

So how did your morning start today

Walking to the office from the side street car park may only be a few hundred meters but in that distance there are several residential gardens and lots of trees and sometimes birds to look at. I walk this same path every day. Most mornings it's still dark, now and then dawn is breaking.

The rain we've been receiving the last few days had stopped over night. Today I was a little later than usual, traffic was very heavy. But how lucky was I, today's sunrise was somewhat remarkable, shining through the hundred foot gum trees. It always seems to be a different hue in the colours after rain. I hear it's because all the dust has been washed off everything and the colours are vibrantly true.

As I strolled my merry way I could hear some currawongs, their songs make me smile, I have wonderful childhood memories listening to these beautiful birds. They were playing in the gum trees as if they were chasing the sunlight, in and around the leaves. I read on the web that explains about their playful flight, "comical flight style in amongst foliage, appearing to almost fall about from branch to branch as if they were inept flyers", how true.

My right foot hit a branch on the ground and I nearly fell over. 'That was close', I thought to myself, I could have been a little grubby if I landed on the muddy path. Steadying myself I looked over to my left just near the end of the first building in our complex I saw an old man sitting against the end wall. He was dressed like a bum, hell, he look like a bum. He had a smile on his face that was a little daunting yet intriguing.

I said hello and asked if I could help him with anything. His smile beamed even more and told me he was fine just resting and listening to the currawongs. Said he lived in a squat further up the road and had been listening to the birds as he did every day.

"This morning there was a different joyous song these birds were singing and I came down to sit, watch and listen to them." he continued with a smile.

"I was watching you limp down the path as you do every day when I noticed you smiled when the currawongs started to sing. Why do they have an affect on you?" he asked.

I was looking at this bum and somehow I wasn't getting the right vibes for what I was expecting to see in a bum. His teeth were quite good and not at all that dirty. His hands, while they were a little grubby yet his nails were kept. His attire was old and dirty. And well, his shoes could do with renewing. He looked at least in his seventies or eighties. Then I remembered that passing comment Jen threw at me last Wednesday night, "Stop being so judgemental with your eyes."

I won't think of him as a bum anymore, I told him how I used to listen to the currawongs down in the back paddock of a morning when I fed the chooks, ducks and poddy calf's as a young boy. They were my morning friends and I loved the way they would play and sing. Sometimes I would think these were the same birds from yesteryear and are now here to play and sing for me going to work.

He looked at me and smiled. "I will take you up on that passing comment of getting me something." He said with a cough and splutter. A thought raced though my head, 'No way am I getting you any smokes'.

He wiped his mouth and asked for a cup of black coffee with some sugar. I said sure, I had to go and set up the coffee machine in the office before everyone gets in, in about an hours time. As I headed off, he said, "We forget to play and sing as we get older and you stopped way to long ago".

I nearly swung around and asked how would he know that, only to think to myself he was just rambling to himself. I gave him a smile and told him I would be fifteen minutes or so. He continued to talk to himself.

What the hell, I was thinking as I set the coffee machine up for the day, there was something strange about this guy and a cup of coffee isn't going to hurt anyone. I grab some money out of my wallet, why not, I won heaps last week at the club and walked back outside with the coffee and money for this guy. The sun was well and truly up now and I noticed the birds had left, well stopped playing and singing , I couldn't see them.

As I got around the end of the building thinking he would be gone I noticed he was still sitting against the end wall. The closer I got, I could see he was asleep. I lent down and gave him a little nudge to give him the coffee and the few notes I got from my wallet. The nudge was only gentle but he started to fall to the right and just landed on the path, not a movement at all. He was either unconscious or dead. I rang 000 and informed them what had happened. I moved closer to lift his head off the muddy path and I could tell he was dead. I rang 000 again and told them he had died and they said the police should be there soon.

I started to lift him back up to his sitting position thinking, 'It's not a crime scene', I've been definitely watching to many movies. I wasn't going to leave him face down on the muddy path. After sitting him up I put his hands on his lap, sat with him and just chatted to him drinking the coffee until the police arrived.

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