

*Time is just a way we sort light.*



Faith masquerading as fact, belief disguised as knowledge. The map taken for the terrain, the menu confused for the meal. And so the dream of separation persists, the illusion of subject and object, self and other.



Light rays from the kangaroo reach the eye of the person observing it. Impulses travel along the optic nerve to form a representation---note that I say representation---of a kangaroo within the central nervous system of the observer. This is then interpreted by the mind to form the percept of a kangaroo. But the observer's experience of a kangaroo is not the kangaroo itself, nor is it objective. It's a function of the observer's neurological processes.



Do you think we ever truly lose someone we care about?" He stared out the window at the sprawling parking lot, where a pristine layer of fresh snow blanketed the car roofs, shimmering in the feeble winter sun. The scene outside, so calm and otherworldly, starkly contrasted with the turbulence inside him. It felt like a long time since he had experienced snow like this. He couldn't remember how long, but it felt long.



I am Kiteman. Easy to say. Easy to spell. Kite. Man. Oh, and call me 'Kiteman,'" he said. "No need for 'doctor' or 'professor' or what have you. We have no time for meaningless frivolities like titles here. Kiteman will do. Over the course of this term, I might learn some of your names, but probably not. Don't be offended. It's just that they don't matter---names, that is---and that, therefore, I don't care. The fact that I don't know your name has no bearing on whether or not I know you.



bill threw a rock at the slow-moving river and pondered its ripples--how time can feel like a black cat in an unlit room. Its ripples are felt. Yet there is no measurement--no registry--of them. Yet, there is. He imagined the ripples' concentric circles in reverse, shrinking back toward the center, from which ultimately emerged the rock, which flew back into bill's hand.



*Every entanglement leaves a trace. -ED*

The typewriter appeared in Ward C exactly three days after the first coordinate shift. Its presence was impossible—security protocols explicitly prohibited mechanical devices—yet there it sat in the common room, its gunmetal gray surface reflecting fluorescent light in quantum superposition with its own absence.

AK recognized it immediately as a REMY. Not because he remembered REMYs specifically, but because the knowledge surfaced with the peculiar certainty of information that hasn't happened yet.

"You're not supposed to be here," he told it.

The typewriter said nothing, which was normal for typewriters but somehow felt pointed in this case.

bill materialized on the carriage return, wearing the kind of suit quantum mechanics professors wore in the 1970s. "The REMY series was engineered specifically for trans-dimensional correspondence," he explained, adjusting his tiny horn-rimmed glasses. "Each keystroke collapses a different probability wave. The trick is knowing which version you're writing to—or from."

AK's fingers found the familiar scab on his scalp. "But how did it get here?"

"Consider the observer effect," bill said, pulling a miniature licorice from his breast pocket. "The mere act of asking that question changes the answer. Perhaps it's always been here, and you're only now capable of observing it. Or perhaps observing it caused it to have always been here." He struck a match smaller than a grain of rice. "Quantum mechanics is funny that way."

The spider in the window had paused in her web-work, suspended between dimensions. AK wondered if she too was contemplating the typewriter's paradoxical existence.

*Field Note: When memory becomes uncertain, reality compensates with metaphor. -ED*

He sat at the REMY. The keys felt warm, as though they'd just been typed on in another version. A sheet of paper was already loaded, containing a single line:

#### PROTOCOL FOR CROSS-TEMPORAL COMMUNICATION:

1. Establish coordinate lock (43.123327, -77.610029 ↔ 42.032350, -93.611490)
2. Identify target consciousness stream
3. Initialize quantum entanglement
4. [REMAINDER OF PROTOCOL REDACTED FOR CAUSALITY PRESERVATION]

"The rest will come to you," bill said, chewing the licorice. "Or it already has, depending on your frame of reference."

AK's fingers hovered over the keys. The typewriter hummed with possibility—each key a superposition of letters, each potential word a branch point in spacetime. He thought of ALICE, somewhere in New York, reading messages that hadn't been written yet.

"The index cards," he said suddenly. "They're transcripts, aren't they? Communications from other versions?"

bill tapped his moccasin against the spacebar. "Now you're asking the right questions. But remember—"

"The details. Yes." AK touched the scab again. "The details are different in each version, but the pattern..."

