The Five-Minute Theory

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Everyone always assumes that falling long distances happens instantaneously. In reality, falling from the sky takes a significant amount of time. Take me, for instance. Panic subsided quite a while ago. I’m already halfway through my epitaph. I can’t, however, for the life of me decide who will speak at my funeral. Never mind that. I still have several hundred feet in which to figure out details like that.

I would enjoy this so much more if the contact in my right eye hadn’t flown out two hundred feet ago. Now if I want to look down at the clouds I have to close my right eye. What are those, anyway? Cumulus? Stratus? Wait a minute. I remember from college that there were three types of clouds. What was the third? I sure wish I had studied harder in school.

Damn it, I got to stop letting my mind wander. I only have a couple thousand more feet to think about my life. Certainly meteorology never played a large part. So I have to stop thinking about that. Besides, I can only see the clouds with one eye anyway. And to think, I just bought replacement contacts last week. Now I’m going to die, and they’ll be wasted. They cost me a hundred and twenty-five dollars! Maybe someone else can use them.

Stop thinking about my stupid contacts! All right -- let’s see. What should I think about in my last few minutes? People always talk about their lives flashing before their eyes in near-death experiences, but I’m not sure which part of my life to think about. Well, chronological order is good. That’s right. I’ll start out with my youth.
What's the first thing I remember? I remember the trip to Montana. I remember my sister kicking me in the groin at Old Faithful. Except it's not faithful anymore. Old Faithful, I mean. Heaven forbid, I'm certainly not impotent. I remember reading in the news where an earthquake made it stop. Again, I mean Old Faithful. I think it was an earthquake. I wonder what would happen if I hit the ground while an earthquake was happening. Maybe I'd bounce.

That gives me an idea: I'll wait until the last second before I hit the ground and then I'll jump up into the air. Except my legs will get crushed probably. Oh, well. I wonder if there's a heaven. Or even a hell. Maybe I'll fall through the crust of the earth into hell, like in that one Bugs Bunny cartoon. And then I'll get three chances to kill Bugs Bunny, and if I do, I get to stay alive. Then again, probably not. That's a cartoon.

Cirrus! That's it! I knew there was a third type. Okay, back to my past.

I'm running out of time, so let's skip to middle school. Okay, what do I remember about middle school? Gosh, I don't remember going to middle school. Well, let's try high school. I have to remember something about that.

On the other hand, let's try the cord one more time. You never know -- maybe it was a temporary defect. Hmm...it still doesn't seem to work. Oh, well. Shit happens.

Okay, high school. I remember that one teacher who suspended me for giving her a dead raccoon for Christmas. No, wait a minute, it was a squirrel. Anyway, the class thought it was funny. I thought it was, too, at first. Nope, it was a raccoon now that I think of James calling it a 'coon. What a stupid name for an animal. 'Coon. He was a hick.

Wasn't he the one who got Michelle pregnant? Gosh, I haven't seen them for ages. Maybe they'll come to my funeral. No, they both died. I guess they probably won't be there.

Actually, it's pretty funny now that I think of it -- my funeral, that is. Only an insane person like me would plan his own funeral while falling thousands of feet to the ground. But I've learned to accept my insanity. It's a part of me I value very much. It'll be
something I’ll be remembered for. I think it’s a virtue.

I’m getting sick of thinking about my life. And considering I’m not totally sure about all that goes on in the after-life, I can’t really plan what happens to me after death.

Okay, I’ll think about my theories on life. Like the five-minute theory. It states that all of life started exactly five minutes ago. Everything before that is just a memory that was implanted in your brain. Or my brain. I am explaining this to myself, so I would say my brain, not your brain. Anyway, that was my favorite theory. Wouldn’t that be cool if it were true! I wouldn’t have to worry as much about dying because everything that’s happened to me in my thirty-two years never really happened. I’ll bet that’s right! Everything before five minutes ago was just a memory, something that never really happened.

What was another one of my theories? I know -- the observation-reality theory. It stated that -- I mean states that...wait a minute, would that be past or present tense? Well, since I’m thinking about it now, let’s say present tense. Besides, no one cares about grammar now. Besides, I don’t have enough time to think about petty things like correct grammar.

Okay, it stated that whatever you can’t observe doesn’t actually exist. So all of the people in the world below don’t really exist. I’m the only person in the entire world. Isn’t it ironic that the only person in the entire world is thousands of feet in the air, falling to his death? Oops, that’s sexist -- it should be his or her death. Then again, I am talking about myself, so I would say ‘his.’ I always hated using ‘his’ or ‘her’ or ‘his.’ Since I’m the only person in the entire world, I’m officially changing the grammar rule about ‘their.’ From now on, the word ‘their’ can be either plural or singular. That makes it easy, and I don’t have to say ‘him or her.’ Besides I’m being sexist by saying one before the other.

Now that I think of it, there were other grammar rules I wanted to change if I ever became famous. Let’s see -- I wanted to officially change the spelling of ‘okay’ to ‘OK.’ But that’s not grammar, that’s spelling.

For heaven’s sake, this is taking a long time. I still have one
more layer of clouds to go.

You know, this reminds me of a movie. It was some movie with that one guy who died from drug overdose.

Come to think of it, how would I die if I had a choice? Not that I do -- I’m going to die from falling to the ground -- that’s a given. And I’m not complaining about it -- I could die a more painful way. Like being starved to death, or electrocution. But I think I would rather be shot. In the head. Actually, this is a pretty fun way to die. Now that I think of it, I think I’m dying the way I would want to die. This is perfect! I always knew that something in my life would go right.

Well, there goes the last layer of clouds. Just a few more seconds. Let’s see...I will be landing in the middle of a woods. You know, if I would have jumped out of the plane a little sooner, I could’ve landed in that lake over there. Oh, well, too late now. Besides, the impact of hitting water would kill me anyway. And sharks might eat me. Wait -- sharks live in the ocean. Okay, maybe I would rather have fallen into a lake.

I’m getting closer. What should I do? Cringe? Push my eyelids together? If I wasn’t assured of certain death, I’d probably roll into a ball and hide my head. But little help that would do now.

I’m really close now. I have to stop thinking about useless things. I have to end with a clear head and a pure heart. How poetic.

I was wrong. I’m going to fall into that field. Good. I really didn’t want to be torn apart by the limbs on a tree.

Just a few more seconds. The ground’s approaching me faster and faster. I’m coming closer and closer. The grass is getting greener and greener. The air is becoming colder and colder. I’m falling and I’m almost there. Two hundred more feet. Now one hundred. Fifty. Thirty. Ten. Five.

Wow -- I did bounce. I didn’t think I’d bounce. And I’m in much less pain that I thought I’d be. Of course I’ll only be conscious for the next couple seconds. But all in all, this was certainly a positive experience.

You know, that’s another misconception people have. People
always assume that when you die, you lose consciousness immediately. In reality, it lingers on and fades out, like a mundane Barry Manilow record, fading out into oblivion.