

Ego by the *Pequod*

Ideal master of our rocketry
Would not be Captain Nemo, still less Bligh.
Ahab, perhaps: staunch purpose in pursuit,
If not of vengeance, then of other goal
Equally self-reflexive. One leg up
In chasing reputation, sought- for whale
A planet; Typee, Omoo, names for moons
And space a nameless Polynesia.
Gas giant Jupiter, struck by a chain
Of asteroids but having, as it were,
No surface, easily reduced the scar.
As unintentional harpoon, chance hit,
We too may vanish in our target, fate
Of going where no man has gone before.
Fame, neared now by a final fuel burn,
Or stumping of an ever-near peg leg,
Is it the mutilated you attract,
Or folly's mutineers who go forth whole?