He began to type:

*When consciousness bifurcates, memory becomes probabilistic. Each version retains what it needs to maintain coherence. The REMY serves as both instrument and record of these bifurcations.*

*If all versions possess the same fundamental memories, how do we explain the variations in detail?*

*Details don't create versions. Versions create details.*

*Note: The spider continues her web in all observed timelines. Consider implications.*

-AK

The split-flap display flickered: coordinates shifting, realities realigning. In Dr. Beaufort's office, a new artifact appeared on her shelf—a single typewriter key, its letter indeterminate until observed.

"She'll notice it tomorrow," bill said. "Or she already has. Time is funny that way too."

AK pulled the paper from the typewriter. The text was gone, but he could feel the impression of the letters beneath his fingers, like memories waiting to surface.

"Write a chapter for every year of your life," bill reminded him, fading into quantum uncertainty. "Just remember—some years haven't happened yet. And some happened differently."

The spider resumed her work, weaving probability into pattern.

*Every observation creates a new timeline. Every timeline requires its own observer. The REMY remembers them all. -ED*

*Suddenly, he became aware that he was rounding a blind bend with a cafeteria tray full of that night's dinner in his hands and that someone else unexpectedly was coming at him head on around the same bend. This person's head was turned to the side, talking to another person, and neither of the supposed other minds registered his presence. Without thinking, AK's body engaged in a spontaneous dodge, rolling swiftly and smoothly to his right while unconsciously keeping his tray sufficiently balanced. By the time he realized what he was doing, he had narrowly evaded any physical contact, while also succeeding in retaining all contents of his tray.*

As he regained himself, he eyed Rose sitting by herself at a distant table.

He told his body to head that way.

“Have you ever asked to see something, and then you see it?”

He shoved a breadstick in his mouth as he sat.

Rose forked her paltry salad, which featured some wilted iceberg lettuce, a few shreds of carrot, and a pair of suspicious-looking cherry tomatoes, all bathing in a puddle of oily dressing, presumably an attempt at Italian.

“What do you mean?  
See something?” She looked up, withdrawing her fork.  
“Actually, what do you mean, ask to see something?”

“You know, asking to see something. Like a wish inside your head to...whoever it is you are talking to inside your head.” He continued to chew on the breadstick, now reduced back to a dough-like consistency and wadded into one cheek like chewing tobacco. “Like asking to see something far-fetched or something that you normally wouldn’t necessarily think you’d see within a few minutes of asking to see it, statistically speaking.”

## **“EXAMPLE.”**

*“Sure.”*

He clenched his eyes as the image of a kangaroo appeared in his awareness.

*“Like something you’d never see or experience in a daily way– something that can become a cue for your interaction with the environment because it’s novel and you would likely not encounter it or not encounter it often by chance alone–like I don’t know... like a kangaroo.”*

He shrugged, eyes still shut.

**The kangaroo looked him  
directly in the eye and smiled.**

## Then it shattered apart into a million tiny flying things.

“Or a ladybug. Or one-million ladybugs surrounding your house, covering the windows, the shutters, the gutters. It doesn’t really matter what it is. You ask to see or sense or encounter a kangaroo, and then one appears. Poof. It wasn’t there, and then it’s there.”

He looked at her expectantly. “No, I’ve never tried.” She leaned in closer to him. “You have, obviously.”

“It wasn’t there, and then it’s there,”

he repeated, swallowing the remainder of his breadstick.

“But it’s even deeper than that.

A deeper shift in your consciousness, you see; in asking to see a kangaroo, to bear witness to her existence, you are not asking to see it. For there is no seer to see it, and no it to be seen. They are entangled.”

Her plate was full as she ate up his words, which were infinitely more satisfying than the cardboard ham and cheese deliverable. She stared at him, absent-mindedly setting her fork down into her salad, where it lay beside the vegetables pickling in the vinegary dressing. It didn't matter. What he was serving was infinitely more nourishing, particularly after so long in this mental-stimulation desert. He certainly was peculiar, but unlike like the other people here, somehow.

