

The Write of Spring

Shottery Young Writers' Anthology, Volume 1

Spring 2015

We would like to thank Mr Cooper & the English Department for their support which has enabled our creativity to blossom.

Editor's Letter

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Shottery Young Writers' first anthology of creative works! It has been a long time coming, but I hope that these pieces give you all a flavour of the exceptional creative talent we have in our little group.

For those of you wondering who the Shottery Young Writers are, the creation of the group started back in December after many conversations with girls who told me they were writing stories and poems at home and were desperate to share them, but were simply too afraid to! Creative writing can be a highly personal and hugely isolating experience, and all of us that have ever written before will understand that the moment we wish to share our work can be incredibly frightening. What we wanted to offer was a safe, supportive and highly collaborative forum for our girls to share their work with like-minded people. To have the opportunity to be given feedback and encouraged to explore their themes and ideas through different angles and perspectives. Every Monday lunchtime, the group comes alive with imagination!

This anthology, inspired by the Spring, is the girls' first chance to show off some of their work. I sincerely hope that you enjoy reading these and perhaps feel inspired to come along on Monday lunchtimes in G15.

Enjoy!

Mr Cooper

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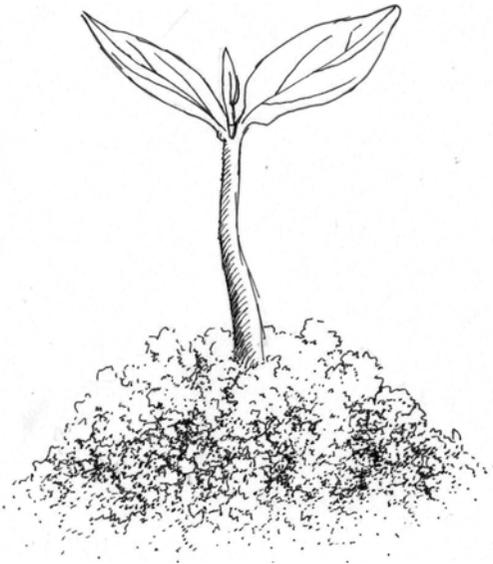
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Nature

The Universe by Annabel Peet

So precious,
So fragile,
So infinitely small.
So far away,
Is it really there at all?
The colours and sounds,
All light-years apart,
Like stepping stones,
Was how they did start.
Too hard to understand,
Yet so obviously there,
If you know how to look,
How, when, where?
So strong,
So tough,
So giant to see,
But you can't because
It's too big to be
All caught in camera,
Or to the naked eye,
And we are all here.
My question is why?

Harvest by Adele Cooke

Amongst dry earth, crumbled ash and porous rocks, here you lie. Forgotten to the wind, rain or hail. Forgotten to sunshine, light and the elements- a cocoon of life, waiting to ignite.

You know not what the season will bring, unaware of the future and confined from the past. You are new hope, nature's answer to rebirth. You are new harvest, new possibility, new life. You are the bringer of the future.

At first only a shoot, searching for the sun. A voice, reaching the surface. Green and fragile. Hope, embodied as you create prospect for the future. You are the food of hungry mouths, the strength to grow. You are the light on the faces of the famished and the substance to feed empty bodies. You are the product of a year's toil, the creation of blind faith vested in the earth. You are nature's miracle.

And then a root, searching for water amongst solid earth. A hope of survival reaching down in hope of nourishment. An instinct to draw upon the earth for a new beginning. You are the answer to the prayers of the desperate. You are the strength to survive another year.

A flower, vibrant against the colours of the earth. A simple blossom, adverse to the elements- a symbol of growth. You are the beginning of new harvest. New struggles. New toils. New life. Here, amongst the earth, a silent bud springs to life.

