10 No Silver Bullet: Essence and Accidents of Software Engineering
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Fashioning complex conceptual constructs is the essence; accidental tasks arise in representing the constructs in language. Past progress has so reduced the accidental tasks that future progress now depends upon addressing the essence.

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On the cover

In the words of author Fred P. Brooks, Jr., "the familiar software project...is capable of becoming a monster of missed schedules, blown budgets, and flawed products." In his article, "No Silver Bullet: Essence and Accidents of Software Engineering," Brooks analyzes the nature of software engineering and assesses the technical developments that are most often advanced as potential "silver bullets" for slaying the monster. Silver bullets, of course, are, according to popular belief, the method by which werewolves are killed. For an overview of werewolf history and advice on what to do if you are confronted by the creature, see the sidebar entitled "To Slay the Werewolf," which is located—appropriately—on p. 13.

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Expert system building tools, programming for parallelism, exploiting supercomputers, enhancing GaAs performance, accreditation activities