



Excerpt: One Man's Revolution by Yvonne Singh

That evening he went to the marshes: a flat stretch of land between his home and the temple – a bridge between worlds. The sun was low in the sky, illuminating a bank of brooding clouds. The rays cast a golden rim of light over a group of balding, middle-aged men in tracksuits showcasing their model drones. Each of them held their remote controls in front of them like prized trophies, relishing the control of the robots, which buzzed and hovered like a swarm of prehistoric insects in the sky. Occasionally a model would dive into the long grass only to be rescued by its hapless owner. Jimmy watched the drone show for a while and then walked further into the copse of trees, where he found a deserted clearing.

He was nervous about what he was going to do. Worst-case scenario, a drone would land near him and the owner would come looking for it. They would think him mad? Was he mad? No try and focus. It was a form of meditation. What had the Guru said? Heads, shoulders, knees and toes – no, that was a fuckin' nursery rhyme. *Think. Think. A chance I might get to see her again.*

He took off his trainers. Despite the cold, the earth under his feet felt mulchy and warm, itself a living, breathing organism. He knelt on the ground and took a deep breath. The dim evening light dappled through the dense foilage of a tree stump setting it ablaze like an emerald. It felt quite magical. Encouraged he lay on the ground on his back, embracing the soil's warmth, wanting its rich compost to seep through his clothes and enrich his pores, act as a hinge for his unmoored soul. Twigs and bark, and soil: the dirt reclaiming his essence.

Gentle birdsong and the faint rustling of leaves echoed around him. He imagined tree roots yawning and stretching underneath him; their rich sap investing him with strength. In the corner of his eye he could make out a tiny bird, its body still, its iridescent chest plumage shimmering like peacock feathers, sapphire and greens. No, the plumage was alive, a swarm of bluebottles feasting on the tiny corpse. He averted his gaze.

'It's over here, mate.' He tensed as one of the drone crowd came too close to comfort. *What the fuck was he doing?* He took a deep breath and waited, while the heavy footsteps trudged off in the other direction.

He exhaled and looked up towards the inky blue sky visible between the canopy of leaves. Down here, lying on the ground, it was as if the earth stretched out forever, its deep fingers cradling the horizon. He felt like a speck in this infinite universe. His mind felt quiet and still. At peace. He hoisted his arms above his head. He took a deep breath and he began to roll. Roll the pain away.