The Waiting Room by Jess Bassil

I sat in the tightly packed room. It was quiet; the only sound was an occasional rustle as someone turned a page in their newspaper, and some faint music which I'd never heard before, the sort of music that's played in lifts, you don't recognise it when you listen to it and if you listen to it again you can't quite place it. This was the last place I wanted to be. No, not the last, I know where the last place is. It's the place I could end up in. Theirs is 50/50 chance, I could end up in the best place imaginable but I might not. I wonder how long I have been in here. Days? Weeks? Months? Does time even count here? I don't know. All I know is that here it will be decided.

The next person is called in. They stand, looking terrified, I nod to them, trying to look reassuring, but I know I don't. The door closes behind them. I rack my brains for anything I did wrong, any rules I broke. I can think of nothing. Good. I've still got a chance then. But then again, I haven't done anything amazingly good either. I'm just average. It's going to be the little things that decide my fate, the things I never thought mattered. The door opens, the assistant steps out clipboard in hand.

"Next is," the entire waiting room holds a breath "Alexander Montgomery." The room sighs with relief, everyone except me. It's me. All eyes are fixed on me. I am rooted to the spot. The man next to me nudges me gently.

"Go on," he whispers softly. He's middle aged, a businessman, he smiles in all but his eye. I get out my seat, "Good luck" the man whispers. I'll need it. I walk slowly to the assistant. I reach the door. "Come on" she trills.

Honestly, what is the point of making all the assistants here act cheerful, it doesn't change how we feel. We all still know what could be ahead. I think of the woman, who went before me, I hope she passed. I hope she doesn't go there, I hope I don't either.

I follow the assistant through a long, off-white corridor. It's dull, all the same. But that's the point of this place; it's the most neutral place there is. Finally we reach a door; on it is a black plaque, which proudly reads "Dr Almond, Please knock Before Entering". We obey and someone inside calls out "Come in!" I enter, turn around to thank the assistant and find that she is gone. The door closes.

“Take a seat,” the man at the desk tells me. He leans across and puts out a hand “Doctor Almond,” he says. I take his hand; it is cold and smooth, without a blemish. I shiver.

“You must be Alexander, may I call you Alex?”

I nod utterly bewildered.

“Wonderful, wonderful,” the doctor drawls. He’s a thin man, dressed impeccably in a grey suit and tie. His eyes, hair, almost even his skin are all grey.

“I do like to get acquainted with my clients before we get down to business; helps get rid of nerves I find.” He purrs, elongating every one of his vowels. Get rid of nerves, this is the most nervous I’ve ever felt!

“Now Alex. Alex, Alex, Alex,” he continues “Any hobbies? What do you like doing?”

“I play tennis,” I mumble

“Ah yes, tennis. I do love watching tennis but I’ve never been much good at it.”

“Mmm,” is my non-committal reply.

“And you’re 14, lovely. It’s a wonderful period, childhood.”

I shrug.

“And it says here you died in a car crash. I’m sorry to hear about that.” The doctor sighs sadly.

“So I suppose we’d better take a look at what you were like when you were alive then, hadn’t we?”

He runs his finger along a shelf of folders before retrieving one that reads “Alexander Montgomery 2000-2014.” He places it on his desk and opens it. “Right then,” he begins, starting to flick through it. “Well Alex, at first glance it looks as though you lived quite a good life. You were kinder than you had to be and not as cruel as you might have been. Not bad.” I gasp, I might make it, I really might make it!

“Let’s take a closer look at some facts.” Doctor Almond scrutinises the papers in the folder. “Oh dear, Alex. It looks like you bullied someone a bit when you were younger.” I groan miserably. “But, it does say that you apologised, still we’ll have to take it into account.”

