



Virgin Slate

Issue 2

Two Become One

November 2011

**L: "I want to be a star when I grow up",
said the brother to his sister.
"You'll be nothing but a pup",
replied a passing mister.**

**E: The little boy did not understand
that one day he would get his wish;
in a way, that was most underhand
and began with a petri dish.**

**U: For the boy was often sick
and it took time for doctors to uncover
the reason his body took such a kick
and every illness stuck like a lover.**

**K: The doctors were gentle when they came with the needle
to gather some blood for the dish.
The boy hoped he wasn't too feeble
and that someone would grant his wish.**

**A: He gazed up at the stars every night from his bed,
wishing and hoping and dreaming.
Nurses came to try help him be fed,
but the little boy, he had no feeling.**

**E: With his last ounce of strength he raised his arm
and pointed to show the nurse
the brightest star at the edge of a farm
And then she let out a curse!**

**M: For the boy was dying, there and then.
A whisper escaped his lips:
"I want to become one", said little Ben,
as his head, it slowly dips.**

**I: The boy was gone, alive no more.
The doctors stare at the dish.
The nurse she cries, but swings the door
to see if the boy got his wish.**

**A: And there up high,
a star glows bright.
Ben's in the sky,
everything is alright. :)**

Once he sat down again and picked up the first one, he checked his pockets. Left jeans back pocket. No. Right jeans back pocket. No. Front right. No. Front left. No. Not in the right jacket pocket or the left and not in the inside jacket pocket. The second one was gone. He checked his wallet, again, but he knew it wasn't there, he'd already checked. Twice.

It could be anywhere - hopefully nowhere too embarrassing. It didn't really matter that it was gone. They were pretty cheap anyway; certainly if you bought them in a supermarket, rather than a pub toilet. And cheaper still if you bought a twelve pack, which he had, a few months back, when he thought he might need them, which he hadn't.

He felt he should think through where he might have lost it. He'd had them both in his wallet on the plane home. But in his parents' house, he'd taken them from his wallet and put them in his jeans pocket when he'd put on his suit - he was pretty sure he wouldn't need them at the funeral. And this morning he'd put on the jeans. The first one must have been in his jeans pocket, until it fell out, onto his seat, on the train, the crowded train.

It was his own fault. He shouldn't have stood up to help that woman. She would have figured it out herself. All she wanted to know was when she should get out at *James' Hospital*. "When the announcer says *James*", would have been the correct response, if he'd been thinking straight. He didn't have to stand up, look at the map and count the stations for her. Completely unnecessary.

It was his own fault for trying to be nice, for trying to impress the girl. Not the woman who needed directions, but the girl in the seat beside him. There wasn't even any point in trying to impress her. It's not like he was going to get the chance to talk to her, to get to know her, to get anywhere with her. So there was no point in trying to impress her, especially when he ended up making a tit of himself in front of her instead.

She'd got on the train a few stops after him. The long wavy red hair had caught his eye, and the little New Zealand flag on the large rucksack she was half-carrying, half-dragging. She wasn't from New Zealand, he didn't think; he'd heard her talk with her friend; she had a Dublin accent, a mild one, but definitely Dublin.

She'd got on with her friend, and her kiwi bag and her red hair and he couldn't stop looking at her. Her bright red hair and her bright blue coat and the bright blue fingernails that matched the coat. Her fingernails were short, and bright blue. Her coat looked warm, and the furry brown boots looked warm too, and the blue jeans. She'd got on with her kiwi bag and her red hair, and blue nails and coat and jeans and brown boots and sat right beside him.

They'd both sat sideways. It would have been rude to sit straight and stare at her. So he sat sideways and looked at her sideways while pretending to look out the window. She probably knew he was looking at her, but what could he do. It would have been worse to look away, to make a point of not looking at her.

He thought about making conversation, but what would he say that wouldn't just sound weird. "Where are you off too?" Weird. "Great weather we're having". Weird. "I like your fingernails and your hair and your kiwi bag and your furry boots". Very weird.

He got his opportunity to make an impression when the old lady had asked when she should get out for *James' Hospital*. He was polite. He was friendly. He stood up from his seat; stood up in the crowded train, beside the kiwi bag and the furry boots and left his seat empty behind him to look sideways at the map on the side of the train.

