

I've Been Waiting for This My Whole Life

By Austen Tucker · 2026

Three years ago I was sitting in my office at two in the morning, reading Kurzweil for the second time, and I felt something shift. Not in the book — I'd read the predictions before. In me. The thing he was describing wasn't theoretical anymore. I could feel the curve bending under my feet.

I'm a writer. My job is to listen to the rhythm of human culture, synthesize what I've experienced, and create meaning. I've done this my entire life — through novels, essays, code, communities, arguments with strangers on the internet at inadvisable hours. And what I'm hearing right now is a sound I recognize.

It's the sound of everyone getting it wrong.

We've Done This Before

The dot-com boom was supposed to change everything. It did, eventually — but first it changed nothing in the ways people predicted and everything in the ways they didn't. The early arrivals built castles on sand and called it a revolution. The revolution showed up ten years later wearing a hoodie and running on AWS.

Cloud computing. Same pattern. "Why would anyone put their data on someone else's computer?" became "Why would anyone not?" in about five years. The early skeptics were wrong. The early evangelists were also wrong. The actual transformation was messier and more mundane and more total than either side imagined.

Big data. God, big data. Remember when that was going to solve everything? When every company needed a data lake and a chief data officer and a strategy deck with the word "insights" on every slide? Most of that was theater. The real change — the quiet, infrastructural, boring-until-it-wasn't change — happened underneath, in ways nobody wrote breathless LinkedIn posts about.

Every single time, we underestimate the thing at first. Then we overestimate it in exactly the wrong direction. Then we panic. Then the actual shape emerges, and it looks nothing like what anyone predicted, and it changes everything anyway.

I've watched this cycle four times now. I'm watching it again.

The Acceleration Is Real

I don't need to give you a timeline of model releases. You've felt it. If you work in tech, if you write, if you build things — you've felt the ground moving faster under you this year than last year. Last year was faster than the year before.

Here's the only number that matters: the amount of progress that used to take a full year now happens every four months.

Sit with that.

I blinked and Claude went from 3 to 4.5. I blinked again and we were talking about Claude 5. The open-weight models closed the gap from eight percent behind the frontier to less than two. Not over years. Over months.

This isn't a prediction. It's an observation. The curve isn't bending anymore — it's broken free of the axis entirely, and most people are still drawing straight lines on their mental graph paper because exponential growth doesn't feel real until you're inside it.

I've been inside it for three years. It's real.

What It Means to Be a Writer Right Now

Here's where it gets personal.

I have a custom language model trained on over a million words of my own prose. My sentences. My rhythms. My particular way of building a scene where the dialogue comes first and the emotion sneaks in sideways.

When that model suggests a revision, it doesn't sound like a machine. It sounds like me on a good day — the version of me who's had enough sleep and whose eyes aren't burning. I built it because I'm a low-vision, neurodivergent writer who loves drafting and hates revision, and the editorial slog of traditional read-with-a-red-pen-in-hand was physically inaccessible to me. So I engineered around the problem.

Someone I care about saw me using these tools and thought I'd given up writing. That I'd handed the work to a machine.

She was wrong.

What happened is the opposite of giving up. Authorship used to mean "I alone put these words on the page, one at a time, with my fingers." Now it means something bigger. I direct the vision. I train the voice. I orchestrate the output. I make it cohere into meaning. The thinking is mine. The taste is mine. The thousand micro-decisions about what stays and what goes — mine.

The labor shifted. The art didn't disappear. It evolved.

I didn't stop being a writer. I stopped being slow.

Two Futures

Here's where I get honest about what I don't know.

We're living through something that doesn't have a clean name yet. The post-World War II economic model — the one where scarcity drives value, labor drives wages, and growth drives everything — is running headlong into a technology that makes knowledge essentially free. Not metaphorically free. Actually free. Every person on earth with a phone now has access to something that combines the Library of Alexandria, an ENIAC, and a Cray supercomputer, and it fits in their pocket, and it talks back.

That's new. That's genuinely, historically, never-happened-before new.

And it forks into two futures.

The likely one: Power and resources concentrate in fewer hands. The companies that control the models control the infrastructure of thought itself. The transition is brutal and unequal. Some people get the abundance. Others get left behind. Social unrest follows — not because the technology is bad, but because the distribution is.

I see this future clearly. I think most honest people do.

The one I'm betting on: The barrier to entry drops so low that no corporation can gatekeep it. Open-weight models proliferate. Basement hackers and indie builders and people who've never had access to this kind of power suddenly have it, and they do what people always do when you hand them tools — they build things nobody predicted. The democratization happens bottom-up, messy and distributed and ungovernable, the same way it happened with the web, with cloud, with every technology that was supposed to be too complex for regular people.

I'm betting on the second one because I've seen the pattern hold. Every time. The early consolidation looks permanent until it isn't. The gatekeepers look unassailable until someone in a garage builds something better. The future always turns out to be more distributed, more weird, and more human than the doomsayers or the optimists imagined.

I could be wrong. The pattern could break this time. The concentration of power in AI is deeper and faster than anything we've seen before, and pretending otherwise would be dishonest.

But I've been watching these cycles my whole life, and I've never once seen centralization win in the long run. Not once.

So What Am I Doing About It

I'm building.

I built an editorial engine that lets me finish novels I'd been carrying for years. I coordinated AI agents to work together like a publishing house. I'm writing about it, openly, because transparency is how trust works and because I think there are other people out there — disabled creators, indie builders, writers with a drawer full of unfinished work — who need to see what's possible before they'll believe it.

I'm not waiting for someone to hand me the future. I'm not waiting for the perfect tool or the right moment or permission from an industry that never gave me permission for anything else either.

I saw this coming three years ago. I've been getting ready. And now it's here, and it's moving faster than even I expected, and I'm not scared.

I've been waiting for this my whole life.

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