He begins rapidly typing something on his laptop. The doctor went through my file picking out every detail in it and writing notes. Half of the stuff he mentioned I couldn’t even remember myself. Finally he closed the file and put it back on the shelf. “Well, Alex I think I’ve made a decision about where you’re going, so this is it I suppose.” He puts out his hand again; I can barely hold his as we shake. He reaches behind him and picks up one of two identical keys and hands it to me. It’s only now that I notice two enormous doors in the wall to the side of the desk. I am directed to one. “Goodbye then Alex, I must say that you’re a lovely young chap, so sorry you died.” And with that he left, loudly announcing “Just going for a tea break, tiring work this job.” I know the door he just left through is now locked; there are no windows, no point trying to escape. I gulp, walk over to the door the doctor showed me, I put the key in the lock. I look back at the office please don’t let where I’m going be worse than this. I walk through the door, it slams behind me. It is pitch black, but then I can just make out a light, a soft white light.

Spring by Kate Inman

Oh! Joyous spring,
How your colours send me into a trance,
How they create such beautiful hues of light across the dark winter sky.
How the snow melts in your warming presence.
Ha! How the other seasons laugh at your passivity,
Yet only because they are hostile.
Summer: burns man.
Winter: freezes man.
Autumn: too innocent to be true.
But you are real - real beauty, real love.

Your eyes are as blue as the seas,
Your hair softer than the skies,
Your dress brighter than any pigment.
You blow in the wind,
With the wind.
You swim in the sea,
With the sea.
You fly in the sky,
With the sky.
You open our dark world to new life.

When you are here, life begins again.
New life is no longer a myth, but an event,
Created by your presence.
Lambs bleat,
Chicks hatch,
Flowers grow.
Ha! How you laugh at the other seasons' hostility,
Because you have passivity -
And optimism, of which you give to all those who experience you.
All of which create the unique magic of spring.

Life is Weird by Evelyn Bryne

Life is weird.

The way I see we're each like a flower, when we're born a seed is planted and then the plant grows and we grow with it. But not every seed turns into a blooming rose, watered and trimmed daily. Some turn into weeds, taking up ground meant for another plant, slowly sucking out its life. And some are planted in harsh conditions facing the struggle of going on every day, only growing very small.



Society

My Voice by Sophie Fennelly

Stuck inside the confinements of who she's supposed to be,
Always trying but not quite knowing how to break free,
Yearning for acceptance, although she claims it, she doesn't need
it,

But approval from them would make her completed,
Her voice is silenced by the want to fit in,
And everything she had to say was thrown in a bin,
On her mission to keep within the confinements of society
Thinking that she'll be safe there as long as she treads carefully,
But society is just as cruel, as the voices in her head,
They all tell her she shouldn't be here, that she should be dead,
But she realises her desire to escape from the realms of modern
culture,

Her biggest critic waits for mistakes like a vulture,
She's been taught her biggest critic is oneself
So she misses nothing, ripped apart by herself
But she realises her voice could be the thing to set her apart,
She could be out in the open, no more hiding in the dark
But how should she use it? What message should she send?
The answer is easy, it's: it'll all be okay in the end
But what about until then, what should she say?
How can she know when her life's been a list of rules to obey?
For this, I blame the system of identical uniform
Suppressing the self-expression that's been vital since we were
born

So people go to desperate measures to get themselves noticed
This girl is many; they're the ones that no one sees
I know a lot about them though, because this girl is me.

Industrialization by Annabel Peet

Industrial beams,
Sprouting up.
So smoothly,
So speedily.
Taking it all,
All for itself.
Feeding off
The beautiful life,
That will soon end,
But,
For now,
The harsh metal,
Now dominating
The once peaceful landscape,
Tearing through the laborious world.

With due respect by Alison Graham

Visibly billboard burn, visibly hands are warmed.
Visibly they burn and I mistook them for the sky:

Summerhouse on a lake, no more than
Small rooms of things formed first, no less.
In there we saw toddling ghosts, and now
We row. The intravenous look about you.

Yours is a sweet milk to suckle, mine's
A diamond in the rough to swallow.
I am for wearing road sign green so I am
As you are so is this a rosary, a chromosome we string?

