

Two years ago Melanie and I succumbed to a mutual desire...wanderlust. I quit my job , she finished her last grad school exam, and we hopped on a plane to try our luck in jolly old England. It wasn't long until the hard reality of trying to make it in another country set in. We also weren't prepared for the exorbitant cost of living in London. The first week we spent wandering the streets of London waiting for Melanie to get a call for an interview. One week slowly turned into three. We passed the time as nomads, shifting between dreary hostels, dining on corn flakes, and hiding out for as long as we could in the corner of any Starbucks that offered free internet. By the second week we had made our way to a particularly depressing hostel in south London. It was February and our room seemed to be without heat. It was here, trying to sleep, bundled in our winter coats and scarves, that we reached our low point....What exactly were we doing in London? It was rainy and expensive. We were poor and cold.

We stuck it out. A few weeks later Melanie got an interview and accepted the position as a hospital social worker. We began the search for more permanent lodging and found a small basement flat reminiscent of my college dorm room for a mere \$1200 a month. Strangely enough we were ecstatic... we could finally unpack the 3 suitcases and stop hauling them from place to place in the dead of winter.

As Melanie set off to work, my job hunt continued. Many of us daydream of how wonderful it would be to not have to go to work (a la Peter in Office Space). The reality for me, however, was that after a few days of basking in the solitude of a good book, a long walk, and an afternoon nap I was itching to do something. Unfortunately, I was not financially sound enough to live

in London for any extended period of time with the amount of money I had saved. Scanning the internet every day, looking for employment, was no easy task. There was an army of young Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans in London who enjoyed the advantage of being eligible for a commonwealth work visa, and thus, had a much easier time finding work. I was getting close to my wits end when I saw a job post calling for friendly youths wanting to spend their summer outdoors. I responded.

The next week I started training to become a sandwich man. My job was to deliver sandwiches on a bicycle. Not what I had dreamed of as a little boy... but I did get to enjoy working in the great outdoors. My training took place in downtown London. I had to haul my sandwich cart while dodging giant double-decker buses and acclimating myself to riding on the left hand side of the road. I earned a few pounds sterling at the end of each week, but my main contribution came in the currency of leftover sandwiches. By the end of the summer, Melanie and I had put away enough money for a two-month trip around Europe before returning back to St. Louis.

Setting out to learn about the world, we ended up learning mostly about each other and what sets us apart from other couples. Our uniqueness is more than just a list of adjectives or common interests. We are unique because of the experiences that we share—good, bad, and just plain ordinary. We are beautiful because of the individual sacrifices we are willing to make in order to have those shared experiences. After all, living in a “box” and eating egg and watercress sandwiches is a small price to pay to share a dream with someone you love.