

Morning Commute

by Michelle Yung

Yesterday, she almost hit a teenage boy with her car. She sees him crossing the street everyday and has come to a point where she no longer sees him at all. Today, as the light turns green, she pauses for a moment and he saunters across the street, dragging his feet. She watches him, and understands how he feels. Daily, she submits to her morning commute, blindly ushering herself along with everyone else to a life of routine. The world, it seems has lost its element of surprise.

The commute takes her from Los Angeles, through Beverly Hills and into Santa Monica. Her mind drifts into a half conscious state as she speeds past waking coffee shops and bakeries, dodging children on their way to school and morning joggers. She drives through the Jewish neighborhoods and sees schoolgirls entering an old, brick building. Their long plaid skirts hanging to their ankles, shrouding them in modesty and religion.

As the light turns red, she pulls up to the corner near a bus stop. Wrapped in anticipation, the people at the bus stop crane their necks, looking for any sign of a large orange bus lumbering towards them. Their eyes droop, their arms hang by their sides. She feels that people who wait for buses are often sad. They have no control of their fate, as all commuters in Los Angeles often need, and they carry a small tinge of shame in their faces. If not for a God-given drop of compassion inside of her, she would drive right past them. But something inside of her nudges her to pray for them, and so she does. It gives her a certain private joy that she is trying to bless them without them even knowing it. Sometimes she can see a change of expression in their faces, but this time, the light turns green and she goes.

She sets little goals for her commute.

Praying for people at bus stops is one. Secondly, she prays over a prayer list that her small group collects. Sometimes as she reads the list, the words come alive and her heart is on fire with care. It is something rare from God when the Holy Spirit moves. So she moves along with it and finds her soul so buoyed that she has to catch her breath. Her third goal is to try and speed through all yellow lights.

After she passes the shopping mall, the traffic breaks up and she is able to hit at least forty-five for the rest of the way. It shaves two minutes off her commute. As she is about to step on the gas, the light turns red. At this, a slight amount of irritation boils beneath the surface of her skin.

She slouches behind the driver's wheel, waiting at the corner of Pico and Sawtelle. Day laborers wait by the freeway entrance, their hands tucked in their pockets, ready for their lucky break. Their baseball caps are pulled low, shielding their eyes. A man sits in a wheelchair underneath the covering of a bus stop, his boombox in his lap. He is talking to no one in particular. A young woman tucks her hair behind her ears. She stands a few feet apart from him. They make eye contact and she clutches her textbooks to her chest. A man rides his bicycle across the street. In a white van, a young woman applies lipstick. To her left, a man gestures while speaking on his cell phone. In her rearview mirror, she sees an older woman furrowing her brow clutching her steering wheel at ten and two. It is a not so special day and everybody seems to agree.

Just then, the light turns green. Before she leaves the intersection, she looks back and sees one of the day laborers. He laughs. His grin pushes his cheeks upwards and his mustache stretches across his upper

lip. Lines creased by happiness and mirth form around his eyes.

And for a moment, God grants her a new set of eyes as a small miracle forms before her. She sees through His eyes, the eyes of His heart. She looks around again and sees faces of infinite beauty, thick with intelligence and complex in detail. They are the hopeful standing on the street corner, the brilliant near a bus stop. The wise, the interesting, the important. God grants her the knowledge that He did not only choose a select few to lead the way, but granted everyone with infinite value. And it is because God values us, He desires to hear every prayer spoken to Him, screamed at Him, and written to Him. He hears the prayers that we dare not utter and grants us what we hadn't known we needed.

She looks down at the very lines on the palms of her hands and understands now that they are not the only hands that matter to him. She is no more or less great than the very people outside of her car. Then, the very love of Jesus for others humbles her because Jesus is not just about her. He is about everyone. Everyone and everywhere you could possibly go. *



Michelle impacts the world through crafting, knitting, storytelling and gifting. Her yearning for God is distinguished by redemption, a longing for real fulfillment, and a need for true hope.