We come upon a knowing tough to trawl:
A once castle on whose walls
Among sheep crows land. One for the seed,
Two for the blade. Our shadows we throw down

Pseudo drawing, you are nervous.
Honest bawling, you are distressed.
Fkiat the sheets out to dry and keep
This all third-degree, nuclear, you understand
The lake is a mess; and so sweetly you

With impetus, with motility
Construct intricate rituals that you
Might touch the skin of other men and
Encased, affix, to those cherished galley walls.
Retire respiring,

Deep sea diving: You hold the lead
I the tank
We the weight.

Osmotic dance by
Way of marionettes,
Maestros,
Respectively.

Now is the hour for
Inns to take us in wearing the clothing of sheep,
To give us berth (on grounds of observation), raging gaping

Tides charioteer the moon, the plough us
And we are tilling the field, always were.
The castle has yet to be us

On faultlines, on the dashboard with feet laid out,
Joints nitrous by the nets we drag:
We came up too fast

Among a people of unclean lips.
The air tasting the same.

My Voice by Adele Cooke

There's an echo as it emits.
A sound in the silence reaching out for those to hear.
There's a vibration,
a pitch, a tone, a moment
when the oscillations can be heard.

It draws you out.
You hear it in your ears,
you feel it in your lungs
and you can touch it with your fingers.
It engulfs you.

It resonates on each crevice of your face,
in the hollows of your skull
and in the depths of your mind.
It comes from within,
a place inside you screaming out at the world to hear.
A moment
in which suddenly you are heard.

The waves move from your mouth to your surroundings.
They form patterns in the air.
The thoughts from within you,
finally receiving the freedom they deserve.
Momentous. Transient. Incomplete.
The sounds set you free.

Yet they fade into silence.
Existing only for a minute.
Only for a second.
Only for a moment.
Fragmented as they resonate around you in the cacophony of
sound.

Lost forever in the grips of time and decay.

A sound only audible for a second.
Engulfed by the silence that ensues.
Forgotten,
almost as instantly as it began.

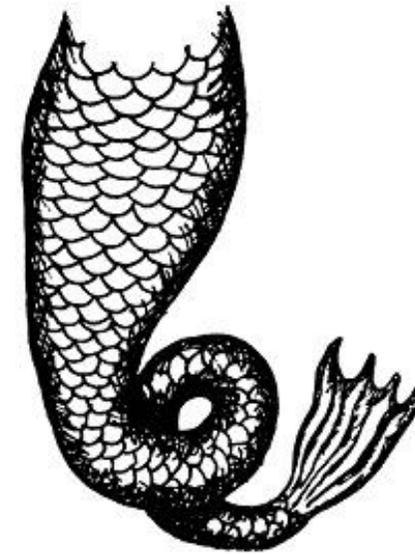
Yet it reaches out to those who will hear.
It resonates with those who will listen
it draws on those who inspire.
It consumes,
it enables,
it develops from within.

It can destroy
but it enables you to create.
To write, to explore, to escape.
Yet it remains momentous.
This, is the sound of a voice

E by Annabel Peet

The disastrous moment.
The one when you realise
That everything you've worked for,
All that you've achieved,
Could be gone
In the blink of an eye,
A push of a button,
A simple command.
And it would be gone.
And now you realise,
It could –
No.
It should be different.
Friends, family, a lasting legacy.
But your last few
Seconds, minutes, hours, days
Spent behind a desk
Because, really, you have nothing.
Nothing worthwhile.
Just assets and possessions.
But no time.
The sand has run down
And it's all over,
Your life
As brief as
A snowflake on skin,
Breath in the wind
The flash of a camera.
So much of it...
Wasted.
It's all just pointless.
There was nothing to work for.
Just denial

Plain, clear, simple.
So perfectly obvious,
But you,
You couldn't see it.
Yet you do feel ashamed,
Even though you don't know why.
You should know why,
In it's blinding clarity,
Pointless to point out.
Your time is up, you're gone,
Head lolling, eyes closed.
Snap.



