Returned to the Earth

Martin Howse

[...] But if they so apply themselves, they must have memory; it is impossible that they should have no remembrance if they are to be benefactors; their service could not exist without memory.

[... on the stars and earth as having soul and perception. Plotinus IV.26]

The Egyptians say that their houses are only hostleries and their graves their houses.

[Diodorus Siculus]
essay The Artist as Site-Seer

A blind or un-thinking imposition on the earth is of more interest and necessity than any scientific attempt to understand, and would thus frame what could be called the multiple workings or origins of the earth.

** 3

Minute rings of a magnetic material, a compound known as ferrite, can be threaded with thin copper wires to form the memory of a simple binary computer. This computational memory, known as magnetic-core or simply core memory, dates back to the mid 1950s and was used for perhaps twenty years as a common, finite storage-medium. A single bit can be stored indefinitely on a single core, ring or toroid, relying on the electro-magnetic properties specific to the ferrite used. The operation of reading that singular bit will destroy the information, reverting any ‘one’ to a ‘zero’.

** 4

The time-traveller arrives at his location as evening falls. Sodium lamps turn on in the nearby Victorian-era ornamental greenhouses, turning from bright white to a pulsating deep amber. It is impossible to see within the greenhouses; the windows are dense with vegetation and spotted with moisture.

She stoops down, scraping the earth in the near light, gently digging a small hollow. She drops into that hole a Morlockian container: a paper-cushioned glass vial containing a solitary toroid ferrite. Hand-threaded with hair-thin copper wire, the ends twice entered the core, were fed out from the apparatus with thicker wire, to be pressed finally into the earth. Why would someone wish to bury a core memory?

** 5
The buried single core memory inspires the forest action, "a return to the earth." The first impulse is to bury a single magnetic-core memory in the earth, and to subsequently pass the entire contents of the author’s hard drive, through or into this core, as binary data. To return it to the earth. The idea is transformed to, perhaps more elegantly, release this same binary information as a series of electrical impulses that could travel into the earth through differentials induced between two metal plates, which are inserted into the ground. This process lasts for 175 days, until the informational content of that hard disk has been exhaustedly returned to the earth.