

## ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE

reprinted from *The Sadness of Spacemen* (Dreadnaught 1980)

RAGE MADE ME NERVOUS all morning. All morning I had watched the automatic daisies go by me on the assembly line. Raging and raging. I was so sick of sticking on the stamens. For a dollar fifty an hour. Every once in a while I would pick up one of the lilies and it would be one of the true lilies—the kind with human blood or lion's blood in it—and would just hold it trembling in my hand. Wanting terribly to crush it. Even sometimes curling my fists into claws, then just hold it there trembling and trembling. But, as I say, my fear had made me useless. I had centuries of obedience to overcome. What would the tall pink pig wear to its wedding if I crushed this lily? The thought of it nearly overcame me. Can you imagine a wedding pig without a lily and then not cry? For a while I forgot about Marx. I forgot about Engels. I was in fact blinded by my tears. By the time I had finished weeping there was a veritable garden there all bunched up on the assembly line waiting for stamens. Unable to resist the intoxicating perfumes I threw myself back into the task with all the avarice and determination of a mystic and by afternoon was all caught up.