

Sink Into Your Skin

PART 1 - The 422

It was late. Just me and one woman left on the bus, two stops from the final stop. Almost home. It'd been a long Friday for me and I had coated its last hours in jays and live music at the Botany View. The bands were nothing much to speak of to be brutally honest but nevertheless they had oozed over me and allowed a peaceful tying up of some mental loose ends. The bus had the dull weight of a tired drunkenness and as the woman alighted - one stop from the final stop - I almost felt like saying goodbye. The idea of a routine and robotic departure just didn't sit right with me. It seemed so alien. But of course I didn't say goodbye. How ridiculous an idea, and how sad it was that it was and forever would be such an unquestionably ridiculous idea.

It's always a more personal farewell to the driver when it's the last stop and you're the only passenger. They've stopped at this stop just for you. Solely for you - that's rare - and as much as the interaction is one of obligation rather than choice, there's always a certain fulfillingly tangible tenderness to it. It was the same tonight.

"Thanks mate, have a good one".

We gave each other a tired but warm nod and for a fleeting moment there was what I'd call an air of general understanding about something. A mutual acknowledgment of the essence of humanity, a force that is eternally present and available but felt rarely and only for seconds at a time.

Now the connection is over.

I walked along the same footpath I'd walked down a thousand times before, fumbled for the same purple key I always carried and thrust it into the same lock I'd opened maybe a million times. The pitch black hallway was no match for my muscle memory. I made myself some aspirin to quell any threats of a hangover and then I was in my room alone with the bitter-sweet weight of familiarity. Not with place but with feeling, although place was always tied to it. Consistency and repetition can be the loneliest things of all when you lose sight of an earnable endpoint.

It'd been another crazy day, and I still had to smother that same biting question that always hid residually in my subconscious; how long can I keep letting this be just enough to keep things ticking over, keep me from spiralling out of control into madness, keep me hanging on?

Just give me a brand new, fresh set of days and I'll be fine. Everything will be perfect. It always is.

PART 2 - Premier Street

I lay next to a vibrating body, she was squirming beautifully in her own laughter, losing her mind over the fact that when she breathed out her nose it whistled and she sounded like a boiling kettle. I always loved seeing her lose it like this. Pure and thoughtless joy. The narration of David Attenborough was muffled in the background, he spoke solemnly about the length of some whale. It'd been a while since I'd felt this good, this relaxed. Checking the time I saw that it was almost one. I should get moving. "Might have to head home", I declared. Might was the perfect word, it's air was laid back and vague but its implications were obvious. We played around for another few minutes, unable to break apart instantly. The drawn out goodbyes. They could be painfully tedious sometimes but tonight was nice. Pulling on my clothes, I climbed down the little ladder and began filling my pockets with the stuff I'd left downstairs. While I got to work rolling up a jay, she rolled me a dart and soon I was ejected into the night air with a jay behind one ear and a dart tucked behind the other. Such a silly look, but it was a blissful evening and it was comforting to feel like a bit of a fool. I set up some Beach Boys for the walk home, but first I'd smoke in silence. It's always such a pleasure, a nighttime walk with your own mellow conscience. Complete silence apart from the slight crackle of burning marijuana and the sweeping whispers of the wind. These streets have so much attached to them. Friends houses and countless nights out with everyone. So much fun and excitement. It was nice to imagine that the joy of past moments had somehow been absorbed by the streets and was now stored in the powerlines, lampposts and trees, always available to someone with a memory of times they had here. In fact, that's just an abstraction of the truth. For as I rambled on down Premier Street my memories emerged vividly and a smile spread across my face. My spirit glowed underneath the light of rehashed moments. Moments of insanity, hilariousness and love.

And that's all it ever took. A fresh set of days. Maybe some unexpected luck. A kind-spirited and honest denouncement from someone close enough to make it tender. Then I could sink into my skin, quiet the mind and look through a lense of contentment. Tinted just how I like it.