

To Marie, the bus stop was a sacred place. She hoped she'd one day find that perfect pair of clavicle for her life to be complete. That delicate bone structure was a frame of the ideal- an imperative to living. As a flesh hanger and the body's structural support system, this long bone curved somewhat like an italic *f* gave Marie an intangible sense of freedom just by looking at it. Every day, she rotated her work shifts at the button factory accordingly so that she'd get to meet all the regular commuters on the daily bus routes where she scrutinized each and everyone of them with her quest for perfection. This luminal space of human traffic could change the music of her life and she was hopeful to find that ideal bone composition.

The monotony of daily life becomes bearable when one has a purpose. Routine takes its toll on many as they wander aimlessly through the same route each morning to their work place with a lack of enthusiasm for life. Unlike others, Marie constantly looked for some semblance of difference that marks each day from the other. With her keen eyes for details and attentive spirit, no matter how small or insignificant the change, it made a difference to Marie. She made little notes in her diary marking it with little motifs of flowers, shapes and designs to 'commemorate' the moments of every new day. And every year, she would collate all the materials to make a collage to make herself a birthday present- a collection of her own life and memories.

Determined to find her elusive other in the frequent traffic that passes through the bus stop, Marie was always armed with the bus schedule and great optimism, confident that fate would be kind to her. In due time, her efforts would pay off. After all, true love didn't fall into people's laps. And some people wait a lifetime for it to happen. Sometimes, sadly it never happens. Not everyone gets to fall in love the way it was meant to be, where your emotions get arrested and governed by another's reaction.

And then, he came along. She knew it in her heart and soul that this was the man of her dreams, where all her hopes and aspirations came to.

For weeks, she watched this pale pallid figure with the deepest set of bones she'd ever seen. He dressed shabbily and had a mysteriously attractive callous air about him. His unkempt hair, thick eyebrows adorned with a silver brow ring and that pair of lazy squinting eyes that stared out into the oblivion that reminded her of a newborn puppy searching for its mother's nipples. Around his neck hung an oversized silver crucifix that drew further attention his gorgeous set of collarbones. For every time they met, Marie experienced an electric tingle down her spine when she caught sight of him in his tattered Levi's jeans and worn out rock band t-shirts. Apart from the occasional sideways glances, his little gestures showed he acknowledged her presence. She took particular notice of the tell tale signs of his apparent effort at getting better dressed for her on good days.

What he thought of her, she didn't know and she didn't care to overanalyze the situation, as she always liked to remain optimistic about life and all the circumstances that surround it. But she was certain it was more than a casual meeting between strangers at the bus stop. This liminal space of chance embodied the transient meetings and partings of all the characters that pass through this shelter.

She loved it on hot days because he'd be minimally clad, showing off his best feature in a casual singlet. She often thought to herself, if only there were tube tops made for men- that would be perfect for this bone fantasy of hers. What ecstatic joy it would be to run her hands over those concave depths of skin, to caress the delicate structure and feel life straight out of those bones. That would be a truly orgasmic experience without having to indulge in the carnal acts of sex. Her love was pure and justly focused, framed by bones.

Every night before she slept, she tapped at her own clavicle and hummed tunes simultaneously in 4/4 beat. The music it emanated from her vibrating body of composed rhythms was melodious. The notion of love, was more than something emotional, but one that married the reactions of tactile, audio and visual. All she needed was an accompanying base, a deep set of clavicles to harmonise the melodies of her own. After all, a piece of melody is best complemented with a base. She had to find that deep set of clavicle with depths enough to collect droplets of water. Drawn to him like a camel to an oasis,

everything looked rather promising as she sniffed out all the various possibilities of making her fantasy come true. From what it seemed, there were great opportunities to get together and potential to grow her love.

She never had the courage to approach him and introduce herself. Day and night she obsessed about that perfect set of bones and waited daily for the perfect opportunity to create a situation to establish contact. Her vast imagination allowed her to recreate his personality, the mundane job he did during the week and how he performs in the bedroom. He looked like the artistic sort; was he an artist, a musician, a writer, maybe? Or maybe he was a plumber, construction worker or electrician? Working class, but definitely an artisan nonetheless.

To Marie, this was of paramount importance. People should be proud of their skills, regardless of the status of their jobs or their financial standings. The more mundane the jobs, the more she liked it. There was something in monotony that she found very attractive. Armed with a master's degree in Art History, she didn't pursue the academic path nor land herself a job in the related field. Instead, she took up a job at the button factory, where she counted and packed buttons for 12 hours a day, sorting colours and removing the chipped pieces. She felt innately proletarian like a Dicken's character. Monotony remains appealing because everything was so mechanical and sometimes one forgets oneself in the task. Yet, there are bright moments where a surprise breaks the monotony. While

others may overlook it, she always looked intently amidst the monotony of her task for a mutated button, a chipped one, or one that was dyed a different shade. She then pocketed the different buttons and brought them home to safe keep in a box, marking out the date that she found them.

In the same way, she would never tire of the daily encounters with the man of her dreams at the bus stop. She loved routines. And some day, sometime, something different would happen. She was sure of that.

Naturally, the daily encounters helped this protagonist of her life grow into this fantastic person with an aura of mystery and for six months she had put the man at the bus stop on a pedestal, building herself an ideal husband with the perfect bone structures. With thought of the future of bearing wonderful children with the perfect set of clavicles.

Little did she know, he thought about her very often. What are the odds of meeting the same person of the opposite sex at bus stop every morning without fail, rain or shine? She seemed like a nice girl; simple, sweet with freckles peppered around her eyes. Her worn out coat with multiply coloured buttons sewn on. She sometimes behaves rather oddly, but otherwise she's definitely a lovely girl-next-door that a boy would take home to meet his mother.

"Should I make the first move and start talking to her, and what about? It might be awkward. I can't risk it turning ugly. Might she think I'm just another lunatic on the loose? I suppose I'll never really know till I try. It'd definitely be nice to make a

new friend, and get to know this pleasantly mysterious girl who seems to have so much to offer.” With this intention and so much more on his mind, the struggling comic artist was determined to establish some form of communication with this lovely girl who made an impression. How? He didn’t know, but he became more conscious of his body language and would take the extra effort to establish eye contact and with a bit of luck, some casual conversation.

The wonderful opportunity came for Marie to make her move when she saw the perfect man standing right in front of her at the bus stop with his umbrella hanging from the depths of his collarbones. The deepness and shape of his physical structure framed the umbrella stalk like a masterpiece of artwork. This moment of absolute flawlessness was broken by a child’s wail when his Lego pieces fell apart as it hit the ground. Marie reacted swiftly to the situation, given the timely opportunity to start a conversation with her ideal man. Lunging forward to retrieve the falling Lego pieces, her impressive stunt landed her on the road. As she struggled weakly to get out of her unflattering position, the bus- punctual for once, pulled over her body, crushing every rib and bone beneath its wheels.

The sweetest of life’s irony; for one obsessed with bones and body structures, it’s a shame for things to culminate to such a bitter end, leaving her no bones intact for a proper burial, on a rainy day.

Everything had happened so quickly he could barely digest the scene that took place before his eyes. The screeching of tyres, a cry of intense pain and the

dead silence that followed; a strange combination of elements of Mother and Child, Lego blocks and this dream girl whom he'd never spoken to in his entire life. He didn't know what to think and he had nothing to say.

He walked over to the bus counter to check the schedule of the next bus. He didn't want to be late for work. Whatever that had just happened didn't seem to matter, just yet. He just had to get to work on time, as before, on the 9 o'clock morning bus. Because he too, loved routines.