

electrical cables feeding into the Station. It has a squat, brutish look, disguised by cushions which allow it to be used as a bench. There is a TV set, kept out of the way when not in use. The arrangement of tables and chairs is flexible.)

*(At rise: The stage is dark but for a single shaft of light on **CHIEF BROMDEN**. He is a huge, bull-muscled Indian who stands six and a half feet, but when people are about carries himself like a small man. Head cocked, he is listening. Vague and milky light-patterns wreath and intertwine across the stage.)*

(There comes the soft, puissant thunder of machinery and, contrapuntally, the pinging rhythm of electronic music. Behind the glass of the darkened Nurses' Station, colored lights pulse and dance accompaniment.)

CHIEF BROMDEN. You hear it Papa? The Black Machine.

They got it goin', eighteen stories down below the ground. They're puttin' people in one end and out comes what they want. The way they do it, Papa, each night they tip the world on its side and everybody loose goes rattlin' to the bottom. Then they hook 'em by the heels, and they hang 'em up and cut 'em open. Only by that time they got no innards, just some beat-up gears and stuff, and all they bleed is rust. You think I'm ravin' 'cause it sounds too awful to be true, but, my *God*, there's such a lot of things that's true even if they never really happen!

*(A bell rings. The sounds and dancing light are gone, and the stage lights up with the effect almost of an explosion. Whistling is heard from off as the **AIDES** approach. **CHIEF BROMDEN** freezes into the catatonic stance. A key hits the lock, and **AIDES WARREN** and **WILLIAMS** enter, their rubber-soled shoes making no sound. They wear starched and*

A

START

END