

Joe Bruner  
Fiction II  
Retold Tales

### Nowhere Man

Eric sat at his desk, drumming on the edge with his faded Ticonderoga pencil. He was sitting in his office, 32<sup>nd</sup> floor of some building in New York. He never bothered to learn its name, no one would recognize it anyway. Glancing out the window only made him more depressed; the day was overcast, on the verge of raining, and it seemed the entirety of New York had been drained of color overnight, trapped in a perpetually monochrome world.

Deciding he had had enough of the depressing view, Matt left his office, and walked to the office water jug.

“Hey Eric!” Cindy winked at him as he passed her cubicle. She had been making moves on him ever since her boyfriend had broken up with her by smashing her favorite vase against the fireplace. The joke was on her however, because he was already seeing Justin.

Eric smiled and walked on, surrounded by a cacophony of phone rings, private conversations and footsteps echoing against the tile floor. He kept his head bent and did not make eye contact. Finally he was there at the water cooler, and sought refuge in the tank’s *ga-lub ga-lub ga-lub* as he poured himself a cup of water.

“There you are Eric! I’ve been looking all over for you.” It was his boss. Steve. “Are the McGowen briefings almost ready?”

“Yes sir,” he said, standing up straight.

“Excellent, excellent. Well, I’ll be by after lunch to come pick them up.”

Eric sighed. He hated Steve and his pompous attitude. He hated that Gucci suit of his, that wisp of curly brown hair and those gigantic, plastic red, round glasses, responsible for giving him the nickname bugeye. He especially hated those glasses.

He was always making plans, or writing briefings. Doing this, doing that. Who was it for anyway? He never got to meet these people. They were just nobodies to him. The Zumwalts, the Steinmans, the McGowens.

Draining the last drops of water from his cup, he let it fall from his fingers into the trash, and made the arduous journey back to his office, not catching Cindy's gaze or luring smile this time.

For the rest of the morning, he just sat there in a daze, looking out across the dreary New York scape. As he watched the miniature figures of people walking down the sidewalk, he wondered where they were coming from, where they were going.

When lunch came, Eric put on his coat, popped up the collar, and stepped out into the now misty city street. Now he was one of the wandering. Nobody made eye contact with anyone else. There were no smiles, no nods of recognition, no secret understanding shared when two strangers would acknowledge each other in the greetings that did not happen.

Gradually the rain increased, and instead of making it to his usual subway, Eric sidestepped into a small, diner-like store. It seemed strange, for such a thing to exist in the middle of New York, but then again, the world was full of strange things, and suddenly it didn't seem so strange.

The diner was empty, not even a server stood behind the counter. Eric took off his jacket, glancing around the diner. It was completely white, not a mark on the walls. What kind of place is this, he thought.

His phone buzzed. A text.

*“I c u printed the briefings. Im picking them up. When u get back, start on the Centennial Park plans.”*

Eric sighed, and put his phone away. He sat down at a booth and waited, when suddenly music started playing. It was a Beatles song. Eric’s favorite. Nowhere Man.

*He’s a real nowhere man,*

*Sitting in his Nowhere Land,*

*Making all his nowhere plans*

*for nobody.*