

# 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?"