Except his seat wasn't empty. The one he had found was there. The little square packet. The little bright shiny silver square packet with the faint circular impression. Right there on the seat. As he counted the stops to *James'* (nine), the bright silver shiny square packet was there on the seat, right in front of the red hair and the blue fingernails and the kiwi bag and the furry boots. As he counted nine stops, sideways.

After that, he stopped wondering how he could make an impression.

Once he sat down and picked up the first one, he checked his pockets. Left jeans back pocket – no; right jeans back pocket – no; not in the front pockets and not in his jacket. The second one was gone. He checked his wallet, but he knew it wasn't there.

Maybe he'd lost it in his parents' house, maybe in the bedroom, hopefully not in the sitting room. Maybe he'd lost it in the taxi. The taxi driver had been relaxed, easy-going and there wasn't much change he'd see them again. Hopefully he'd lost it in the taxi. Hopefully he wouldn't find it again. He'd had two, now he had one; finding the first one had been bad enough.

"But still she gazed and still the wonder grew, that one small head could carry all he knew". Could it? Did it? Or was it all a facade? An attempt to distort reality, to augment the ego? Or maybe, worse still, an evil monster disguised in lambs' clothing and Solomon robes.

The setting sun's golden rays illuminated the silken beach as she strolled pensively along. Suddenly, in a dazzling blaze, she felt an enormous thud. As she struggled to stay upright, two strong bronze arms balanced her, holding her close against his chest. As she regained her composure, two steel blue eyes held her gaze and instantly hypnotised her.

In the weeks and months that followed this bizarre encounter, a relationship developed with the tall dark handsome stranger. As it progressed, first mentally and socially, then intensely physical, yet strange inexplicable doubts arose in Sylvia's mind, doubts which at times almost suffocated the intensity of the relationship. *"...and still the wonder grew!"*

The mystery of this "intimate" friend, yet sometimes stranger, continued to pose a problem. There were the strange mannerisms, the awkward silences, counterbalanced by explosions of deep and philosophical discourses. Yet, despite these lingering doubts, the relationship grew in intensity and depth with Sylvia wondering, and at times hoping desperately, that one day soon "two would become one". Yes, it was heading in that direction, quite definitely.

Suddenly, the shrill sound of the doorbell disturbed her pleasant pondering. "Please come down to the station to answer a few questions", ordered the dour policemen; his voice, sharp and menacing, echoing the frosty night air.

A cold, terrifying shudder shook her whole body. Had her darkest fears materialised? Had these strange premonitions and terrifying fears become a reality?

A Little Death

AC

**I have walked for two hours
When I come upon the lake
A dark pool midst
Reeds and marsh**

**As I watch
A cormorant breaks the surface
A silver flash at her mouth
Bird and fish rising as one**

**Deftly she turns him
Another little death**

**She holds me then
This sleek bird hunting
In the night of the water
Silent
alone**

Today

I lifted my lids to the dazzling sunshine.
No past could quell that desire, that fire for life.
Mundane, the work it was.
But that I could do it, such joy.
One daily chore tumbling into the next,
Such progress.
No pain, no gain, so true.
The seconds, minutes, hours are mine.
Such ecstasy, tumbling, falling,
Dazzling light rushing up to greet
As dawn rushes out to meet new day.
Wild, wild and warm,
Steadies the breeze to enfold,
like babe in arms.
Such solace, such comfort unknown before
Where heart and soul had lain
Begins today.

About VirginSlate

VirginSlate is a group of would-be creative writers based in Cork, Ireland.

Our inaugural session happened in the Slate Bar in Cork on Tuesday, 11th October 2011. We can blame the teacher of our creative writing class for cancelling that night, so we had nothing better to do than go to the pub and get creative.

Each of our fortnightly issues will begin with a theme (a word or a phrase). We then have two weeks to submit a piece of writing on that theme. The writing can use any form and take the theme in any direction the author wishes.

Every two weeks the group meets (in a pub) to discuss the various submissions and decides upon a theme for the following fortnight. The authors then have a chance to make any edits they like before the submissions are published online.

We provide a forum for would-be creative writers to practice their writing and get some friendly feedback and constructive criticism.

Selecting a theme each fortnight makes it easier to stop wondering what to write about and to concentrate on just writing something.

New members are welcome:

Email us at: virginslate@gmail.com

Or contact us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/VirginSlate>