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# 1:

## METAPHYSICAL DOUBTS, VERY SHORT

**N**OT even a decade ago, everybody believed. Events did seem under control. Inflation would creep, not gallop; the New Economics would fine-tune the economy; productivity would increase; wars would be fought, but not by us—we were the mediators, understanding but tough; problems would be articulated, and that articulation was half the solution; we would begin upon the solutions. Kennedy rhetoric: let us begin; let the word go forth; let us never negotiate from fear, nor fear to negotiate; let anybody call upon us. Confident, ambitious, optimistic, even naïve—the very best of the American tradition. Hail Columbia, happy land.

Then, one thing and another, the John Philip Sousa music faded a bit. Could rational men make events behave rationally? Maybe they couldn't. (Nobody then asked for a definition of "rational.") Maybe the falcons could not hear the falconers. They were still wheeling around up there; would they listen?