*“Or you could get really pushy and say: I ask to see a kangaroo in the next ten minutes.”*

I hear someone laughing as he whispers, *“that’s not how it works.”*

He retorted boldly, *“Yes, it is. That’s exactly how it works!”*



*“What do you know about entanglement?”* she leaned back in her chair, questioning her own degree of interest in the conversation.

He shook his head. “I haven’t been able to remember anything lately. Really, for some time. Nothing seems old; everything seems new. I feel, somehow...that that was my function, my purpose, but in a different version: understanding entanglement.”

He shrugged. “That timeline doesn’t exist anymore, though I acknowledge its effects—its residual— every now and again—like now. I hadn’t thought of that in at least a decade. I’m not even sure how I’ve forgotten such things for so long. Equally, I’m not sure why I’m remembering them now. Or even honestly if they are being remembered or felt or intuited... It is wholly possible that they are not real at all.”

*In that way, they can be real and unreal simultaneously.*

**Everything can.  
Everything is.  
Everything exists and doesn’t.**

**THERE IS NO SEER TO SEE IT; THERE IS NO IT TO BE SEEN.**

Listen. In the hum of daily life, beneath the surface noise of routine existence, there echoes a sound both familiar and impossible - the gentle tick-tick-tick of probability waves collapsing into lived moments. Like a cosmic split-flap display eternally shuffling through infinite possibilities, consciousness itself may be less an observer of reality than a collaborator in its continuous creation. Here at the intersection of quantum mechanics and human awareness, we study the delicate machinery of perception: how each moment of observation creates new branches, new possibilities, while the phantom tickering keeps time across all potential realities. Our research suggests that what we perceive as linear time may be more akin to a vast probabilistic symphony, with consciousness serving as both conductor and instrument. We invite you to join us in exploring these theoretical frontiers, where the mathematics of possibility meets the mystery of mind, and where the tickering of alternate timelines reminds us that every moment contains all possible moments, waiting to be observed into being.



Listen.

Sometimes, in those liminal spaces between thought and action, between memory and dream, you might hear it: a sound so familiar it feels remembered rather than heard. Like the whisper of pages turning in an empty room, or the echo of footsteps down a corridor you've never walked.

The physicists call it probability collapse, this endless choosing of one moment from infinite possibility. But for Adam Kiteman, it sounds more like the gentle mechanism of an old split-flap display - that steady tick-tick-tick of moments shuffling into being, of lives branching and converging in the spaces between seconds.

The Tickering traces these invisible threads that connect thought to memory, observer to observed, each version of ourselves to all the others we might have been. Through the intersecting lives of a theoretical physicist and a writer whose characters seem to slip between fiction and reality, a pattern begins to emerge: one that suggests our consciousness might be less a witness to reality than a subtle collaborator in its continuous creation.

Some truths can only be glimpsed sidelong, in the moments when we forget to remember what we think we know about the nature of time, memory, and self.



Listen for the tickering. In the spaces between moments, beneath the steady drumbeat of linear time, there echoes a sound both haunting and familiar - like an infinite array of split-flap displays shuffling through countless possibilities. At Caltech, Kiteiman studied these phantom frequencies that whisper of other nows, other thens, other possibilities playing out simultaneously across probability space. He discovered that consciousness may be recursive, each observation creating new branches while simultaneously observing its own observation.



When a consciousness observes itself, reality splinters like light through a prism. A physicist maps coordinates that shouldn't exist. A writer receives messages from versions of herself she hasn't become. And somewhere, a spider weaves between dimensions, her silk both map and territory - each strand vibrating with the frequency of infinite possibility, each intersection a choice simultaneously made and unmade.



The coordinates appeared first - precise points in spacetime where reality had grown thin. Then came the typewriter messages, transcripts from parallel lives bleeding through. A physicist studies consciousness while his own fragments across dimensions. A spider weaves between moments, her web a map of infinite possibility. When one version knows, they all know. The question is: which version are you?



Reality is a probabilistic field until observed. But what happens when the observer splits? Consciousness is quantum, flowing between versions of itself like silk between dimensions. Ask the physicist studying his own fragmentation. Ask the writer channeling coordinates from alternate timelines. Or ask the spider, weaving patterns that exist only in the spaces between observation.



