

## *A Different Slant*

Vertical is out for me. Oblique is the way I am. I can't face the world straight on and the world sees me as stooped and shuffling. It immediately assumes I'm retarded, but I'm sharp enough to see people's reactions to me.

My brain has trouble controlling my body, but my thoughts are as clear as an un-rippled pond on a sunny day. It's easy to fulfil people's expectations of my mental incapacity, because I like to keep to myself.

Writing is difficult, so I do the daily crossword in my head. I love reading because it takes me to places my body can't go. I travel more than most people I know to more places in the world. Google Earth on my computer lets me visit places I read about and other places I haven't read about in books. Sometimes I read about a place and I've already been there on my computer.

I have to do things slowly or my body gets away from my brain, like it has its own mind. I walk slowly, bent over so I can see where each foot goes. I use my left arm to guide my cup to my mouth when I drink, my fork when I eat. Sometimes I have to hold things with both hands, because they shake.

Sometimes my friend walks with me. She's vertical. One day I saw us together reflected in a shop window – we looked like a **K**. A couple I saw kissing looked like an **A**. Another couple was an **H** as they walked holding hands. My friend is an **I** when she's on her own and she's a **P** when she carries her little girl.

Last year I moved into a house where other single people live because I kept hearing comments that a thirty-year-old shouldn't be living with his mother. My friend lives there too with her daughter. It's good, because we sleep together sometimes and have sex. Somehow my body does what it has to without me having to concentrate, when I'm having sex. It's easier than walking or drinking tea. Horizontal is good.

Lying in the bath is good, too. Another horizontal good thing. My mind can relax, because my body doesn't have to deal with gravity. And I love letting the water out very slowly so that I end up heavy in the bottom of the bath. The only problem with that is getting my body out of the bath again.

Cheryl (that's my friend's name) says she likes being with me because I only deal with things that are important to me. I suppose she's right, because everything I do is important to me. Some people tell me they worry about all the things that happen in the world. I don't understand this, because most things they can't do anything about. If I can't affect something, I don't worry about it.

I like reading about medical things where people find solutions to problems. Especially I like solutions to problems with the brain. The other day someone told me about a book that is all about changing how your brain works and that it talks about computer programs that can help the brain do this. Cheryl is going to buy the book for me. I'm very excited about this, because I would like to be able to control my body and walk up straight like an **I**. This would give me a different slant on the world.

If I can improve the working of my body, I hope I can move through the world like a proper **I**. It is so tiring having to watch my feet all the time when I walk and having to deal with the shakes when drinking or eating. I think Cheryl and I will end up together and I want to be a proper father for May, her daughter. Then we can walk down the street together like an **M**.

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