

# Stories from the tinyblog

<http://tinyplace.org/tinyblog>

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*these stories are about the* **pike place market**

## home of the market crazies

I'm reporting today from Seattle's Pike Place Market; a place where tourist, junkies, housewives, middlemen, fish throwers and brass pigs all meet together in perfect harmony. Mostly.

It's so lovely to come at 8am when no one is there and the vendors are all chattering and setting up their stalls. You get to see a totally different side of all of them. Usually I go in the afternoon when they are all well into their day and a little jaded already. Now, though, freshly showered heads bob among rarely showered ones. It feels so cool for it all to be part of my hometown.

My friend Cara is setting up as well. Knowing the market scheme, she can get work at different booths, as they need help, since she is known to be reliable. Today she is selling soap, and as she vigorously packs gift boxes with this serrated fancy shredded cardboard filler, she looks over to me and says in all seriousness, "Crinkle wrap is the key to all gifts."

## he was sick of being in his own skin

Yesterday I went over to my friend Cara's house to help her paint and she told me a story.

She works in Seattle's historic Pike Place Market, where she sees tourists, millionaires, and bums. Because she is the way she is, she accepts and befriends them all without prejudice. She calls the people she meets there the "market crazies".

As she tells it, she invited one market crazy back to her house to help her paint. He hung out all afternoon, and at one point asked for four dollars to go buy a pack of smokes. She pulled out her wallet, with more than a hundred dollars in it, and pulled it out for him.

Later in the day her boyfriend came home and asked to talk with her privately. When she came out, her friend said he was leaving, and took a bus home. The next time she looked in her wallet there was only forty dollars. She was pretty disappointed...it was rent money.

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Today she worked in the market again. She called this guy and asked him to come down and visit her so she could talk to him. When I met her at the market, she was in the middle of this talk. She

looked him in the eye and said that some money was missing, and she wanted to him to look her in the face and say whether or not he had taken it.

He acted surprised and said he hadn't. He asked how much it was. She told him at least sixty dollars, and he said that he didn't want it to be a source of friction between them anyway, and that he was sad that she had been put in the a bad position by it. He offered to help with some bills!

She assured him it was okay, and said that if he said he didn't take it she trusted him. She even told him the name of the bar we were going tonight, and said she'd be there if he wanted to drop by.

He was there when the two of us walked into said bar, looking a little sweaty and strange. He and Cara sat down, and I wandered over to talk to another friend.

He gave her sixty dollars. He told her some story about how he had met some guy, who had met an angel, and didn't want to ruin things with her. This guy had told him to give the money to Cara. Cara was a little puzzled...that didn't add up, really. He had even left a message on her answering machine saying that "he had found the guy who owed her money".

He stayed, and some other friends and I came and sat down. We all talked and drank beers for hours. At one moment Cara looked at him and said, "I bet that guy feels better."

"Oh yeah," he said with a smile, "he's so relieved. He was sick of being in his own skin."

In further conversation we learned he was undergoing Methadone treatment for heroin addiction, that he had four children with four different mothers, that his mother raised cashmere goats for a living, and that he called her "the queen of darkness". Also that he had '666' in the adress of his childhood home, his social security number, and other relevent numbers. He alluded to the fact that anyone might be Jesus, and anyone could be Satan.

I personally think he took a positive step towards the former on this fine evening.

### **boomerangs will only be sold to responsible adults**

The boomerang vendor was in casual drag. Not all dolled up like a queen, (s)he was wearing a sensible lipstick, a midlength skirt from TJ Maxx, and a dreaddy grey wig.

When I first approached her, and asked her about her relationship to the boomerangs, she told me in sort of a psuedo-confiding voice that she had never even thrown one. "Boomerangs are hard to sell," she said. I thought that was hilarious, and wondered why the boomerang maker might have chosen her as a vendor.

I stayed though, and quickly discerned that she had quite a well developed banter about boomerangs, and everything she said seemed to be tongue in cheek. She started to do her sales pitch on me, just to show me how it was done, and it

became apparent that I was in fact talking to the maker of the boomerangs. Evidently the larger the boomerang, the more range you get, but the less tolerance you get for mistakes.

Her boomerangs were modern, loopy affairs, sweetly painted and shiny. She showed me some old school boomerangs, meant to be used as weapons, thick kangaroo-smackers that didn't look like they were designed to return.

She made it clear, however, that she was only interested in boomerangs for play, however. She has a sign clarifying her position:

Boomerangs are not weapons!  
...but antidotes for  
predation!

These are times when our  
PHYSICAL and SOCIAL  
PREDATION on each other  
have run amok.

So let's use boomerangs the  
right way!  
Throw only in open areas  
CLEAR OF PEOPLE!  
Boomerangs will only be sold to responsible adults.

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## hey...you're a hippie, aren't you?

One last market story...as related by Cara (as I remember it):

Cara was sitting there at her booth reading a copy of Mother Earth news, when a nearby vendor said to her, "Mother Earth News! I haven't seen a copy of that in a long time."

She paused, deep in thought for a moment, then looked up and said, "Hey...you're a hippie, aren't you?"

Cara smirked confidently, "Well, what do you consider a hippie?"

The woman thought hard again. "Have you worn tie die in the past week?"

Cara was currently wearing tie die long johns. "Yes," she said, "yes I have."

"Do you have a VW bus?"

"Yes. Yes I do."

"Is it broken down?"

"Yes. Yes it is."

The woman gave a little nod of her head, "I thought so."