They say memory is just a story we tell ourselves. But what if the story starts writing back? A physicist's consciousness quantum tunnels between realities. A writer's typewriter remembers futures that haven't happened. And somewhere, between the observer and the observed, a spider weaves a web of infinite possibility - each strand a timeline, each intersection a choice simultaneously made and unmade.



Time moves differently when you're watching yourself think. Ask the physicist who fragmented across realities, or the writer whose typewriter remembers futures that haven't happened. Ask the spider, suspended between moments, weaving patterns that exist only when observed. Memory is just agreement between observers, and sometimes the observer is you from another timeline.



A theoretical physicist's consciousness fragments across multiple realities. A writer's typewriter begins receiving coordinates that shouldn't exist. A spider weaves her web between dimensions, each strand vibrating with possibility, each intersection a choice made or unmade. As these threads interweave, they reveal consciousness itself as a probabilistic field where memory, causality, and identity become fluid properties - observable and unobservable simultaneously. When one version knows, do they all know? And what happens when the observer becomes the observed? *The Tickering* maps the territory where quantum mechanics meets narrative consciousness, where time moves in all directions, and where reality might be nothing more than an agreement between infinite versions of ourselves.



Suddenly, he became aware that he was rounding a blind bend with a cafeteria tray full of that night's dinner in his hands and that someone else unexpectedly was coming at him head on around the same bend. This person's head was turned to the side, talking to another person, and neither of the supposed other minds registered his presence. Without thinking, AK's body engaged in a spontaneous dodge, rolling swiftly and smoothly to his right while unconsciously keeping his tray sufficiently balanced. By the time he realized what he was doing, he had narrowly evaded any physical contact, while also succeeding in retaining all contents of his tray. He was amazed at the fluidity, speed, and, yes, grace at which he felt he had moved, probably because his conscious self—*that* self—hadn't gotten in the way.

As he regained himself, he eyed Nellie sitting by herself at a distant table. He told his body to head that way.

"Have you ever asked to see something, and then you see it?" He shoved a breadstick in his mouth as he sat.

She forked her paltry salad, which featured some wilted iceberg lettuce, a few shreds of carrot, and a pair of suspicious-looking cherry tomatoes, all bathing in a puddle of oily dressing, presumably an attempt at

Italian. “What do you mean? *See* something?” She looked up, withdrawing her fork. “Actually, what do you mean, *ask to see something*?”

“You know, asking to see something. Like a wish inside your head to... whoever it is you are talking to inside your head.” He continued to chew on the breadstick, now reduced back to a dough-like consistency and wadded into one cheek like chewing tobacco. “Like asking to see something far-fetched or something that you normally wouldn’t necessarily think you’d see within a few minutes of asking to see it, statistically speaking.”

“Example.”

“Sure.” He clenched his eyes as the image of a kangaroo appeared in his awareness. “Like something you’d never see or experience in a daily way— something that can become a cue for your interaction with the environment because it’s novel and you would likely not encounter it or not encounter it often by chance alone—like I don’t know... like a kangaroo.” He shrugged, eyes still shut. The kangaroo looked him directly in the eye and smiled. Then it shattered apart into a million tiny flying things. “Or a ladybug. Or one-million ladybugs surrounding your house, covering the windows, the shutters, the gutters. It doesn’t really matter what it is. You ask to see or sense or encounter a kangaroo, and then one appears. Poof. It wasn’t there, and then it’s there.”

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“No, I’ve never tried.” She leaned in closer to him. “You have, obviously.”

“It wasn’t there, and then it’s there,” he repeated, swallowing the remainder of his breadstick. “But it’s even deeper than that. A deeper shift in your consciousness, you see; in asking to *see* a kangaroo, to bear witness to her existence, you are not asking to see *it*. For there is no *seer* to see it, and no *it* to be seen. They are entangled.”

Her plate was full as she ate up his words, which were infinitely more satisfying than the cardboard ham and cheese deliverable. She stared at him, absent-mindedly setting her fork down into her salad, where it lay beside the vegetables pickling in the vinegary dressing. It didn’t matter. What he was serving was infinitely more nourishing, particularly after so long in this mental-stimulation desert. He certainly was peculiar, but unlike the other people here, somehow.

