2 a new slant on the means of production  
{the Luddite irony of the prosthesis}.

Do I sound cold-blooded? You forget  
the ascetic beauty in all this:  
Call it an idealization if you will:  
starting from a real point {no width, no length,  
no depth} and expanding in 4-space  
{the equations nonlinear; forgive me  
if I omit them}. Think of something like  
a radially expanding sphere  
muscling its way through its recipient,  
its volume swelling as of  $r^3$ ,  
its surface area as of  $r^2$ . But I digress.

Did I answer all your questions? Probably  
not. You'd like to know: Do I drink? was  
my mother kind to me? why didn't my brother  
want all that money? did I use a hammer  
when I built my house? do I have regrets?