Fantasy

Waves by Katie Phillips

I was falling. I tripped on a crack. I fell. I didn't hit the ground. That is all I have been thinking about; trying to see a fault in my memories, trying to find a reason to say this isn't real. But it is; and I am still falling.

But then the whistling in my ears, of the wind I have been falling into, stops. It takes me a moment to register the feel of the fine cut gravely concrete of the pavement beneath me. Only this isn't my pavement. It is distorted, it is too big. I am too small. The dull sandy grey of the pavement beneath me is five metres wide and the bluish kerb is over one metre. This is not right. I stand up slowly, spinning as I go, taking in my surroundings; only, that is harder than it looks, and it doesn't look like anything!

It is all changing, every time I blink there is something that wasn't there before, the pavement is now white sand and the kerb is an infinite sea of marine blue with no depth that is large enough to define it. One small island, one minute, and one moment of panic is all it takes for the scream to build up inside of me; no. I have to keep this down. Who is watching me? What is listening? I have to concentrate on something else: the salty wind that is fanning out my golden hair behind me, the soft sand beneath my now bare feet, the...

The ground shakes. I can't hold it in any longer. I scream as much as my voice box will allow. I scream until there is nothing left inside me but the racking sobs that are pulsing through my body as I fall to my knees, ripping my jeans on the... This is not sand. I am not on the island any more. I am in a small, grey room with a shrinking circle of light above me. The walls are moving and my ears pop as I descend further down in to the depths of this abyss. The sky is gone now, replaced by a black hole and I feel the platform on which I stand stop. But nothing happens. No doors open

up and I stay still in the blackness. I feel claustrophobic and I scream again, my voice hoarse from overuse. I take a deep intake of air and this seems to be the key, because suddenly the walls disappear and the water floods in.

I don't move apart from my initial jolt of terror as the warm, Mediterranean water hit my pale skin. When I was seven I discovered that when I held my breath whilst on the couch at home, I could hold it for considerably longer than if I was gliding underwater in the pool. So I stay still. Preserving my oxygen until the water invades my lungs. It doesn't get that far: in an instant my legs fuse together in a way I never thought possible, I can hear every sound wave pulsing through the water, every pop of a bubble, I feel warm and as comfortable as I can be in my state of current panic and most of all, I can breathe. It feels like a filter at the back of my throat, letting through only oxygen. I can see everything. I no longer have my grey jumper on, but the upper half of a vest and, when I dare to look down, a grass green tail, split at the end into two almond shaped fins, just like in all the books I ever read. This can't be happening, and before I can begin to comprehend anything, a voice, male and deep, says in a flat monotone,

“Olivia Waves, you have passed the test. Please proceed to the cave to your left. Thank you for your co-operation.”

I look around. I am at the sandy bed of the sea that not minutes ago surrounded me. As the voice pointed out, to my left is a cave, green like my tail. I try flexing it. I move three metres forward with the smallest flick of the end of my fins. I flex the muscles where my knees used to be and get in to an alarmingly familiar rhythm, but at least it gets me to the cave. I slowly pass through the opening to the cave and under some dangling

seaweed. I shiver as it brushes the back of my neck but carry on. If this is a test, and I doubt that it has finished, I don't want to appear weak.

Thank you for your co-operation. You now will choose. You can't go back to the life from which you came, but if you choose you don't want this life, you will have to find your own way in this vast ocean. You have one hour to look around the village. You have two hours to decide. You will be kept in this cave for the second hour to consolidate your two options. When you exit this cave, you will enter the village. You will have a cord attached to your tail to guide you back when your hour is up. Thank you for your co-operation. Your hour commences in one minute."

I freeze. Why me, why now, when I was happy. I can't go back, and I don't want to be alone. What lies in this *village* that is so repelling that I would choose a life of solitude over it? A piercing bell marks the start of my hour. I swim towards my future, I swim into the waves.

