

Alternate Timelines

by Brianne Baxtali

Usually, I stop existing for a bit whenever I have a seizure. That's probably why I'm crying so hard whenever I come out of it. I don't mean to do it, but the tears just flow as I struggle to catch my breath and stop my heart from slamming against my sternum.

But every so often, I end up somewhere else. It's only happened a few times, but in a way it's scarier than the blackness and inertia. I'm somebody else; my own memories have been lost, replaced by somebody else's. I don't know where mine go for that short time. Maybe they're wrapped in a neat box until I get back.

Once I was a professor of photography in a Tokyo nobody would recognize. During that incident, I watched the sky split open with a sickening roar. People were half stuck in the sidewalks. Suddenly, I was back in my bed in Pittsburgh, wailing like an air-raid siren, my whole body shaking — nerves coiled like sparking telephone wires. The worst part was the uneasy feeling of falling out of time and landing in an alternate version of it. That happened a year ago, and I'm still terrified to think about it.

Physicists say that a tremendous amount of energy has to be generated in order to rip through space-time, to jump to another place, and at this time, we're incapable of doing it. I have to disagree. They've never met my brain. I fear it's going to kill me in its attempts to escape.

