

# Museum Piece

Boy: *(in a sniveling tone)* I don't get why people ever played old video games. They're boring! No story, no ambience.

Father: *(incredulous, with a tone of alarm)* Have you ever heard of Pacman?

Boy: *(taken aback by the vehemence of his father's response)* Y-yeah...

Father: Think about it. It's like Kafka wrote a Lovecraft story... *Pacman* is the story of a man who wakes up one day to find he is nothing but a mouth.

*[Scene: Pacman in the maze. He says: "No."]*

All his dreams, hopes, desires, sensations... all atavized into a primal consumptive urge. He's trapped in a maze with no exit, but his focus on consumption is so overwhelming, so sensual, that he doesn't even notice.

But in the maze there are ghosts. Departed spirits.

*(turning to his son, as if remembering he wasn't alone)*  
Do you know why they chase him?

Boy:     *(beginning to grow uncomfortable)* N-no?

Father:   Ghosts can't eat...

They envy eaters because food is the domain of the quick, and they've been dead so long they find eating not only depressing, but repulsive.

Then a being appears who is only mouth. Only there to eat. Only there to remind them, with the crunch and gush of its mastications, that they will never again know the warmth of a beating heart or the contentedness of a lover's bed.

So they pursue the mouth, loathing each food pellet as they pass it, hating the fruit that haunts even ghosts—the tantalizing product of whatever mad creator built this labyrinth.

When the mouth eats them, they find an almost erotic solace. Impotent voyeurs, they live vicariously as they twist through the tangled viscera of the mouth-man.

But with each psychic excursion, the ghosts recall their purgatorial state with renewed horror and grow faster, and faster, and faster.

Until the mouth can run no more, and the dead fall upon it. Unable to digest, they destroy. And the mouth, whose curious nerves existed only for sensuous taste

and tactile stimulation, finds those very nerves to be his final torturer as he is ripped into oblivion.

And then... the game begins again.

Boy: (*blanching*) Old games are horrifying.

Father: (*gazing into the offing*) Oh, don't get me started on *Centipede*. ■