

THE LIFE SIZE ZOETROPE

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MALE V.O

Once upon a time there was a wheel.

I was born at home in the sitting room.
Dad shouting at my mum. Mum shouting at my dad.
And of course I don't remember any of this.

My dad said "push woman push"
And my mum pushed woman pushed.

Nipples were thrust into my face and I stayed like that till I started to remember.

I scream and dad picks me up.
My arms reach for the lights.
I fall to the ground and someone say's "Fucking bollocks! Shit...don't tell your mum."
I stand up.

I walk to a mirror...I shout, "I want that!"
My first words aren't inspiring.
I dress for school well, and soon I do it all on my own.
I'm a good boy.

Mum cries as she says, "look after yourself"...
But I don't.
I don't know how to look after myself.

Nicola Greed was my first.
She said "Show me yours"...
I played football.
I showed Nicola Greed mine.

Number 2: Louise.
I open my eyes.
And I know what I need to do to keep the bastards at bay.
She faces me. She opens her mouth.
I fit in and She shuts her eyes.

So I take many a drag and I swig many a swig.
I come to terms with the regular smell of friends and my own vomit.

Buttons and zips.

Suzi says "This is my first time". And I say "same here".
I remember wishing I hadn't said that more than I remember what
happened.
Her shirt top opened.

Next.

Behind a desk in a large hall with other kids.
I leave home. I'm reverse out of the drive.
I said for the first time "Love you mum".
Mr Calpine shouted "you may turn over your papers...now".
And my Mum said: "good luck...love you!"
I think she was blubbering.

Next.

I was a rock n roll star.
I cook and eat beans on toast and do things I'll never tell my own kids.
I am not a rock n roll star.

A girl is crying and I say, "I'm sorry - I didn't mean to hurt you".
And I graduate with a mickey-mouse degree and become depressed.

I'm crying.

In a mirror finishing off a suit.
I'm in a café.
I reckon I probably look quite good.
So all I do is smile and say "hello".

She had nipples like saucers and none of this was planned.
She vomits down the toilet.
She is pissing on a stick.
"what are you doing?" And she said "a pregnancy test".
Then I said why and I properly looked her in the eye for the first time as
she said...
"I'm pregnant".

None of this is planned.

Once Upon a time there was a wheel.
She was born at home.
I was shouting at her shouting at me.
I don't remember any of this.

I was on bloody auto-pilot.
I said "push woman push" and she did.
Then there was a new she.

Her arms reach for the lights and I pick up shit in a nappy.
We buy a house and a Volvo with plenty of space.
She speaks well and is already riding away.

I buy her love.
Because it's different when you've got your own.
I cry as I say, "look after yourself"...

When you've got your own kids you find yourself in the office.
Buttons and Zips.
And I said to her "No-one need ever know".

Cliché.

There's intense crying and "you fucking wanker!"
Well, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you."
I pour a big shot of something that doesn't really matter.
Down it in one.

Stood in my drive.
The other she leaves home. Reverses out of the drive.
I say "I love you" and mean it for the first time.
And the woman with flying saucer nipples said: "good luck...love you!"
I think I was blubbering.

Open eyes. See office workers and turn to my own desk. Blink.
Open eyes. I put food in my mouth. Blink.
Open eyes. I lay my head down on a pillow next to my wife. Blink.

Eat.
Sleep.
Work.

I open a door. My kids are grown up, "Happy Christmas!"
And I say "hello little fella".
Blink.

I retire at 65 like a good boy.
They all clap and pretend like they liked me...
"For the last 20 years!"

I'm gardening when I fall over.
I clench onto independence.
I'm riding into town in a mobility chair.

I look up from a child's head below me.
We both look into the mirror to see I'm holding them.
They must love me very much but I'm unsure why.

I dance in the community centre with the others.

I like it.
I'm having fun.

I am doing the washing-up.
And my wife hands me a plate and says "can you hold this for me
please".
She sits upright and stares straight forward...
before falling to the floor.
I said "I need an ambulance".

I cried for a long time.
And wished I had been nicer.
I say "I love you" and mean for the first time.

I am watching a ceiling fan rotate above me as I lie in bed.

In my body I can hear the muffled sound of the song of cancer
Destroying me.

It eats away.

My heart. It stops.

One upon a time there was a wheel.