

Prelude to a Love Story

by Bradley Hook

Slipping into the Sydney Harbour Tunnel like a nocturnal creature fleeing the light, tears stream down my cheeks, spilling from my lips, the pain too great to care about self-preservation. Drunk still, hands clenched, I strain to focus on the world fading into a blur of dark symmetry as tears obscure the view from my mirrors. Rising up, the snaking darkness replaced by dawn's grey menace, it's incomprehensible that life can become this, as I listen to an ode to an angel past and empty future that just makes the pain worse.

Now I sit here and wish I had known then what I know now. But without then I could not be here, connected, somehow, by dark days of nothingness, memories lost or memories that never started. A drudgery of survival, raw animal functions and a stream of all that is meaningless but gives meaning today in its absence. When did the glimmer of hope appear? When did I climb to my feet and learn to smile?

So I get home, drag myself to bed and dissolve into yet another day of recovery as the golden people laugh on the streets and play in the waves on the shore outside.

Blowtorch neurons solder circuits, deeply embedded in the intensity of their creation. No-one needs me and I need no-one. Except, perhaps, for the angel that will carry me home. But maybe my moment has passed, maybe she has followed her own path back to heaven as I descend to where I more likely belong.

Only now do I understand how the path of life is mirrored and replicated like our filthy virus genes as we follow the timeless predictable cycles of reproduction and consumption, parasites all searching for a prince or angel. Around every corner waits another opinionated beast, tamed only by repetition, fear of repercussion

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and desire.

Yet, each is a story so beautiful and all-consuming.

Tightness in my chest, thoughts that flit around like a butterfly in the sun, everything finds a path back to you. Every thought, every moment brings me back to your face. Who cares that down the track we may hate each other? I'll cause fights with you when you talk to other guys and you'll be cutting about my appearance. We'll make each other sad and then, after prolonging the pain, let oblivion prevail.

But right now, I want to feel your lips on mine, see your eyes light up when I laugh, hear your voice. I am sick. I should be in bed, medicated. In bed with you. And now, as with every other thought, my orbit draws close to the only light I see. It's you.

And maybe we'll be happy together, a thought that is so taboo so early, but we may yet smile into each other's eyes as you stroke your swollen belly and I hold your hand, walking down a sunset beach, laughing at my silly jokes, happy.

This is the mind's journey, when it is ruled by the heart. The force that provides the rythm to our life and when given breath, combusts, leads us to where we must go - together or alone.

