

ON DEAF EARS

Music.

That's the one thing I miss most.

Not having legs, no worries. Got a wheelchair, and I'm being fitted up for prosthetic legs by the University Hospital so that's gonna be a solvable problem. I was never into sport anyway.

Losing vision in my left eye. Whatever. I still see fine out of my right. And that means I can still legally drive, albeit in my new pimped up Corolla which lets me control speed and brakes using my hands.

But damn, what I wouldn't give to hear my stupid dog bark, my friends telling a dirty joke and laughing their heads off, to hear cars coming when I'm crossing a street.

Okay, communication and safety are all good and that, but what about the near-orgasmic pleasure of slipping in your ear buds and turning up the volume on your favourite track; the sensation of being somewhere else, someone else? Of not giving a damn and moving your body to the invisible rhythm and letting your mind take flight.

One middle-aged man, even good-looking, one homemade bomb in an ordinary part of Chinatown. That was the last time I heard anything again. Ten dead. Twenty survivors, some to die later from complications of their injuries. The rest are expected to draw on their reserves, Be Strong and be grateful for being given a second chance. Sometimes I could scream - but I wouldn't have the satisfaction of hearing my personal tragedy translated into vibrations in the air, waveforms of anger, of grief, of hatred for the bastard who thought he had the right to take down as many innocents as he could just because they are the wrong colour.

But. I nearly told a lie just then. I do hear. A constant singing in my ears. How can I best explain this new sound that has been conjured up by my poor, traumatised auditory cortex (and some fancy-named parahippocampal area, wrote the ENT specialist, most helpfully - if I had a freaking medical degree). I invite you to think of the noise made by fingernails scraping down a blackboard, but right inside your head. No, I know you aren't really trying, 'cos it gives you a horrible creeping feeling from your head down to your toes. Try again, for me. No really, Be Strong, you can do it.