

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

From a Safe Distance  
a timed exercise

by Chris Kingham

I have the privilege of walking to work with her.

Always the same coffee shop, always the exact same order. Skinny Vanilla Latte with a pan au chocolat. As usual the barista flirts shamelessly with her. No one could blame him. She is intoxicating. She is irresistible.

All morning she occupies my mind. She makes doing anything other than daydreaming very difficult. Luckily we spend most lunchtimes together. We differ over what to eat normally. I prefer hot food - pizza maybe, or pasta perhaps. She tends to choose sushi or a sandwich. Thankfully we both enjoy eating outside, and both adore the park.

Afternoons tend to be more difficult. I miss her. I spend much of them wondering what we will do later. Planning.

I am always there when she finishes work. I would never be late for her. I would never dream of letting her down.

Today I can sense she's had a bad day. She doesn't say anything, but her shoulders are slumped and the corners of her perfect mouth downturned. Her eyes a fraction of a percent duller than normal.

Not as vibrant. Not as alive. I instantly hate whomever caused this. But she doesn't complain, she is too lost in thought. It is like she is not with me.

The walk home is never long enough. I never have time to tell her all the things I would like to tell her. I wish I had more courage.

Dinner is always at 7pm. It is quite remarkable just how well she keeps a routine. Tonight it is leftovers from the night before. Any opportunity to not cook again. We are both so lazy. In a planet consisting of over seven and a half billion souls we both somehow find ourselves painfully lonely.

Bedtime. Ah bedtime. She showers. I prefer to have a bath - I find it allows me some alone time. Whatever that means.

Every month she cashes the cheque. She smiles when the letter arrives on the doormat. A genuine smile. She wants the money. She needs the money. It's hard to know if she knows the price she pays for it?

The smile is genuine. She doesn't care. She's happy.

This is a symbiotic relationship. I know I am a parasite of sorts. Not great for the ego. But I am not deluded. I take what I need. She does the same.

Love doesn't make the world go around. Money makes the world go round.