

Time To Leave

by Venita Munir

He's always there. Perhaps I'm being paranoid. There's no menace and we like similar music. We eke out the work hours in banter.

He starts to loiter around Emergency, though rostered to the wards. Doesn't approach me, but looms present without any tasks. It seems unusual, but orderlies can work hospital-wide. He's distinct; the blond ponytail of a surfer, but pallid and willowy like he lives on *2-Minute Noodles* in a vegan share house.

Crossing the gritty carpark at night always unnerves me. After my late shift I find him tinkering under his old beetle. His familiarity reassures me, until I realise he finished hours ago. He's sheepish. Invites me to see a band with him.

I smirk, shrug and say, 'I have a boyfriend.'

I drive out the boomgate, his beetle follows, its beady eyes in my mirror all the way home.

Imagining he's at my window, I don't sleep.

Next morning I confront him. He flaps in denial.

I receive odd phone-calls, a card reading, 'In Good Time', a CD sporting phallic mushrooms on the cover.

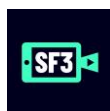
I must move, house and job. Change numbers.

Later, he appears.

In my new workplace.

Beams.

'Found you.'



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