

I like Jazz

A long time ago, I could walk. Dance, even. I'm kind of shy but when the right music plays and it's loud and it's thumpin', I can lose myself on the dance floor.

Not anymore.

There was a girl called Jazz. Me and my mate, Tuck, met her one night at a club. She gave us roofies and we got high in the back alley between the rotting garbage and smashed bottles. She became our dealer and our friend.

I had a secret crush on Jazz. Turns out so did Tuck.

One summer we spent a week at the beach, couch surfing with a mate from school. We trashed the apartment. Looked like a war zone you see on TV.

The last night of our stay, I was sitting alone on the balcony trying to force myself to get the guts to tell Jazz how I felt. The rest of the crew was inside. I looked through the glass doors and saw Tuck kiss Jazz. Jazz kissed back. My heart sank. I wanted to spew. I leant over the balcony, my head spinning. The stars in the sky were bright like hundred watt globes. So close I could reach them. Or so I thought. Tuck had spiked my drink with LSD. I didn't know that until later. I believed I could reach the stars if I leant just a bit further over the edge. Then I believed I could fly. For real. No joke. Like a friggin' eagle soaring above the whole world. It was so damn real. I stood on the edge of the balcony, spread my wings and took off.

Six floors down.

I don't remember the fall or the impact.

One doctor said I was lucky. I told him, if this is lucky mate, I don't want to meet a loser. I think that pissed him off.

'What's that tune?' the nurse said.

'What tune?'

'You're humming a tune, Tony,' she said.

'Am I awake?'

'Sure are, and humming like a happy man.'

'I don't know what I was humming.'

'But it was just now, a moment ago,' she said.

'I don't friggin' know, all right!'

The nurse took two steps back away from my hospital bed.

'What's your name?' I said.

'Judy.'

'Are you new?'

'No, Tony,' she said. 'I've been taking care of you five days a week for about two years.'

That makes no sense. I've never seen her before. She steps towards me and rests her hand on my arm. I feel nothing. Why can't I feel anything when she's touching me? Her face is kind. Like nanna. But younger.

'Tony, it wasn't just your body that got hurt,' she said. 'Your brain also got injured. So it's hard for you to remember things. And people.'

But I remember what happened. Over and over.

I remember Jazz.

She never came to visit.

Neither did Tuck.

Or did they?

I don't remember.