

2007

## I Wanted to Go There

Chris Vola

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Vola, Chris (2007) "I Wanted to Go There," *The Messenger*: Vol. 2007 : Iss. 1 , Article 25.

Available at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol2007/iss1/25>

This Artwork is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Messenger by an authorized editor of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).

If X is the sum of two differentiating equations  
 and if I didn't write the answer in my graphing calculator  
 and if graphing calculators served a purpose  
 and if one of those purposes was paying my bills  
 and if I sold my graphing calculator on eBay  
 and if I got enough money to pay my bills  
 and if I spent the money on a fifth and three dimebags  
 and if I got drunk  
 and if I got stoned  
 and if I got stoned  
 and if Mr. Jones shut off the water  
 and if Mr. Jones shut off the electricity  
 and if Mr. Jones shut off the gas  
 and if I got stoned  
 and if my parents lived in Connecticut  
 and if I took a Greyhound  
 and if we saw a homeless black man passed out in the road  
 and if the kid next to me had an Incredible Hulk blanket  
 and if we stopped in Triangle, Virginia  
 and if we stopped in Baltimore  
 and if we stopped in New York  
 and if my parents were gone for the weekend  
 and if I got stoned  
 and if I slept on the couch in the T.V. room  
 and if I got drunk  
 and if I broke Dad's collection of 19<sup>th</sup>-century whiskey glasses  
 and if my parents came home while I was looking through their closets  
 and if I walked a half-mile to Grandma's condo  
 and if Grandma asked me why the trees look so big this year  
 and if we're one happy family (well sure we are)  
 and if they build a colony on the Moon in 2024  
 and if I wanted to go there  
 and if the shuttle's cost was comparable to flying from Newark to Atlanta  
 and if the density of atmosphere gradually decreases as the altitude increases  
 and if I got sick from space travel  
 and if I vomited on an astronaut  
 and if he hit the wrong button while cleaning his boots  
 and if we got sucked into a vacuum  
 and if vacuum didn't look so slippery  
 and if there was no afterlife in space

*I Wanted To Go There*

and if that idea didn't sound so bad  
 and if most ideas don't sound so bad  
 and if ideas are combinations of words  
 and if words are more fun than calculus  
 then X equals 7.

—Chris Vola

### *The Devil's Payment*

Marcy Dime took her keys out of the ignition and placed them neatly inside her purse. She stepped out of her 2007 Beemer and casually straightened her blouse and bangles. She ran her manicured fingers through the halo of curls around her head, closed the car door, and began walking toward the portico of her spacious three-bedroom condo with the large backyard (she had specifically demanded it—for her extra-large Jacuzzi and matching patio furniture).

But Marcy took her time, playing with a stray sprig of ivy leaning over the stone pathway as she passed. She made a mental note to cut that later. She even took time for the sweet, sultry—sometimes putrid—smell of the golden honeysuckle she grew by the front stairs but had rarely noticed since her early attempts at gardening resulted in something more than dark brown dirt. She was in no hurry. Marcy stopped at the bottom of the front stairs and looked up at the windows. They were clear, clean in fact, and expensive. They had cost close to twenty thousand dollars. That was a bargain compared to their *real* price, of course—the price neither she nor her husband ever mentioned out loud. There was a presence behind them warding off visitors like a dead body on a doorstep. No one came near their property. The postman's heartbeat rose dangerously close to heart attack level every time he opened the mailbox, and settled only when he was around the street corner and out of sight. Neighbors refused to visit and always made excuses with sweat beads beginning to form on their anxious brows. Some were even brave enough to say that the windows bothered them—they were always either too shiny or too shadowy.

Marcy admired her choice in glass and wood frame, but she, too, felt chills run up her spine when she caught sight of them at just the wrong angle. Now, from the bottom of the stairs, they seemed almost normal, ordinary. She didn't feel the chills. Instead she watched them darken a moment; the trees swayed uneasily, and Marcy felt her stomach turn. It took everything in her not to rotate her head and spill her four-star breakfast all over the lawn orna-