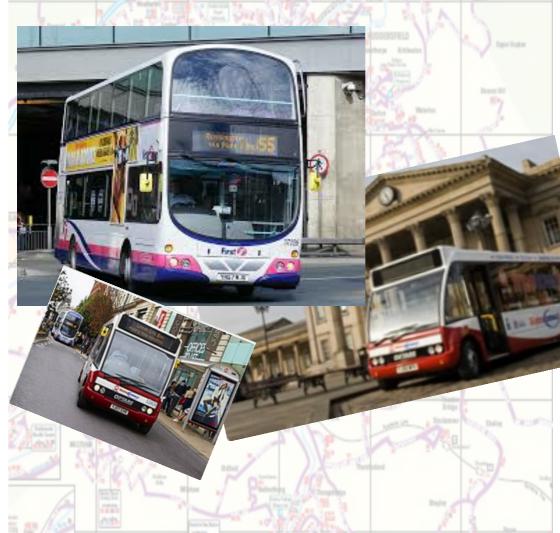
## Snippets at the Bus Station



By

Harry Jivenmukta

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## Dedication

Without the help of the people who write bus timetables, I would never have become so confused.

I was waiting.

On the bench next to me, a young lad said to his girlfriend:

He said: Tasty? Er... well... McDonald's.

She said: I think strawberry milkshake.

He said: Well you have the milkshake and I'll have

the burger and fries.

She said: OK then. But I'll have a few fries as well.

And off they went.

I thought about the simplicities of life, tiny things, the small moments of pure happiness, ecstasy, that come to us every day.

The first slurp of tea in the morning.
That ahhhh... feeling.
It might be another day,
but right now
everything is in the cup of tea.

Throwing open a window and smelling the dew of a fresh morning.
New, every day, for everyone who is awake.

Watching a bird

Watching its way

making its way

across the sky

across after dawn.

just after dawn.

On its own, unconcerned.

The notes of a familiar tune that tells you why it is good to be in love. The exquisite pain the moment of meeting.



I was still waiting. The seat next to me, empty now of the young couple, was filled by an old man, probably with creaky bones, and a hat. He had a shopping bag, cloth, with meagre supplies for the coming days.

No need to worry.

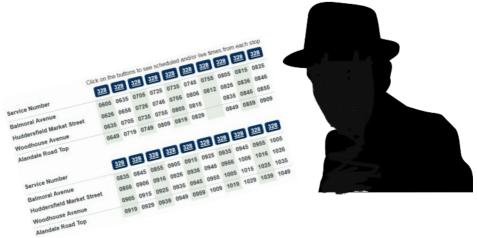
The bus will be along soon just as it has been coming for all these years.

Unvarying routine warms him inside.

The double dip in the mattress, one for him and one for her now turning into just one dip in the middle.

He needs flowers for her grave.

That chair, facing the TV as important as an astronaut's control panel and the remote control, with digits worn out pressing the same buttons for years.



I was still waiting. The old man had gone. He knew when his bus was due. And the bench next to me was empty again.

I can imagine you sitting next to me. Flowing long hair and inquisitive eyes, darting here and there. The last time I waited for a bus, you say, was when I was going to school. 90 children crowding around ready to overwhelm the driver.

Everyone rushing around In identical uniforms.
A flock of flamingos ready to rise into the air as one a mass of curiosity.



Fervent hungry brains willing to be filled with learning.
Facts and figures,
formulas and fiction.
Confusion translated into sense.

And no one is ever tired.
Young limbs stretching into growth,
Longer, taller, more flexible.
Only excitement for the future.
No past, no present.

I got up and wandered to the snack shop to get a drink and a sandwich. I fancied a cheese and pickle, and carton of orange juice.

And fish and chips.
The shop opened at 11.30 on the dot.
But we still got there early
just in case
the fish made a run for it.

We used to wait for the ice cream man. He came at the same time every day. 3.30. Coins in our hands, hot from holding. We couldn't wait, hopping around, excited.

Cartoons started early for toddlers, But mine were on a bit later because I was 7. That was big in those days. You're not 7 every day.



My back was beginning to ache, and I decided that I was not going to wait any longer. So, I got up and wandered back towards home.

Young women mainly, with so many carrier bags, staggering on heels too high, rushing towards the end of the day. Home to slippers and big mugs of coffee.

Office workers trying to look important with ties tied too tight, and buttons all fastened up to the neck, hurrying home to small children, to another sort of happy chaos.

Merry queues of cars all stuck at the traffic lights. Drivers playing pop music and dreaming of empty beaches, blue oceans and paradise.

At home, I took off my shoes, made myself a cup of tea, turned on the TV, reached for the remote control and pondered on what a great life it was.

Ahhh....