

That's All

Ask away. I'm not shy!

... generally speaking, I'm up around 6. I wake suddenly, and always get up straight away; I don't like to lie there thinking. I keep the curtains open at night, so that I wake with the sun on my face. And if the sun isn't shining, I wake all the same. Up and about, don't hang around!

Breakfast? Always the same thing. Always has been, always will be. I don't like toast, and I certainly don't like porridge. Muriel tried to get me onto muesli once, but it got under my dentures.

Muriel? My wife. We were together for twenty years. Every year perfect. I remember every day, like yesterday. Fresh and clear. I remember her laugh, for instance. I remember the small things. Like the way she smoothed down her skirt as she sat down.

I used to watch her sleeping, lips always slightly apart. If I came close, I could hear her breathe. A slight whistle. I never told her that! But it was a small thing, something I liked. It was her. Really her. I imagine I would know from anyone else, that whistle, if I heard it again.

Yes, there is another thing. Thursday was baking day. My favourite smell. Cakes and scones. She used to do all the bread too, in the beginning. Not later on though. Too much effort. That was sad, when she stopped the bread. Yes, that's a regret. I lost my sense of smell though. A side effect from the stroke. A minor stroke, but no sense of smell. But I can remember a smell. I'm miffed at that. I'm sure. So what's next?

After breakfast, I make the bed. Always have done so. A hangover from National Service I should expect. Folded corners, blanket folded neatly back. I love the summer because the sunshine gleams on the eiderdowns. They're satin you see. I see that when I turn as I leave the room, which I always do just to be sure that everything is right. The twin beds, side by side. The sun on the satin.

I change the sheets on the both beds, once a week, even though I could do just the one. I'm strict about that. I think sheets get stale.

The day she went? Winter. Dark. Cold. I don't want to go into that too much. Not here, not with that thing running. It's personal isn't it? Ask me about something else!

She was always happy. That's the main thing. She told me that all the time, yes, and I remind myself of that every day. I don't blame her for not being here. Not really. She couldn't help it. I don't think she wanted

me to be alone. Not at all. She must have know I'd carry on buying two chops rather than the one. I'm not the sort of person to discuss my private life in a butcher's shop. Strangers don't understand. You don't either, not really.

I suppose I don't understand it either, not really. No, the day she went was a black day. Dead to me now. A day I hate.

Yes, that's a strong word, maybe the wrong one. Too strong, so put 'regret' instead. That's a better word. She'd prefer that I'm sure! As if I should worry about that! Put it all down then, put it down as I said.

I'm the way I am, I'll never change. Routine keeps me going. Routine keeps everyone going, in the end. Yes, routine is a friend. So don't you call me inflexible. Someone did once. I don't like it. I've been over that often enough. I just like things to be the same.

Of course I could adapt! I could do all sorts of things. I could go on fancy holidays. I could have people over for drinks. What exactly is wrong with familiar things? The things I like. Better that way. I'm getting on all right alone!

That's enough. I've had it with talking.

That's all.

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