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My Name is Clive

by Catriona Millar

I live in a short and ordinary street and I drive a short and ordinary car. I am married to a short and ordinary wife called Jill who reminds me her name is spelt with a 'G' as opposed to the ordinary 'J' which some say makes her a bit arty....something I've never really encouraged in her. Which is just as well because being short and ordinary has a tendency to leave you bilious when one comes upon any form of the 'extra' ordinary like the 'extra' ordinary behaviour that emanates from the woman called Jodie with blue hair who lives opposite on the odd side.

"You're not dying your hair purple," I said to my Jill, "and your not going to start being called *Gill* either your not a blooming fish."

Jill and myself live in harmony on the sensible even side of the street. When our short and ordinary day is complete we climb up our short and ordinary stairs at ten on the dot and lie on our short and ordinary bed.

If it's a Saturday Jill brings the cocoa into the lounge and we stay up later... till half past ten watching 'Strictly Small and Ordinary'...both celebrating the weekend with a platter of custard creams and some nice garibaldiis.

Some evenings Jill will look at me from her armchair across the lounge and ask if I notice anything different. On Tuesday she asked me if she thought she had turned into her brother or any other kind of different.

"I hope not," I say clutching my heart, "I don't think my short and ordinary heart could take ...anything...'different," I reply quickly.

One night in bed Jill lost her library book just as we were ready to put the lights off.

"It can't have gone far," I said struggling to put my light on my side on again.

"Where can it have got to?" she said pulling back the bedcovers to search....

"What does it look like?" I asked her.

"Well it's small and quite ordinary. Its called, 'Watch Your Hyperbole' by Edwina Shatt. I hope we don't get fined."

'What an adventure', I thought, darkness is cheap but its no good when you're looking for a library book at night. We don't often get an adventure like that in our house and thanked the Lord when we found it at long last in the fridge.

If I was to be honest Jill's not been right for a long time now she's not the least bit as ordinary as she used to be... she put the alarm clock in the bed the other night and tried to set our hot water bottle for seven thirty.

"Now I hope to god you're not starting to go "zany" on us girl!" I shouted to her.

She didn't listen.

"Perhaps it's just my short and ordinary imagination.... well I'm hoping it is anyway."

"Are you sure you can't see anything different?" she keeps asking me.

"No of course I can't and I don't want to neither." I keep repeating.

At three o'clock one morning I found her outside in her nightie hailing a taxi.

"Taxi, taxi!" she were shouting.

"And what kind of dent will that make in my small and ordinary pay packet?" I asked her as I shoved her back in the house, "and where do you think you're going at this ungodly time of night?"

One day I woke up with a short and very out of the ordinary cough, "now look what you've made me have with all your shenanigans, I've never had a cough like this in my life," I said to her with a good deal of frustration in my voice.

Next day I go to the doctor it was a very short and very ordinary sort of appointment. But I wasn't well to be honest it was very serious. Jill didn't seem too bothered...just kept pointing at the multi-coloured butterflies and tartan bats with bells on that circled round her head.

In between one of my coughs which were getting less short and less ordinary I must have slipped away because I saw our short and ordinary street as a seagull must do from the sky...I got higher and higher floating up not a bad feeling nor ordinary if I was to be frank.

When I got there a man asked me if I had done anything wrong

"Nup," I replied, with firmness in my voice, "I seemed to have lived a short and ordinary life sir."

He handed me my wings... they were huge and he told me they were what you referred to as diaphanous and were made from satin and silk and dyed cerulean blue to match the sky.

"I do like them I said feeling their fine texture...but I don't suppose you do them more short and ordinary like and in polyester?"