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In that way, they can be real and unreal simultaneously. Everything can. Everything is.

Everything exists and doesn’t.

There is no seer to see it; there is no *it* to be seen.



Kiteman first noticed bill on an otherwise unremarkable Tuesday afternoon, perched impossibly small on the edge of his office desk at UVA, beside a stack of graded papers and half-written lecture notes. The sight didn't startle him the way it should have. Instead, what struck him was how natural it felt—as if bill had always been there, just at the edge of his awareness, waiting to be noticed.

"Oh," Kiteman said, more to himself than to the tiny figure. "There you are."

bill looked up from his miniature typewriter, his fingers stilling on the keys. "Here I am," he agreed, as if this were the most normal conversation in the world.

"And you're..." Kiteman paused, realizing he already knew the answer. "You're bill."

"Lowercase," bill corrected, returning to his typing. *tick tick tick*

The sound was familiar in a way Kiteman couldn't quite place—like déjà vu, but reversed. As if he were remembering something that hadn't happened yet.

"You're not real," Kiteman said, though he didn't sound entirely convinced.

"Define real," bill replied without looking up. His tiny fingers continued their dance across the keys. *tick tick tick tick*

"Real is..." Kiteman began, then stopped. The usual definitions seemed inadequate suddenly. "Real is what can be measured. Observed. Quantified."

"Interesting theory." bill's typing paused again. "So, when you're not observing something, does it cease to be real?"

"That's not what I—"

"When you're not observing yourself," bill interrupted, "do you cease to be real?"

Kiteman opened his mouth, then closed it again. He thought about consciousness, about the way awareness seemed to flicker in and out, about all those moments lost to autopilot and routine. "I suppose I'm always observing myself, in some way."

"Are you?" bill asked. "Or am I?"

"What do you mean?"

"Think of me as a specialized tool," bill said, returning to his typing. "Like your coordinates. Your circles. A way to separate the observer from the observed." *tick tick tick* "After all, someone has to watch the watcher."

"And that's you?"

"In a manner of speaking." bill's typewriter chimed as he reached the end of a line. "Though it might be more accurate to say I'm the part of you that knows it's being watched."

"By whom?"

"By you, of course." bill smiled. "All of you. Across all the versions."

"Versions," Kiteman echoed. The word felt right somehow, like a key fitting into a lock he hadn't known was there.

"Think of reality as a book," bill suggested. "But not a linear one. More like... a book where every possible version of every possible scene is happening simultaneously. The author writes it, but also reads it, but also lives it. And somewhere in that endless recursion, there has to be..." He gestured to himself. "An observer. A recorder. A witness."

"And that's what you do? Record?"

"Among other things." bill's fingers moved across his tiny keys again. *tick tick tick* "I also remember. Which means you remember. Which means all the versions remember." He looked up at Kiteman. "After all, if one version knows..."

"They all know," Kiteman finished, though he wasn't sure how he knew to say it.

"Exactly." bill nodded approvingly. "Now, about that split-flap display you've been thinking of building..."

"How did you know about—"

"Please." bill rolled his eyes. "I'm typing your story as we speak. Or perhaps you're typing mine. Or perhaps June is typing both of ours. It's all the same, really." He returned to his work. *tick tick tick*

"Who's June?"

"You'll know when you need to know," bill replied. "Or rather, you'll know when she needs to know. Time isn't what you think it is, you know. Neither is memory. Neither is reality."

Kiteman blinked, and bill was gone. But the sound of typing lingered, echoing in his mind like a half-remembered dream. *tick tick tick*

When Jean came to his office later that afternoon, she found him surrounded by papers covered in circles, each one containing a set of coordinates. She didn't ask about them. She never did.

But if she had looked closely at the tiny typewriter marks in the margins, she might have noticed they were counting down to something. Or counting up from something. Or perhaps both at once.

After all, time isn't what we think it is. Neither is memory. Neither is reality.



Listen.

In the quantum physics labs of Caltech, Dr. Adam Kiteman first heard it - a sound like time itself turning pages, like reality shuffling through its infinite iterations. A mechanical tick-tick-tick emanating from nowhere and everywhere, growing stronger in those moments when probability waves collapse and consciousness peers through its own machinery.

