

Surplus Electronics | *Matthias Neeracher*

In fond memory of HSC Electronic Supply
aka “Halted” (1963–2019)

Lured by the
 smoke signals, I chase
the acrid smell of burning solder
 to this bland warehouse.
This is where corporations
 come to die, their bleaching bones
picked up, arrayed, scavenged by makers
 who aspire to tickle the ivories.
Your basic passives: resistors
 fly their colors
other hues capacitors, tattooed
 with their numeric codes.
Through-holes awaiting
 an opening, reels of SMTs, squat
twelve oh sixes; oh two oh ones
 wondering which side is up.
Here the transistors, spidery
 legs trapped by glue strips, there
lurk shelves of vacuum tubes for their
 chance to revive some heirloom radio.
Seven segment displays in
 green and red sneer at the
TFTs while LCDs look on
 for intrepids there's VFDs to try.
You pay your money, takes
 your chances. There's
a test bench, heed the
 signage: Use at Own Peril.
Some military gear, robbed
 of its chance to kill
hoping to serve civilians
 in a more peaceful life.
SPARC servers caught in dot-com
 conflagrations; x86 blades

dulled by age. WiFi routers, antennae
tangled up like dying lobsters.
Dad advises an aspiring
roboticist. A grizzled engineer, maybe
surplus to requirements, himself
reminisces with grey-bearded staff.
I bring my tray and list
up front, pay cash and with
my loot stashed in a paper bag,
emerge blinking into the sun.

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