

Elevator Operator

Courtney Barnett

Oliver Paul, twenty years old
Thick head of hair, worries he's going bald
Wakes up at quarter past nine
Fair evades his way down the 96 tram line
Breakfast on the run again, he's well aware
He's dropping soy linseed Vegemite crumbs everywhere

Feeling sick at the sight of his computer
He dodges his way through the Swanston commuters
Rips off his tie, hands it to a homeless man
Sleeping in the corner of a metro bus stand and he screams
"I'm not going to work today
Going to count the minutes that the trains run late
Sit on the grass building pyramids out of Coke cans"

Headphone wielding to the Nicholas building
He trips on a pothole that's not been filled in
He waits for an elevator, one to nine
A lady walks in and waits by his side
Her heels are high and her bag is snakeskin
Hair pulled so tight you can see her skeleton
Vickers perfume on her breath
A tortoise shell necklace between her breasts
She looks him up and down with a botox frown
He's well used to that look by now
The elevator dings and they awkwardly step in
Their fingers touch on the rooftop button

Don't jump little boy, don't jump off that roof
You've got your whole life ahead of you, you're still in your youth
I'd give anything to have skin like you

He said "I think you're projecting the way that you're feeling
I'm not suicidal, just idling insignificantly
I come up here for perception and clarity
I like to imagine I'm playing SimCity
All the people look like ants from up here
And the wind's the only traffic you can hear"
He said "All I ever wanted to be
Was an elevator operator, can you help me please?"