

einstein's dreams
alan lightman
as interpreted by Keeley Gribb



In some distant arcade, a clock tower c
times and then stops. The young man slun
desk. He has come to the office at dawn, afte
upheaval. His hair is uncombed and his trowse
too big. In his hand he holds twenty crumpled p
his new theory of time, which he will mail today t
the German journal of physics.
Tiny sounds from the city drift through the room.
milk bottle clinks on a stone. An awning is cranked i
a shop on Marktgasse. A vegetable cart moves slowly
through a street. A man and woman talk in hushed
tones in an apartment nearby.
In the dim light that seeps through the room, the
desks appear shadowy and soft, like large sleeping
animals. Except for the young man's desk, which is
cluttered with half-opened books, the twelve oak desks
are all neatly covered with documents, left from the
previous day. Upon arriving in two hours, each clerk
will know precisely where to begin. But at this mo-
ment, in this dim light, the documents on the desks
are no more visible than the clock in the corner or the
secretary's stool near the door. All that can be seen at
the hunched form of the young man.
Ten minutes past six, by the invisible clock on
the wall. Minute by minute, new objects gain form.
Here, a brass wastebasket appears. There, a calendar
on a wall. Here, a family photograph, a box of paper
clips, an inkwell, a pen. There, a typewriter, a jacket
folded on a chair. In time, the ubiquitous bookshelves

thin skin in the middle of a neck,
thin enough to see the pulse of
blood underneath. A man and
woman naked, wrapped around
each other. The blue shadows of
trees in a full moon. The top of
a mountain with a strong steady
wind, the valley falling away on
all sides, sandwiches of beef and
cheese. A child wincing from
his father's slap, the father's lips
twisted in anger, the child not
understanding. A strange face in
the mirror, gray at the temples. A
young man holding a telephone,
startled at what he is hearing. A
family photograph, the parents
young and relaxed, the children
in ties and dresses and smiling. A
tiny light, far through a thicket
of trees. The red at sunset. An
eggshell, white, fragile, unbro-