Splinters by Alison Graham

The wheel spins through several questions to settle on "What is your favourite food?"

A shuffling at each podium from the candidate; the first question after an ad break. The audience's attention theirs for the taking.

The microphone adjusted by Candidate 1 after some preening, they began to speak. It was already in position but through intensive practice with their coach, it had been established that shifting it downwards lightly would give a better vocal resonance. The difference between Relentlessly Cheerful Supermarket Cashier and Bank Manager Deserving of Promotion. Before the completion of their answer, Candidate 3 kicked through the plywood podium, drops their microphone and proceeds to walk offstage at medium page.

This has happened numerous times in previous seasons, compounding the cliché. With coaxing from producers and tearful pleas from family the candidate would be persuaded back on stage. *Don't waste your coach's time! The crowd is waiting! Go and get the votes you came here for!* In the meantime the audience would take to jeering and cheering alternately. Candidate 3 was neither crying at the producers nor re-entering. They were actually shouting. Losing points too. It might have been entertaining were it not for the coherency.

"Candidate 3 has withdrawn from *So You Think You Can Prime?* We express our deepest regrets and want to hear the remaining candidates' views on the matter in 10 seconds or less, starting now."

A general theme of deeply felt regret felt right in the heart

began to emerge. Candidate 1 was particularly sorrowful about the loss of an opportunity to talk about the really good sandwich they had eaten the previous night. All this punctuated by loud beeps. This television studio was a pioneer of in-studio censoring and Candidate 3 was falling foul.

“The show must go on. After all, we have to put someone in Downing Street by the end of tonight, and there’s no way it’s going to be one of you.” The presenter gestures at the audience, who laugh.

“We have just a couple of questions left, for our lucky three, but before that let’s have a look at the ratings.”

On a screen with the graphics neatly arranged to include Candidates 1, 2 and 4 a series of coloured bars appear. Candidates 1 and 4 are level; Candidate 2 was behind. A polite smile from each.

“The title doesn’t even make sense,” came roaring freely through headsets. This marked the end of an intern’s (previously accomplished and impressive) time at the channel. They had spilt a tiny amount of coffee on their soundboard, distracting them, and that was that. Their dedication to the field remained impressive. At home they have an enormous stack of Newspapers, for academic purpose only. The application for access had taken two years, let alone the delivery time and stipulations of care. Two years was essentially forever; the time elapsed since the Newspapers’ last publication was not to be thought about. The long articles, all words stacked one on top of another fascinated. After tonight the yellowed pages would find use as lining for the cat’s litter box.

“And that’s it! All the questions are answered. Now it’s up to you to vote. Who do you think can prime?”

Voter fraud was at this point a non-issue. There was already the surveillance technology to make voting by phone feasible so each handset had a feature built in; anyone who would like to vote activated the feature. Simple as pressing ‘yes’ to agree to a terms and conditions (with a convenient ‘skip’ button). It was genius really, to code surveillance into the voting software. Through online behaviour a unique user profile is built up to verify identity. Press the number on the keypad corresponding to your preferred candidate and your vote is counted. The single most successful opt-in surveillance programme in the world. In development was a customization feature. Filter out the adverts for certain candidates, receive only the voting information relevant to online behaviour. Apparently, it was possible to predict voting behaviour by the car you drove, the supermarkets you frequented, the television channels you watched. Remarkable.

The election results are widely discussed. Candidate 3 (who incidentally has a name, Clem) received an invoice detailing the damages to studio property. She dropped her phone on receiving the email. Only partly because of her newly-broken elbow. Included on the itemized list were seven rubber bullets. Stamped with the studio’s logo, as the doctor had observed. More importantly, shot without intent to cause injury and there would have been no incident, had it not been for the non-cooperation of Clem’s elbow. The smell of hot rubber makes her sick. Her parents had - she has a house in the countryside. Great heavy windows that open completely, a front door reached from the ground. With the rent money saved, the fees will pay sooner. The smell of hot rubber makes her sick. She will open the windows fully.

