*The Adding Machine*

Elmer L. Rice

Shrdlu

(Currently dead; most likely in his thirties)

Every Word I speak is the truth, Mr. Zero. I am the foulest, the most sinful of murderers! You only murdered you employer, Mr. Zero. But I—I murdered my mother. I see the whole scene before me so plainly—it never leaves me—Dr. Amaranth at my right, my mother at my left, the leg of lamb on the table in front of me and the cuckoo clock on the little shelf between the windows. Well, as I started to carve the lamb—did you ever carve a leg of lamb? It’s very difficult on account of the bone. Well, I raised my knife to carve the leg of lamb—and instead I cut my mother’s throat!

Do you think there can ever be any peace for such as we are—murderers, sinners? Don’t you know what awaits us—flames, eternal flames! There’s no escape—no escape for us, I tell you. We’re doomed! We’re doomed to suffer unspeakable torments through all eternity. It won’t be long now! We’ll receive our summons soon.