

## Five Strangers

Five strangers are waiting at a bus stop.

Out of nowhere one of them says in a loud voice “This song makes no sense!”

The rest continues looking ahead as if they didn’t hear.

One of them will later wonder if the man at the bus stop earlier had a specific song in mind, or whether by ‘song’ he was actually referring to something more abstract or figurative like ‘the song of the city’.

## In terms of your swing

*You’re not a machine. You’re a wonderfully coordinated, eye-hand coordinated animal so let’s make use of that. It’s not about perfection, it’s about skill development. It’s your job to control your swing. It doesn’t mean you’ll always do it perfectly. But it’s your responsibility; it’s not your swing’s responsibility. You cannot delegate that responsibility to your swing and try to filter what we’re talking about here, through some abstract language and try to interpret it ‘Well what does he mean in terms of my swing?’. I don’t mean anything in terms of your swing. What I’m just saying is that you need to take your hand-eye coordination just as you do with a hammer when you pound a nail. And you have to take responsibility for applying the hammerhead TO the nail-head and you can’t say to someone else ‘Come and see what’s wrong with my nail driving swing, I seem to be bending too many nails today.’ It doesn’t work that way. Your job is to take the end of the hammer and apply it, using your hand-eye coordination TO the nail.*

Written by

Amanda Kyritsopoulou

### **Made of Rubber**

Switching to a lifestyle that allows for certain distances to be walked on a daily basis comes with the side-effect of shoes wearing off faster than usual. That realisation may appear as too obvious but in reality it only hits a couple of pairs down the line.

It is likely that the proportion of the population that would actually foresee this nuisance and prepare accordingly, also enjoys using miscellaneous articles such as wall mounted broom holders and toothpaste squeezers.

### **The Initial Assumption**

Because of an overall lack of visual or sensory symptoms on the surface of the skin in combination with no tearfulness or loss of hair, the initial assumption was that the situation was over the minute it ended. However nine months later, when the feeling of what feeling better actually feels like settled in, it became imperative to revise the initial assumption and that is exactly what happened. The initial assumption being that the situation was over the minute it ended.

## The Alarm

Jacqueline's neighbour's alarm clock goes off every morning at 6.30 am and continues ringing for about an hour. She has never met her neighbour as she has recently moved in this new flat with her male partner Ed. It's been 4 months. It is now clear that no one is in her neighbour's apartment to press the stop-it button. It is also clear that it is the type of alarm clock that gets plugged into a socket so it doesn't run out of battery. Jacqueline owns a similar one so she knows how it works.

Jacqueline is hoping that the neighbour is indeed away and will one day come back to stop the alarm going off. She wonders when that is going to happen. She is hoping that the neighbour is away and they will be back soon because if they are not, she would assume that the neighbour is dead. And if the neighbour is indeed dead, then she can't help but wonder whether they are being dead inside the apartment or somewhere else. All of the above is obviously very alarming.

Sometimes she will take a moment to marvel at the speed at which she can generate such sequences in her mind, resulting in a minor discomfort inside her stomach.

*Is the neighbour away?  
if yes  
for how long?  
If no  
is the neighbour dead?  
If yes  
is the neighbour away?  
If no  
repeat from start*

After years of careful self-observation she has also noticed that the moments of intentionally releasing such thinking spirals, by focusing on something entirely different and practical, are often followed by an unintentional burp.

Jacqueline's male partner Ed on the other hand, is very good at generating answers and discusses the scenario of the neighbour being dead with a calm, detached matter-of-fact-ness accompanied by the release of a series of farts, some intentional some not. Jacqueline experiences Ed's stance as both infuriating and reassuring.

*If dead, for how long?  
Sometimes months.  
If dead for months, what about the friends?  
Some people are truly alone.  
If dead for months and truly alone, what about the rent?  
Direct debit or owned property.  
If dead for months, truly alone and owning property, what about the mortgage?  
Direct debit or no mortgage.*

Ed says plenty of people own places without a mortgage. He says he knows plenty of them. She doesn't.

Jacqueline has been consumed by building her website and hasn't been out at all in three days. She wishes she could afford a graphic designer and is preoccupied by the dilemma of whether having an online shop could turn her unsuccessful business into a successful one. In the meantime, she keeps her bedroom windows open in case the Fire Brigade shows up and attempts to enter the building to retrieve the neighbour's body. She is also undecided about how to visually introduce her work online, temporarily testing a straightforward template where everything shows up as a plain list of captioned photographs in chronological order. It would be this or a slightly more nuanced approach where everything appears as an image of a model of the original thing. She has been both criticized and complimented for her tendency to conceal meaning. This makes her constantly question her decisions on that matter and as a consequence, her choice of profession at large.

Yesterday morning, at 6.30am, as the neighbour's alarm went off again, she had the idea of using the image of a turtle as the prompt for an erratic type of navigation through the website. The idea being that the turtle would function as a tour guide, ready to be clicked on and randomly lead the viewer to the next image or text without any reference to timeline or content consistency.

*Home page, find turtle  
If press turtle  
Take to Winning the Race  
Winning the Race page, find turtle  
If press turtle  
Take to Bio  
Bio page, find turtle  
If press turtle  
Take to Fable*

*And so on*

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Some people like very orderly websites that convey information in a clear manner, while others enjoy a type of navigation that offers a greater sense of freedom, which is really a greater sense of control, just handed over. She now knows that in her field, a fancy way of convincingly camouflaging that dynamic with words is through the use of phrases like *agency through contingency*. In any case she likes how turtles are slow, ugly and related to dinosaurs. Carrying their own shell they seem to be in it for the long run. Ed will think that the turtle is a horrible idea no matter the terminology. Jacqueline thinks that this is probably because in his field and gender, confidence matters more than expertise.

It is 7am in the morning, six months after Jaqueline's turtle idea and the neighbour's alarm hasn't rang yet. Lying there awake and somewhat relieved, Jacqueline is staring at how Ed's double chin is trembling while he snores. She is coming to the understanding that she is probably too stupid for Ed who is definitely too smart and wonders if people are ever so stupid to the point of ending up smart or if it only works the other way round. She makes a mental note to not forget her alarm clock when she leaves or the neighbour might think she's dead.

*Home page, find turtle*

*If press turtle*

*Take to Exit.*

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