

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Just so

by Holly Raber

Tim Chance is a small, neat fastidious man with a large and expansive wife. This morning finds Tim staring disconsolately at a piece of burnt toast for the third day in a row. An angry singed smell of popcorn and cat's pee rises from its blackened surface and coats his nostrils, his eyes water

The smoke alarm punctuates the uneasy silence and the acrid scent drifts aimlessly around the small space and settles in the small man's throat.

Tim's world tilts on its axis, a seismic shift, of which he is at present unaware.

'It's only toast Tim... Scrape it!'

Suzy, the aforementioned wife is stabbing viciously at its volcanic surface. Charred splinters scatter, settling like flies on the surface of her leafy green juice. Specks freckle the poached egg now limpid and cooling in front of her just so perfect husband.

The gastric band has squeezed the life out of Suzy. Once pretty and pliant she is now pithy and parched.

Abruptly Tim pushes back his chair and with hardly a glance at his uneaten breakfast and his unconcerned wife leaves for work an unprecedented twenty minutes early. Slightly disorientated Tim is cast adrift in the cool clear morning too early for his train and too late to change his mind.

The stale aroma of burnt toast still lingers, a scent of reproach.

Tim had succeeded in being totally unnoticeable all his life, slipping seamlessly from school into work, from boy into man, causing barely a ripple. A man of catholic tastes, Tim likes his life just so, no surprises, the Monday to Friday commute and sex on a Saturday night. Today is Tuesday.