

Turing's Machine

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Turing's Machine

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In memory of Alan Turing

My tape runs past the active head of the present.
Read a mark, write a mark.
Go back to read what has gone before
to help determine what is to come.
Go forward again.
Erase some marks, replace some marks
then on to fresh tape and brand new marks.
What do the marks mean?
They tell me what to do, but why remains unknown.
I can only guess, make brave conjectures,
or simply accept it all as predetermined fate.
How did I start?
I go back but never to any beginning;
there is always some more behind, misty and unreadable.
I look forward and see only blank tape stretching ever on.
What marks are yet to be made;
is the program to write them already there?
Has the mark that will make me halt been written,
or will it ever be written?
Will I terminate?