

once every minute, each minute being a day. I supposed that the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. The quick changes of darkness and light were very painful to my eyes. Then, in the short dark times, I saw the moon turning quickly through her quarters from new to full.

'Soon, as I continued, still increasing speed, the change from night to day became one continuous greyness. The sky turned a wonderful deep blue. The jumping sun became a line of fire, the moon a fainter line that changed in width.

'The land was difficult to see clearly. I was still on the hillside where this house now stands. I saw trees growing and changing. They changed from green to brown and back to green again, grew tall, died and fell. I saw enormous buildings rise up, then disappear like dreams. The speed dials on the machine went round faster and faster. The line of the sun moved up and down, from summer to winter, in a minute or less. Minute by minute white snow spread across the world and disappeared, and was followed by the green of spring.

'The unpleasant feelings at the beginning now changed into a kind of crazy excitement. I noticed a strange movement of the machine from side to side, which I couldn't explain, but my mind was too confused to pay any attention to it. So with a kind of madness growing in me, I threw myself into the future. At first I didn't think of stopping. But then a new feeling grew in my mind – a sense of fear mixed with the need to know.

'What strange changes had happened to people? What wonderful improvements to our simple way of life might appear when I looked more closely into that world? I saw large and wonderful buildings growing in front of me, bigger than ours. I saw a stronger green colour move up the hillside, and stay there without any interruption by snow. Although I was travelling so quickly, the world still seemed beautiful, and so my mind turned to stopping the machine.

'My greatest fear was that there would already be something in the space when I, or the machine, stopped. While I travelled at high speed through time, this didn't matter much – I seemed to move like a gas through other things. But when I stopped, I would put myself into whatever lay in my way. Such close contact with the other thing might cause a great explosion. I had thought of this possibility again and again while I was making the machine, but then I had cheerfully accepted it as one of the necessary dangers that a man must face. I wasn't as cheerful now, when I couldn't escape it.

'The strangeness of everything, the movement of the machine and the feeling of continual falling had made me very nervous. I told myself that I could never stop. Then, becoming suddenly angry, I decided to stop immediately. Like a fool in a hurry, I pulled over the lever. The machine turned over and I was thrown through the air.

'There was the sound of thunder in my ears. For a moment I forgot what was happening, then I found myself sitting on soft grass in front of the machine. Heavy rain was falling. Everything still seemed grey, but soon I noticed that the confusion in my ears was gone. I looked around me. I was on a small lawn, surrounded by bushes. Their purple flowers were dropping under the beating of the heavy rain. In a moment I was wet to the skin. "A fine welcome," I thought, "to a man who has travelled so many years to see you."

'Soon I stood up and looked around me. Through the heavy rain I could see an enormous figure cut, perhaps, out of white stone. But the rest of the world was unclear.

'As the rain became lighter, I saw the white figure more clearly. It was very large – a tree touched its shoulder. It was shaped a little like a sphinx with spread wings, and seemed to be flying. The pedestal seemed to be made of metal, and had turned green with age. I stood looking at the figure for some time.