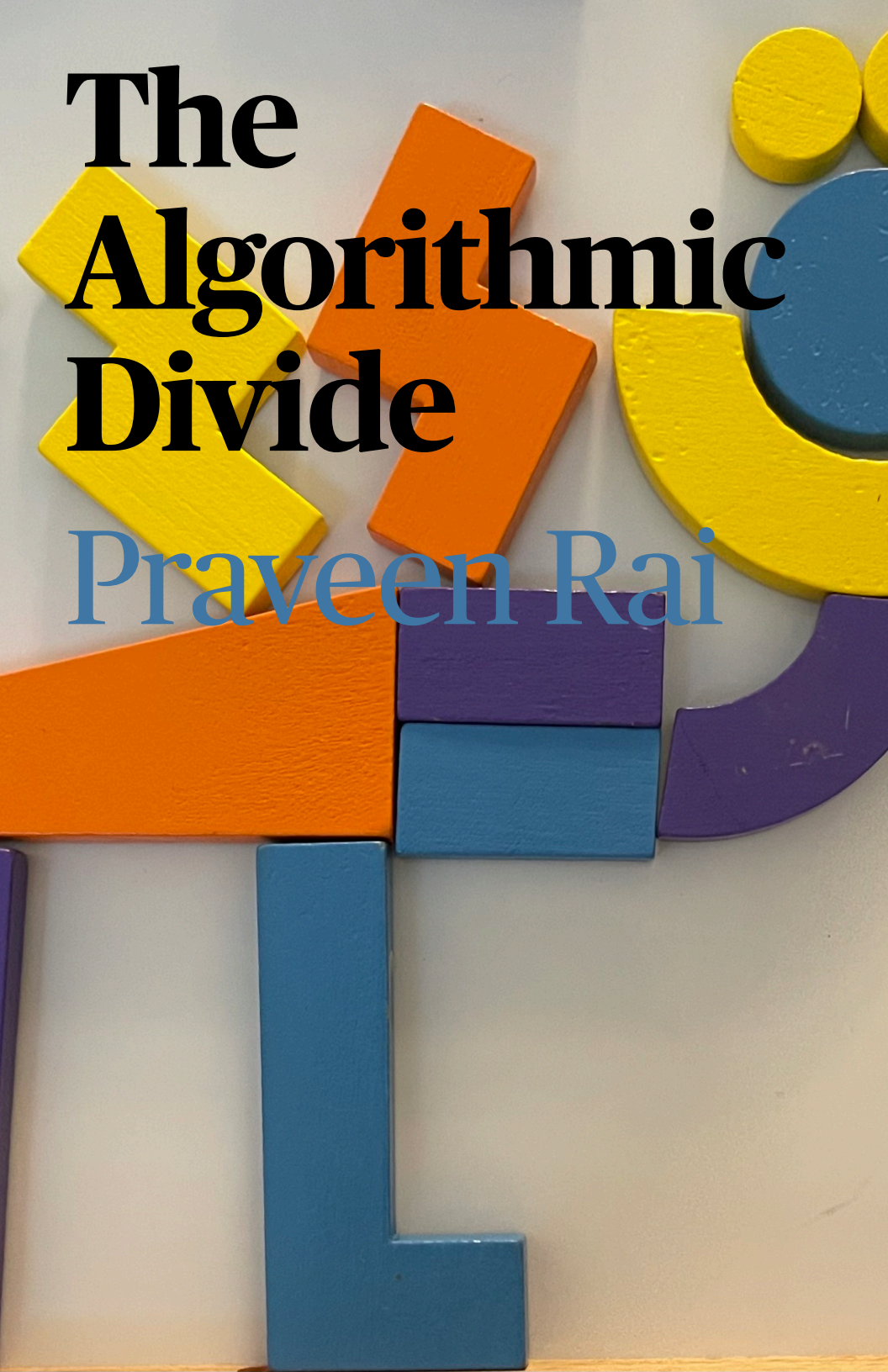


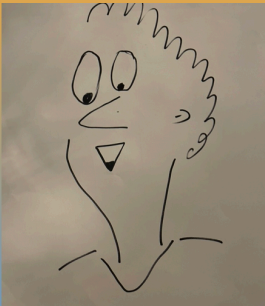
The Algorithmic Divide

Praveen Rai

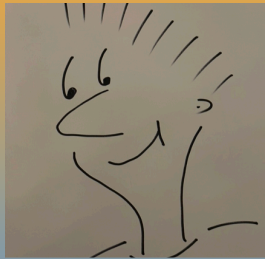


Prologue

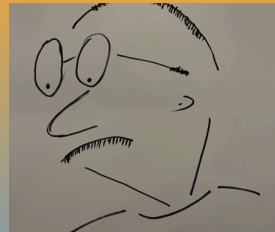
This story captures the three attitudes toward AI coding agents in a satirical way. You have Angus representing the traditional engineer skeptical of AI tools, Moira who's overly dependent on them without fully understanding what they do, and Callum who secretly uses AI but worries about what others might think. All wrapped North American office culture, and subtle humor about the technological divide in software engineering.



Moira



Callum



Angus

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In the gleaming glass fortress of Apex Software Solutions, nestled somewhere between corporate ambition and technological anxiety, three Scottish engineers navigated the treacherous waters of modern software development.

Angus, a senior developer with fifteen years of experience, hunched over his keyboard, methodically typing each line of code as if it were sacred scripture. His plaid coffee mug—a gift from his Glasgow grandmother—sat untouched beside him, its contents having surrendered to room temperature hours ago.

Across the open-plan office, young Moira frantically refreshed her AI coding agent's output, hitting "regenerate" for the fifth time in as many minutes. Her desk was a monument to efficiency—three monitors displaying various code snippets, all AI-generated, none fully understood.

Between them sat Callum, outwardly composed but inwardly churning with worry. He'd been secretly using an AI assistant for his more mundane coding tasks but cleared

his browser history religiously, as if concealing an illicit affair.

"Bloody marvelous," Angus muttered, loud enough for his neighbors to hear. "Debugged this authentication module without any of that AI nonsense. Real engineering, this is."

Moirra glanced up, her eyes wide with the caffeinated determination of someone who'd discovered a shortcut and would defend it to the death. "Actually, Angus, I just had CoProgrammer fix three security vulnerabilities in similar code. Took twelve seconds."

"Aye, and do ye understand what it did?" Angus swiveled in his chair, eyebrows raised like suspicious caterpillars. "Or are ye just copy-pasting like it's a digital buffet?"

Callum winced, closing the AI assistant tab on his second monitor with a discreet click.

