The window cleaner for the Tower of Babel streaks the glass with broad, cautious strokes, spattering the letters and numbers (which the Tower exudes like sweat) that encrust the panes like distorted pearls into his wash-bucket where he fishes out the ones that have floated to the top after he wrings, and puts them into the pocket of his overalls as he steadily descends, the platform swaying in the hot wind, until he can’t see the sky anymore through the fog and his dizziness subsides and his fingers tremble even though he is back in his quarters now up late playing Battleship against an opponent he doesn’t know and can’t see but (like every night) he plays anyway, drawing a letter and a number from his pocket again and again and plugging them into the grid of this awkward, never-ending game whose progress is slow and drawn-out like trying to converse in the atmosphere of the moon, wondering all the while who is on the other side and where his destroyer is and what’s the use of shooting in the dark and whether there is any meaning or strategy to be gleaned at all from the intricate lattice of characters before him which linger in the scope of his vision even when he shuts his eyes, he sees them, floating about like white blood cells, in his dreams, in his tomato soup and even on the surface of light bulbs just before they go on and he wakes up for work, steadily ascends until he’s high above the fog and this time, just this time, he presses his face to the glass and peers through into the Tower and sees characters, millions of them, billions of them, all written on sheets of paper which litter the floor in indiscriminate piles, and then he actually peers closer and realizes that they aren’t characters at all, but human faces.