

## A Number Without A Name

by George I. Anderson

I used to be known  
as a human being. A person  
back in the day when the word  
meant something real, invoking  
a certain pride and dignity  
in being an individual. A person  
with a heart, a soul, and a name  
everyone knew. And for those who  
didn't know, or else didn't care to know,  
I made it known with an  
unwavering look into one's eye,  
a smile, and an outstretched hand  
to shake, a quick joke  
when least expected that delivered  
a laugh and a smile to everyone's  
dreary Monday, an ear always open  
to a friend who's feeling down,  
an honest opinion or a flattering lie  
whenever the situation called for it,  
a shirt from my back always ready  
to lend to one without, an extra  
pair of hands when one pair  
won't finish the job, and a debt  
promptly paid with my last dime.  
But nowadays my character  
and integrity have been reduced  
like the rest of humanity's, chopped down  
like a sequoia redwood, chipped and  
shredded into numbers, ratios and  
intricate mathematical probabilities  
in a computer telling me how big a piece  
of the American pie I can have. This  
is all that I am now. This is what  
we've all become. A number without a name.

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