"I review everything it generates," Moirra protested, though her eyes darted away. The truth—that she'd pushed code to production last week that included commented instructions to the AI she'd forgotten to remove—remained her shameful secret.

The team lead, Fiona, approached with the measured steps of someone who'd seen too many technological revolutions to be either impressed or alarmed.

"How's the new feature coming along?" she asked, her Aberdeen accent softened by decades in Chicago.

"Almost there," Callum replied, careful to keep his screen angled away from her. "Just working through some edge cases."

Fiona nodded knowingly. "Angus, what about the refactoring task?"

"Done properly," Angus declared, emphasizing the adverb with Celtic pride. "Tested manually. No digital ghostwriters required."

"And Moira?"

Moira's fingers danced across her keyboard, hurriedly modifying the generated code to appear more human-written. "Just finalizing. The AI—I mean, I've made good progress."

Later, at lunch, Callum found himself sandwiched between his colleagues' ideologies in the company cafeteria.

"These machines are just fancy predictive text," Angus proclaimed, stabbing a potato with unnecessary force. "They've never debugged a production issue at 3 AM with the CEO breathing down your neck."

Moira rolled her eyes. "That's so last decade, Angus. I wrote—well, implemented—an entire microservice yesterday."

"And how many tests did ye write for it?" Angus challenged.

Moira suddenly became very interested in her salad.

Callum cleared his throat. "Maybe there's a middle ground? Using these tools when appropriate, but still maintaining our expertise?"

"Spoken like someone with something to hide," Angus chuckled, but there was no malice in it. "Is your coding assistant picking your lottery numbers too?"

Callum's face flushed. "I might occasionally... consult... certain resources."

"Ha!" Moira exclaimed. "I knew it! Even old-school Callum's embraced the future."

"Consulting isn't surrendering," Callum defended. "It's like having a junior developer who never sleeps or complains about the coffee."

As they returned to their digital battleground, Fiona watched from her office, smiling slightly. She'd seen this before—with version control, with agile methodologies, with cloud computing. The names changed, but the human comedy remained constant.

Some feared the new, some fetishized it, and the wisest found balance somewhere in the middle—right where progress had always lived.