



For the Love of Guy

by Vera Gajic

I found out yesterday that Guy was dead. Not only was he dead but he'd died two years ago and I hadn't known. Found out at one of those drinks parties, which I sometimes get invited to, just to make up numbers. Someone I once knew just came out with it.

"Didn't you know Guy?"

"Yes."

"Sad he died wasn't it?"

My stomach fell to my feet, as if in a lift rocketing to the sky. I walked straight out. So absolute, so final, gone, dead, the end. How could I not have known? It's true I hadn't been thinking about him as much as I used to but he still took up a whole section of my brain all to himself. It was years since I'd last seen him, decades even but deep down I hoped our paths would cross. I opened a Facebook account ten years ago in case he was looking for me. He wasn't.

Lying in bed I couldn't sleep. In the dark I revisited my old memories of Guy, memories like old friends. I have spent a lot of time with them over the years, I choose the best ones, the shared jokes, the sweet smiles, the clever banter. I dust down each one check it over and try and relive it.

It is harder now than it used to be to put myself into the young person I once was. I try and feel the butterflies in the stomach, the hair on my arms standing up when he accidentally brushed passed me while I sat at my desk trying to work, pretending I hadn't notice him coming in, late as usual.

I hadn't always felt like that, it wasn't love at first sight or anything that shallow.

The first time I saw him I remember thinking, 'who is that skinny boy with floppy asymmetrical hair pretending to be a new romantic slouching outside the office door?'

When he was given the desk next to mine I only gave a curt hello. But the next six months were the most exciting of my life. Gradually getting to know Guy, seeing him change before my eyes from a wimp to a super bright, witty, divine human. I couldn't work out whether he was actually changing or just changing in my head. Was everyone else feeling the same?

The office was full of unknown temps, those with a few months under their belts giving out an air of superiority, I had no-one to confide in. Guy was way out of my league, but not way out enough to stop me dreaming of him and thinking he might feel the same way. How could a feeling with such a force come from me and not have an equal force coming back, the law of physics?

As they grew I learnt to keep my feelings hidden. Pinching myself, biting my tongue, head down, don't look up, don't look up, I might give myself away... But how would we move on? I looked for any sign, smiling, yes, talking to me, of course, laughing with me, yes. What now?

Suddenly the job came to an end. On our last day I asked if he wanted to go for a drink. He'd love to but he'd promised to meet someone else, another time maybe. Yes another time. I gave him my address and phone number. No mobiles then, no facebook, no way of making him give me his. Thanks he said and was off.

I sat by the phone for months. Not all the time of course, I did go to work but checking the newly bought answerphone messages or lack of them became my obsession. Then the Christmas Card arrived. "Be good to catch up - love Guy" and an address. Oh yes, there it was, finally, he'd made a move. I sent my card and suggested we meet in a pub and asked him to ring if he was coming. Yes he was, he said on the answerphone. I had five days to wait. The tension was unbearable, I couldn't sleep, much as I can't now. The rings beneath my eyes were so dark.

Walking into the pub I was like an electrified jelly, I didn't know how I was going to cope with seeing him, was my racing heart going to make me shake? My voice too high.

"Hello Guy."

"Hi, this is Daisy my girlfriend?"

Noooo how could he do that to me? No I won't think about that memory, far too painful. But now he's dead, no more chances to bump into him to make him realise we were meant to be together. Was it all for nothing?