



Source: Nicola Boden, 'Iran will punish 'guilty' British sailors: diplomat', Sun-Herald in *Sydney Morning Herald* online, 01/04/07.

Tags: [intimacy](#), [travel](#), [home](#)

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I once dated a hobo. I met him after a party. He had climbed into the back of my little white V-Dub and startled me with his snoring. Although I yelled and screamed for him to get out, the hobo just smiled and lay right back. As well as being stubborn, I learnt then that he was a man of very few words.

Back then, I was living in an apartment whose only window was above the kitchen sink. Instead of TV, I would perch atop my dish rack and watch the hobo down in his multi-window, parking lot abode.

On colder days, I'd catch a glimmer of light escape the frosty window pane. The hobo had set up a Vietnamese grill across the dashboard cover. When I'd drive to work in the morning, the smell of roasting bananas perfumed the car's interior.

In warm weather, he'd stretch out on the car roof and play Portuguese beach songs from a Graceland Park transistor radio. I would bring him Pina Coladas.

'It's just like being at the ocean,' he'd say staring up at the cloudless, blue sky.

When I'd catch him taking a shower with the garden hose, I'd blush, the hobo's body was lean in the moonlight lustre.

When my rent rose and times were tough, 'shack up with me,' he said, 'there's room for two, but we have to share a bed.'

If he hadn't been a hobo, he told me he would have been an Ambience Consultant. 'It's all about creating the right mood,' he'd say, as we sipped on Calvados, after making love on his silk-lined bindle.

When the V-Dub's engine started giving way, I spoke of renovations, loftier relocations. My hobo laid his head atop her two-stroke heart, his face calm, but one bare foot rubbed against the other.

One night at summer's start, I opened the door to find him gone. I looked for a note but found a letter. It ended,

'Gone roaming, love Henry.'

Once, years later, I parked my home at a river's edge and woke to the sound of a familiar snoring. After a day and a half of amorous exchange, I felt an unease I didn't want again.

A train engine called. I wrote a note, 'Hold the spot dear Henry. Keep the car'. I grabbed Henry's pack and climbed into the last slow-moving box car.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Amélie Bird.*