

To and Fro by William Meakin

About a month ago I crashed my car. While it was getting repaired I had to take a bus to work, an idea that I disliked, but I didn't really have any choice. So instead of walking a few steps to the garage in the morning I walked over a thousand to the nearest bus stop.

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The bus is late. No surprises there. I step on, buy a ticket and start looking for a seat. There's some right at the back and I head towards them. As I walk down the aisle I look at some of the other passengers and find myself wondering where are they going, what are they thinking, what are their lives like.

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I sit down and look out the window, but it's only rush hour traffic and angry motorists. I quickly get bored. Instead I turn my attention back to the passengers. There is a young man sitting in the row opposite me, maybe it's an effect of the boredom but I start imagining answers to my own questions. It's holidays so he isn't going to school. He's going to the cinema with a mate and was thinking he should have brought some more money.

I notice a child in the row in front and across from me. He's trying to work out why everyone keeps wasting time putting bits of paper in a box then taking them out again.

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The next day I grab a book to read on the bus so I won't get bored. Once again I do the same routine as yesterday. I slump down in a seat and start reading. After a few minutes I glimpse out the corner of my eye



Passengers Repose, by Lisa Conolly

an African woman and remember the questions I was thinking about yesterday. I lay my book down and start thinking of the answers.

She was heading to her first lesson to learn how to play the violin. She was thinking of an orchestra she had seen which had inspired her to learn an instrument. The violin seemed to stand out from the rest of the orchestra so she had booked some lessons the very next day.

I pick my book back up, smiling at this little insight. But again I put it down as I decide to think about someone else. I look around and spot two girls talking to each other. They're going to a friend's party and trying to guess who would be there.

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I'm in the same seat again on the way home but instead of reading my book I once again look around at everyone.

There is a girl staring out the window looking bored, she lives in the country so she's just had to spend the last three hours on a bus to the uni. She's going to a talk on a zoology course that's starting next year but forgot to bring the timetable so she's trying to remember when it starts, she thinks around six but she's not sure so she'll have to ask someone when she gets there. I turn my attention to a man who's just stepped onto the bus.



He's going to visit his brother in hospital who fell off some scaffolding and landed on his back, that's why he has his eyes closed, he's hoping desperately that he'll be okay. The man heads to a seat behind me and I'm left staring at the ticket machine.



I stop staring as I see a guy wearing headphones, he's heading for the airport to take a flight to Sydney for the New Year celebrations, he's planning on staying with his cousin, who has a flat that looks out over the harbour with a perfect view of the fireworks.



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When I get back from work I get a call from the crash repairer saying my car was ready and am surprised to find myself feeling slightly disappointed. These people I've been thinking about have turned into more than just strangers, they're now the characters of a play building in my head, with parts of their lives jumping out at me randomly, expanding until I know everything about them; their names, hobbies, opinions, beliefs, and a countless number of other things.



I guess I'll never know what their lives are really like, but I still enjoy imagining them anyway.