

Google

by [Scott Moncrieff](#) in the [May 18, 2004](#) issue

He eases into the barber's chair, closes his eyes,
relaxes as the lather warms his face, remembers
what it was like before they found out he knew . . . everything

His associates had always been impressed that he read
a dozen papers and a chapter of Dickens before breakfast,
remembered their birthday and preferences for coffee,

could announce the heat index in Tehran and the latest numbers
of the Nikkei Exchange, the whereabouts of Jane Goodall
and all the positions for G7alt on the guitar,

but it wasn't until he let slip that this was only
results 1-10 of about 63,000 in .17 seconds
that they began to imagine his commercial possibilities.

He remembers signing the contract, watching them build the tower,
the miles of petitioners hiking switchbacks up the mountain,
the ceaseless Post-its, his fingers aching

from hours of scribbling, head pounding with another inquiry
about the Kennedys, a recipe for chocolate cream pie,
the weight of the pope's hat, where to buy Ginsu knives.

He returns from his shave to find 2.3 million
"while you were out" messages obscuring his door,
straightens his multicolored tie, notices

his reflection in the window: the smartest man on earth,
the wonders of the world at his fingertips,
a name on his desk that suggests infinity

and the babbling of an infant.