

Aaron Levie backs "The Rise of the Automation Engineer"; Patrick O'Shaughnessy recommends Colossus's Nubank profile

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

2026-10-02

Aaron Levie backs "The Rise of the Automation Engineer"; Patrick O'Shaughnessy recommends Colossus's Nubank profile

By Recommended Reading from Tech Founders • October 2, 2026

This period's recommendations from founders and investors: Levie on a new AI-era job, O'Shaughnessy on a David Vélez profile, plus picks from Matt Mullenweg, Garry Tan, Scott Belsky, Ben Horowitz and Guillermo Rauch.

Top pick: "The Rise of the Automation Engineer" by Jake Serval, recommended by Aaron Levie

What it argues: In the essay, Serval says building automation is now easy. What's still hard is knowing what to automate and embedding it in a company with "real people, real politics, and real processes." That gap calls for a new role: someone who sits with a team and builds what it needs [1]. His main example is SeatGeek. He says 40% of its IT requests were resolved automatically within three weeks. The staff who used to handle those tickets were moved into Customer Support, Tech Compliance and Legal to build automations there [1]. One caveat: Serval is recruiting for these roles himself, and the essay ends with "my inbox is open" [1].

Levie's reason: He says most enterprises he talks to are putting internal FDEs (forward-deployed engineers) into their departments. The job takes technical skill, AI knowledge and an understanding of workflows, and "there's no shortcut" to that combination. He sees it as a new function that will create "a ton of new roles." His advice: "If you have software skills and are diving into AI, this is an area to go deep on" [2].

Patrick O'Shaughnessy: Colossus's profile of David Vélez

O'Shaughnessy called Vélez “one of the best CEOs out there today” and the piece “a great profile about him and the Nubank story” [3]. Gabi Imarques (@gabi_imarques) wrote the profile. She spent time with Vélez in São Paulo and in Miami, where Nubank is starting its push into the US. The piece covers his childhood in Medellín during the war with Pablo Escobar [4].

Other picks

- **“Om Malik, last humanist” by Alexia (@alexia), recommended by Matt Mullenweg** [5]. He called it an “Amazing post” honoring Om Malik. He said he hopes it inspires more people to write and that it inspired him, though he’s “working through some work stuff first” [6].
- **Financial Audit Bench from the ModusAudit Labs team, recommended by Garry Tan.** The release calls it a paper by the Modus team [7]. Tan’s takeaway: it’s an open-source test of whether AI can do “actual junior-auditor work, not just answer accounting questions.” He added that “every job in the world will end up having eval benchmarks like this” [8].
- **A breakdown of Brandon Flowers’s “An American Dream” by @SportsGuyRyan, recommended by Scott Belsky.** Belsky said he loved the breakdown and called the song Flowers’s “new masterpiece,” without giving more of a reason [9]. The author reads the song as an allegory for “life as a modern Christian” in a world chasing other things [10].
- **“Ether” by Nas, named by Ben Horowitz.** On his VxV episode, Horowitz was asked what lyric he thinks of when he has to keep going at his lowest. He picked “Ether,” because Nas released it “at his lowest,” after Jay-Z’s “Takeover.” What he takes from it: “When you think I’m dead, I’m going to come out with ether” [11].
- **Alone, recommended by Guillermo Rauch.** At the end of the RE:moat podcast, Rauch said he’s “a huge fan” of the survival TV show. He called one recent winner from Slovenia “so cracked” [12].
- **Fei-Fei Li’s book, praised on 20VC x SaaStr.** While discussing AMD’s \$8.2B purchase of World Labs, one panelist said: “I love her book if you read it. Very moving book about being an immigrant to the US” [13]. The transcript names neither the speaker nor the book.

Sources

1. X article by @jakeserval
2. X post by @levie
3. X post by @patrick_oshag
4. X post by @colossusmag
5. X post by @alexia

6. X post by @photomatt
7. X post by @PranavAPillai
8. X post by @garrytan
9. X post by @scottbelsky
10. X article by @SportsGuyRyan
11. Ben Horowitz on Picking Winners: “Something Horribly Wrong With Them” | VxV EP1
12. AI Era Playbook for Developers (Guillermo Rauch in Klemen Selakovič)
— RE:moat podcast 42
13. AMD Buys Fei-Fei Li’s World Labs for \$8.2B | Meta Poaches MongoDB’s CEO | Bessemer Raises \$5.75B