

Shared

by

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INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bright toys, wooden or soft, sit against by clean, aquamarine walls. A square of sunlight.

ADAM

Home was - a place of riches. It wasn't where something happened, it happened. It was the main event. Because that's childhood. Sunny effortless childhood.

Little feet running, clumsily, happily. ADAM watches them go by.

Home family boyhood! a series of silent pictures, and the outside world does not burst in, is not allowed in.

SOUND: Children playing, a kid's TV show theme. What did the caterpillar say? What did they say?

Home was -

Home is - a spill of noise the snap of photographs.

A phone lies on the table, blinking, the screen black. And she -

We look at him again.

- alongside me for so many years. And she - as Elvis Costello sang. And she - the queen of sharing, with every corner of home also a corner - of the internet - with messy walls crayons and brand sponsorship.

She is almost famous. I am too but almost is not at all not really just a step away from the edge of something, an edge granted - by the internet.

I've not thought about fame, I do not know it, I have not studied David Bowie's work on the subject. Fame sweeps by me, gracing others, not me.

I've not thought about it, which means I'm quite sure about it. Fame

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADAM (cont'd)
means more money and more more
pixels - on the internet.

I don't want it enough. To make
people laugh is enough, and to
laugh is a simple thing.

EXT. HOME - DAY - CONTINUED

The front door is a red, sturdy, windowless affair with a
gold knocker.

The door swings open, and Adam through it. He is walking out
into the terraced street, tidy one-up one-downs looking on.

ADAM
But I worry about it. I'm feeling
protective about laughter. I'm
nervous about its general health,
its wellbeing. How is it faring? Is
laughter okay?

To laugh it a simple thing. Once it
was to slip on a banana skin.

He falls silent for a bit. We're suddenly aware of
surroundings - the chirp of a bird in the tree, a distant
car alarm.

No, I'm not going the blame the
pandemic.

It is useful to point to it,
sometimes. A hardship shared by
all.

But because I don't have amnesia, I
know you can't put it all on the
pandemic. There were many crappy
things populating the universe
before that arrived.

It's not so simple. Caution cloaks
so much. Is this what happens with
age? Is this what a higher number
on the dial means?

I'm 35 - or I will be in a few
months. I'm saying it early, I'm
saying it now, to get used to the
idea, I think. I'm 35, and
comfortable.

(CONTINUED)

Comfort. I am wary of it.

Comfort. Success. And the laughter gets really safe, too, and become about jam rolls, dogs, Disneyland.

He goes into -

EXT. WIDE PARKLAND - DAY - CONTINUED

ADAM

Sometimes... smug. It is as it sounds - a thing, a thick, annoying, grubby humour-killer. Okay, the audience still laughs, but I think they're just being polite.

I must protect the funny. I must not get comfortable, I must not get smug. I must not do what is safe. I must -

EXT. WIDE PARKLAND - DAY - BENCH - CONTINUED

He sees a bench, empty other than a newspaper, its front page rustling in the wind. The BLACK LETTERS loom large. He looks back at them, almost lost in them. Sitting, he picks up the paper and flicks through its pages.

ADAM

Her name's Lauren.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

In profile - a small coffee table, and two white mugs of steaming coffee atop. The SCHKSHHH of baristas working machines, and TINKLE of cutlery.

We see only two sets of hands, one set larger, one smaller with PAINTED NAILS.

ADAM

(V/O)

I met her and I know the risk of meeting in a city where rumour takes flight easily. it is not easy to meet but we meet and I find that she is fascinated by my past.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADAM (cont'd)

She wants me to talk about all the danger - the women, the drink, the collisions of event and emotion. It's good material. It could help others, she said.

And we are all about helping now.

EXT. WIDE PARKLAND - DAY - CONTINUED

ADAM

(V/O)

We've got to help others and help ourselves be better. Do more.

A runner's feet, TRAINER-clad, bound off the tarmac at speed.

Be better. Do more.

EXT. WIDE PARKLAND - DAY - BENCH - CONTINUED

ADAM

It is all in the right spirit but the cynic is creeping after more things, just touching them.

I was doing lots in my twenties - lots of reckless, selfish things. But I'm okay now, with her, with she, the queen of sharing -

And this Lauren, she said, 'You're still together' - meaning me and she the queen of sharing - and I saw something, A Glimpse Of - envy.

There. And then gone. Just as quickly.

Being a self-aware and thinking man, I did ask myself if it was really there. Was it a mirage, a wish granted? Did I wish for envy?

It was there. I did not imagine it. 'You're still together', she said, and A Glimpse Of - A sharp stealing lurch of envy.

And I remember that Lauren documents the single life - her

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADAM (cont'd)
single life - on the internet.
Another queen of sharing.
Don't envy me. Please. Don't stamp
on your life looking across at
mine.

INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Two soft TOYS, very alike, face each other.

ADAM
(V/O)
I know the pictures look beautiful
-

HANDS place other little TOYS into the frame.
I've got three kids and they're
beautiful but I didn't do much for
them to appear, not really.

EXT. WIDE PARKLAND - DAY - BENCH - CONTINUED

Silence. Thinking.

SOUND - that of a sunny, hopeful afternoon.

ADAM
You lead (if I am to believe what I
read) the lone hunter's life, the
one that is full of things, all the
things you choose. I know that
life, it was mine before this one.
It was mine in my twenties.

I know a lot about Lauren, and she
knows much about me. It is too much
for two who've not met before. (The
internet, again.)

'Yes, Lauren, we are together,'
she, three, and I.

Lauren has a question. 'Does that
ever surprise you?'

Then all the things I hoped for 10
years before smash into all things
that are. She three and I are not
what I planned on, but she and
three are all.

(CONTINUED)

There was no big moment, choice, thunderbolt, set of crossroads, crunch time, just a thousand decisions I didn't think about.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Close in one set of hands and one coffee cup - hers.

ADAM

Lauren is watching me closely. When a writer is watching closely, it is cause for alarm. They're collectors, storing up details as they go. She's got this deliberate poker face going on, but behind that is a thirst for other people's lives.

I remember home and wish I was there. I wish for it as if I'd been away from it for weeks. It's been hours.

So this is 35: a reckoning. The calculation and sum of a thousand things plus chance, and luck, or a lack of. I am not surprised by togetherness - of she and three and I - or even of Lauren and I right now - of how people meet or seek each other out.

EXT. WIDE PARKLAND - DAY - BENCH - CONTINUED

ADAM

She's looking at me, and I'm almost convinced, almost over the line when I remember -

This is The Queen of Sharing. Or one of them.

INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A phone lies on the table, blinking, the screen black.

EXT. WIDE PARKLAND - DAY - BENCH - CONTINUED

ADAM

And home. One piece given to the internet. Given, shared, it cannot be unshared.

But it is only a piece. 35, a reckoning, the calculation of all the love I found when I wasn't looking. And here it is shining really brightly and filling up home, this noisy accidental home... of mine.

Some of it is just for me. Just for

-

(a little more uncertainly)

- She. And three. And I.

So I say, 'Listen, Lauren,' I know what you'd like, but I'm not ready.

She says, 'Okay'. She says she understands. She smiles, and she does it so warmly, I realise she is not a lone hunter. She is not a queen of sharing. She is not what I first thought, at all.

FADE TO BLACK