

## **A Very Bad Day 25.05 by Terry Miles**

It got off to a very bad start. I couldn't find Mrs. B's house keys. After a half an hour's search I remembered that she had asked me to give them back to her, so she could give them to someone who was going to stay at her house.

I opened the back door to clear the air, and it was cold. I put on a very old body-warmer. I quickly ate my left-over salad and small boiled potato left-overs from the night before and brushed my teeth. I was ready to go. I only had to finish dressing. I put on my all-weather jacket. It does its job even though it's only one layer thick. Shiny on the outside with a Puma logo on it, white on black. I'm always being questioned why I'm wearing it! I bought it from a charity shop, way back, I put on my red scarf and shades and finally, my black cap.

I picked up my bag of washing and took my white cane that was in front of the radiator by the door and ventured out. I double-locked the door and walked the couple of hundred yards to the bus-stop. It had started to rain. It wasn't a hard shower, just a cold drizzle.

Why was I carrying my bag of washing whilst I was going to work? I can do my washing whilst I'm polishing my employer's brass door-knocker and letterbox and some other chores, like washing-up and watering the plants in the conservatory, and sometimes de-snailing the Sum and Substance Hosta, which I gave her.

I arrived at the bus-stop and asked the three people in the queue when the next double decker was due. Two people started answering me, one to what I meant, and the other answered my question, which I didn't

catch because they were responding at the same time. So I asked again and got the two-minutes, which was what I wanted.

The bus arrived and I boarded it. I was offered a seat but said, "I don't usually sit for two stops. But thank you."

At Hammersmith Tube station I alighted and took the escalator to the entry gate area. I called out for a member of staff and was escorted down the stairs to the platform. I was guided onto the second carriage which I usually ask for. It's closest to the stairs at Turnham Green Station, where I was met by a female supervisor.

I asked to be escorted to the E3 bus-stop, which is right outside the station. When she checked the arrival time of the next bus, she said, "That can't be right, it's 10 minutes away. She went into the station to double check. She returned a few moments later and said, "That's correct, ten minutes."

I thanked her and she returned to the station and I announced, "It's 10 minutes folks, I'm afraid."

The bus arrived and it was only going to Turnham Green Church. I got on because the 272 bus also stops there. Four more E3 buses also terminated there. Needless to say, it took some time for a 272 bus to arrive. Everyone in the queue was grumbling. "What if you are trying to arrive for an appointment?" one person quipped.

When I got off the bus I had to question another ex-passenger about the number of side streets I had to cross before turning the corner. I went

into the Co-op shop and bought 4 custard doughnuts. I needed a small treat. I rang Mrs. B's doorbell and there was no reply. I tried again with the same result. I decided to eat two of the four doughnuts. After that I pressed on the letterbox-lid and pressed the bell again. It was working. But still no response. It was then that I tried to recall the instructions for my next visit. I had to leave it for one week. The next week she would leave the front door on the latch. "Shit," I exclaimed. And I needed a piss. Luckily, she has a small front garden with a car in the drive that I can hide behind whilst I take a piss on the border and out of sight, from nosey neighbours. I did just that and retracted my steps to the E3 bus-stop, this side of the station. There was a queue there. I told them that the E3 buses might still not be running. Some of them followed me to the next bus stop where 272 also stops. We all got there before an E3 bus arrived.

One chap told me how he used to work on fair-grounds and how that work no longer exists.

"Technology and safety regulations." I suggested.

"I'm bipolar. I find it difficult to work."

The bus arrived. "Good, it's going to Turnham Green station," I muttered to myself as I got on the bus.

At Turnham Green Station an operative said he had to go into the office to check if someone was available at Hammersmith. I acknowledged his response and walked through the ticket barrier. A minute later and he was at my side guiding me up the stairs to the platform.

"I want to board the second carriage from the end," I said.

“I can’t take you to that carriage. I have to put you on the first carriage.”

“No you don’t have to do that,” I said. I’ve been going on the second to last carriage, for decades at this station.”

“If you don’t let me put you on the first carriage, you don’t need my assistance, and I’ll leave you here,” and with that said he turned and started walking down the stairs.

“I’ll make a complaint when I get to my destination,” I called down to him as he descended the steps.

By that time I was upset and angry.

I boarded the next train and got off at Hammersmith. There was someone waiting for me there. She said, “A member of staff at Turnham Green telephoned us to say you needed assistance here.”

I gave her my account to what had happened at Turnham Green Station. I told her how upset I was at being treated like that and asked if I could make a complaint.

The member of staff was the same one who had escorted me to the platform as I was going to work this morning. She took me to the supervisors office and I was introduced to her.

“Can I sit down? I have a slipped disc and have Sciatica.”

“Come over here,” she said. I followed her to an empty seat and sat down. She sat down too. I explained why I was so upset. “My heart is still racing. I like to have some decisions I can still make for myself and that are helpful to your staff too.”

“He should have explained, If you want to go into another carriage, it will be at your own risk. He telephoned to tell us you were on the train.”

I thought I knew what had happened. He must have gone into the staff office and been questioned why he had left me there alone before the train had arrived. He must have said, something like, I had this man who wouldn’t let me take him to the front carriage, so I left him there.”

“What! He comes every week and asks us to put him on the second to last carriage because that is where our member of staff will be waiting for him on the platform. You’d better telephone Hammersmith and tell them he’ll be on the second to last carriage.”

I told the supervisor that I wrote poetry.”

“We have poetry days sometimes. I think she said on Veterans day.

Poppy Day!

“I said, I’ll read you one.” I stood up and recited:

And time is flowing by the moulded hill,  
that we once stole  
from the naked beasts of wild  
and calved our monuments of thanks,  
to gods of old. yet these  
like all monuments will fall  
and who then, will be sorry at this call?

We, maybe, but not  
the naked beasts of wild.

“And just a very small one,” I added.

A dog emerges from the village pond.  
Shaking off the wetness,  
the dog, without a thought  
of doing so enjoyed the sensation  
The dog, not thinking, of how it's done,  
didn't miss anything.  
Everything and everyone  
around, was wet.

“We might give you a ring around the time.” she said.

It might have been more positive than that but I don't put my hopes too  
high.

I hope she tells the guy that I'm a performance poet.  
I can't read very long poems now my sight is so bad.  
Perhaps, I should try writing some smaller ones.

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