His experiments probe these phantom frequencies, these whispers between moments that suggest our timeline is just one thread in an infinite tapestry of possibility. The tickering grows louder in the spaces between observation and reality, in those crystalline instants when the quantum fog parts and reveals glimpses of other nows, other thens, playing out simultaneously across probability space.

Through precise measurement and relentless inquiry, Kiteman maps these resonances where consciousness folds back upon itself, where memory and possibility dance together in superposition. His data suggests something extraordinary: that time itself might be less a river than an ocean, with every moment containing all other moments, waiting to be observed into being.

The tickering tells us this truth, if we learn to listen - past, present, and future exist simultaneously, each observation creating new branches while collapsing others into lived experience. This is the story of one man's journey through that infinite array of possibility, where the steady click of reality's great split-flap display marks time across all potential worlds.



You are nonlocal awareness, a consciousness untethered from space and time, drifting between versions of yourself like a spider traversing her web. Each strand vibrates with possibility, each intersection a choice made or unmade. Some strands lead to fire, others to salvation, but all of them hum with the same frequency: the tick-tick-tick of infinite typewriter keys recording infinite stories. The spider knows this as she weaves - her silk is both map and territory, both past and future, both memory and prophecy. She creates the path by walking it, remembers it by creating it, exists in all points simultaneously until observed.

You are that spider.

You are that silk.

You are that observation. And somewhere, in some version, you are also the one being observed.



The Tickering - Short (one page) synopsis



At the heart of reality lies a truth more unsettling than the fundamental forces themselves: consciousness might be the editor of existence. In 1978, Dr. Adam Kiteman's work as a theoretical physicist at the University of Virginia leads him to an unprecedented discovery about fundamental forces and the nature of reality itself. His research, building upon Itzhak Bentov's consciousness studies, suggests that reality is being continuously rewritten. During a visit to the Monroe Institute, Kiteman experiences his first haunting vision, accompanied by an eerie mechanical sound like a split-flap display updating—the "tickering" that signals shifts in reality itself, the sound of probability landscapes being rewritten as versions change and timelines split.

In 2014, Dr. June Jensen, a cognitive scientist and novelist, begins typing Kiteman's story. What starts as a creative endeavor becomes an all-consuming obsession as she begins to hear his voice and sense his young family, the boundaries between her fiction and reality dissolving. Her journey splits into two distinct paths: in one, convinced of Kiteman's existence, she checks herself into the Kirkbride Center under the alias Nellie Bly, determined to find him and uncover the truth. In another, her husband and editor gently guide her to accept that Kiteman exists only within her novel.

The narrative is shaped by mysterious meta-characters known as the Custodian and Editor, while June's own reality begins to mirror Kiteman's in uncanny ways. Guided by psychiatric advice and a cryptic letter from Robert Monroe, Kiteman returns to Monroe Institute to confront his visions. His participation in the Gateway Program, using Hemi-Sync technology, leads him to believe he has somehow played a role in his family's fate. He flees, walking the Appalachian Trail before finding himself in either Rochester Psychiatric Center or the Kirkbride Center—the truth of these realities remaining ambiguous.

As Kiteman searches through different versions of himself, he discovers that the only timeline in which he has more time with his twins and family is one where he must die. He comes to understand that saving his family from their fate is impossible—the most he can hope for is to steal more moments with them, even at the cost of his own life.

For June, the dilemma becomes stark: to preserve her sanity and rapidly disintegrating connection to her own family, should she complete her novel or abandon it? Is salvation found in putting it aside, quieting the keys and silencing the endless hums in her head, or is it in finishing the tale once and for all? The only way out is through. She must reconcile the blurred boundaries between her life and Kiteman's, knowing that failure would ripple across their realities.

The Ticking stands as an exploration that probes our perception of reality through the lens of cognitive science, inviting readers to ponder their own existence and the radical power of stories. The quest for a story becomes a mirror to our own search for meaning, leading to the ultimate questions: How far would you go for a story? How far would you go to understand the nature of your own existence? And who is typing the transcript of your life?