

Fatal-to-the-soul touch

Opposing in many ways,  
we have to share this space.

so when you manspread  
I make a point of untangling my legs

*I too can take up space*

in the little, that's left

I prop a foot up, rest it next to him

call it *compromise*

but guilt and shame

keeps me occupied

for *'people who put their feet up on the seats are the worst'*

(Posted on Victorian public transport Facebook group)

I resort to alternate: 1-2-3-1-2-3-1-

1. having my foot up. 2. letting my conscience kick in 3. forgoing expectations

In the midst of all,  
accidentally, I brush my hand against his bare knee

*Sorry!*

(Self-conscious about the volume of my voice

under headphones blasting True Crime)

I blurt out an apology.

Unbothered, having not noticed;

while I bare the burden of every interaction

stay on the lookout for any inconvenience

On his phone, his gaze remains focused.

I envy it.

The lack of flinch,

fear,

fatal-to-the-soul touch

which destroyed too many

so much

they cannot escape worry,

space,

compromise,

guilt and shame,

*Sorry!*