

As I sat at my dressing table, dabbing cheap concealer over my blue-black eye, I realised I couldn't live like this anymore. Something had to change, and today would be that day.

After I finished hiding the bruise, I crept downstairs to check if the coast was clear. There he was, the man I once loved, asleep on the sofa in the glow of the TV, beer bottle in hand as always. I hurried upstairs and quickly began shoving my important possessions into my black suitcase. As I forced my stuff into the bag, I remembered last night. The shouting and the glass bottles being hurled at me. In that moment, I realised I wasn't safe and I had to go. Now.

I tiptoed downstairs, careful not to wake him. I slipped on my coat and stepped

outside. As soon as I closed the door to that dingy flat, I ran. I flew down three flights of stairs, until I reached the building's entrance. I kept going, my feet slapping against the concrete, and my heart pounding against my chest. I ran towards the bus station, the wheels of my suitcase bouncing behind me. I was almost free.

After what felt like an eternity, I saw the grey bus idly parked as though it was waiting for me. I slowed down to catch my breath, and felt my cheap makeup dripping onto my shirt. I rummaged in my coat pockets and found a crumpled ten dollar bill and handed it to the conductor, the price for my freedom. I got on the bus and slumped into the empty seat at the back. The doors of the bus closed and it began moving forward. I didn't know where I was

going,I didn't care all I know that I was free.