

Kristoffer Lieng, 25, Vejbystrand (Sweden)

THE VERB VENDOR

1. A hilly road through the woods. A little man in a threadbare suit appears, riding a red, woman's bike. He's out of breath. He pedals up and down the undulations with a small black bag strapped to the rack. LOW-ANGLE CLOSE SHOT as he blinks in the strong sunlight and wipes his forehead.

A black Volvo wooshes past, knocking him off his bike. He is left sitting in a cloud of smoke and dust. His bag has opened and the contents are scattered across the ground – small cardboard squares (30 cms x 30 cms) each containing a single verb. The little man picks them all up. CLOSE on the verbs: "consider", "savour", "wait", "stay". He straightens up stiffly, straps his bag onto the rack once more and climbs back on his bike. He freewheels downhill out of shot.

2. A small house. The little man pedals up to the front door. He hops off his bike, grabs his bag and knocks.

A middle-aged man opens up, looks at him and says: "Yes?"

LITTLE MANGOOD MORNING, SIR! IN THE MOOD TO BUY SOME VERBS?

HOUSEOWNER

Perhaps. It depends. What verbs do you have? Are they framed?

LITTLE MAN

No, they're written on cardboard but I can assure you, they're very, very important.

He holds up the verbs "savour", "consider" and "wait".

HOUSEOWNER

Written on cardboard? Bits of cardboard? They're totally dull and insignificant verbs! Don't you have any that are more... sophisticated?

LITTLE MAN

But, sir, my verbs are among the most precious verbs, the most important verbs! Also, they are verbs that people today often forget. And verbs on cardboard are more user-friendly. When you frame a verb, it becomes too complicated to use.

A car pulls up. It's the black Volvo. It hits the Little Man's bike and screeches to a halt. A man in a swanky black suit and hat gets out. He opens the trunk and pulls out a heavy flight case.

MAN IN THE SUIT

(to the Houseowner)

Hello there!

(to the Little Man)

Go sell your cardboard verbs elsewhere! Can't you see that nobody here wants them?

HOUSEOWNER

Yeah, his verbs are so boring! Are yours framed?

MAN IN THE SUIT

Of course, sir! Brass frames, silver frames and even gold frames. All anybody could possibly wish for. Sir has excellent taste.

LITTLE MAN

Can't you see? The verbs I sell are the best and the most important! They are made to be used, not to hang on a wall. Tell me, what verbs could be more important than these?

He holds up "taste", "breathe" and "give".

HOUSEOWNER

They're so old-fashioned.

MAN IN THE SUIT

I couldn't agree more, sir. Allow me to present my wares.

He holds up "buy", "exploit", "destroy", "work".

HOUSEOWNER

They don't seem very positive, though. I'm not sure...

MAN IN THE SUIT

May I point out the gold frames and the unrivalled script!

HOUSEOWNER

Yes, indeed. But I suppose they're very expensive?

MAN IN THE SUIT

Sophistication and quality has a price, but you get a lot more verb for your money!

HOUSEOWNER

All right, I'll take two.

MAN IN THE SUIT

Sir is obviously a man who appreciates quality when he sees it. Here, take your pick.

The Houseowner chooses two verbs and hands over some money. The Man In The Suit takes it and gets back in his car. The Little Man is in despair. The Volvo roars away.

3.

LITTLE MAN (VO)

Why doesn't anyone want to buy my verbs? People can't see any further than a gold frame nowadays. They don't care what's in the frame.

He walks his bike down a trail in the sun-drenched forest. He is sad. Two little girls are picking flowers. The Little Man stops and looks wistfully at them.

GIRL #1

Is something wrong, sir?

GIRL #2

Would you like a flower, sir?

LITTLE MAN

That would be very nice.

He wipes a tear from his eye.

GIRL #1

What do you have in your bag?

LITTLE MAN

Oh, nothing special. Just verbs that nobody cares about anymore.

GIRL #2

Why, sir?

LITTLE MAN

That's a good question. People don't know what's good for them. But you seem to understand. Do you want my verbs? You can use them any way you like. Here!

He hands the girls "love", "live", "savour", "think" and so on...

LITTLE MAN

Here, you can have the whole bag!

GIRLS

Thank you, sir!

They take his bag and run away across the field. The Little Man smiles at the idea that his verbs have at last found a taker. He gets on his bike and pedals away. The young girls throw the verbs up into the sunlight, laughing, running and skipping as they go (slow-motion).