

## **Freedom: Tania Johnson**

As they pulled away from the hospital, taximan, as Peter thought of him, started talking about the weather, the rising prices of rent and food. Peter listened and occasionally made a hand gesture to indicate he was listening, but the taxi driver was focused on the road and seemed to forget he was there.

Peter's mind drifted as he thought about his wife waiting for him at home and the huge amount of work she'd had done to the house to move their bedroom to the ground floor. Taximan's mood got darker as he muttered about his wife leaving him, his wife was a whore, she'd found out he'd had an affair, but he'd said sorry besides he wouldn't have had the affair if his wife had been a little more loving and appreciative. His kids had left home, rarely visited and couldn't or didn't want to make time for him, after everything he had done for them, they were ungrateful shits.

Peter knew he could never have his own kids now and wasn't yet sure how he felt about it, his wife was stoically saying she just wanted a life with him in it regardless of whether children were a part of it. Peter wasn't sure he believed her.

The taximan continued, what had he done to deserve any of this, his kids had been given a fine home and good food, yes, he'd raised a hand to them occasionally but only when they deserved it. Taximan sounded bitter and angry.

The façade of being the jovial decent person who had wheeled him into the taxi and anchored and strapped his wheelchair down, had dropped completely and Peter wondered if taximan had forgotten he was there. More talk followed and Peter tried not to listen; he knew the taximan wasn't talking to him. The ride would be over soon, and Peter would be back at home with a whole new way of life to navigate and problem solve.

Peter pondered on his own sense of helplessness and listened to the taximan's very different challenges. There are all kinds of freedom.