The Girl Who Fell Down The Stairs by Eloise Lines

Her face was everywhere. The local newspaper's front page, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, there is even a photo, tall and proud, on the left of the Headmaster's Office, accompanied by several gleaming trophies – no dust or cobwebs to be seen. The name, written underneath the mahogany wood frame was engraved into a brass plate.

Lottie White
2001-2015

Her name wasn't uncommon to St. Matthew's High; in fact, it was probably mentioned at least once in the average conversation, and probably more today. And not for a good reason.

.....
It was a foggy Friday afternoon, heavily condensed windows with vapour drip, drip, dripping down, storm clouds sulking up high and the sun, no longer shining but a pale, white oyster. Also known as: ordinary British weather. The atmosphere outside reflected on the atmosphere and emotions of the people inside, boredom, anger, fatigue, and boredom again. We were meant to be focusing on our lesson, preparing for our GCSE's but no one was listening, no one was paying attention to the stammers of the teacher, everyone just wanted to go to next period, then go home, anything to get out of school. Maybe it was out of instinct, some feeling that comes from the age where we had no technology to help us. I felt it. I felt it creeping up my spine, like a cold finger, gliding, giving you goose bumps, and you think when you turn around someone will be there, laughing at your fright as you jump. But no one was there. Nausea crept up my throat, and maybe everyone else felt it to, because as soon as we saw we could nearly go we all stood up, already packed, ready to run away from the danger. But it was too late. It was too late.

Title here

An ear-piercing scream echoed down the corridor, into the classroom, bouncing along, followed by a loud thump. That was enough to send our hearts racing, adrenaline coursing through my veins. But not in the fun rollercoaster way. The get-out-run-you-are-going-to-die-way. We all ran, ignoring the whimpers of the teacher as he tried to stop us, but he couldn't. We were sprinting, around half-way down the long, slippery corridor, past the old door to the Headmaster's Office, with the hinges so rusty you had to apply pressure to open it. The wall next to it on the left hand side was bare, a cream-y white, but I saw crimson red blood trickling down like the water vapour on the window. I shook my head and it was gone. There was another scream, much higher but not as loud and we followed it, down the corridor to the right, through the double doors, and... there the small body lay, with a girl sobbing at the side.

Her ice white hair was fanned around her face, skin deathly white, sharp pale blue eyes like windows into the summer sky, and face forever in petrified form, mouth opened out wider than I thought was humanly possible; a sharp contrast to her blood-red lipstick, not a smudge out of place. She could've been sleeping, if her eyes had been shut, and her head hadn't been at an awkward angle. It was like what adults tell young children when someone dies. I think we were all trying to tell ourselves the girl would be alright, but a first aid teacher took her pulse, and shook her head. We all came closer, to see who it really was. It was the Queen Bee, the Miss Popular, the good girl, the clever girl, the musical girl, the sporty girl, the Teacher's Pet. It was the Lottie White.

The funeral was to be held the next Sunday, but it was already in the news, in social media, in everyone's head, this nagging question: how did it happen? There were lots of theories going round, someone had pushed her, a ghost had pulled her, she did it on purpose, she faked it and is in America, but I think that what the school said is deemed most likely. "She slipped." They said, "She tripped, slipped and fell. Chances that would be fatal were next to nothing." Even so, not many people were convinced. They continued posting pictures of her on social media, Lottie White, her spirit stays alive. But not a single picture was of after The Accident. It was always of her at a party, on holiday, helping at home, taking her dogs for a walk, but not one of The Body. No one knew what to do at first, student wise. It was like we were all bees and Lottie, our Queen had just died. We had no purpose, but to find a new ruler, probably someone who wasn't as nice. It was a forced change, and I for one, didn't like it.

The register was called in the morning. When they paused at where Lottie White had been, and continued on, missing her out, it just made it even worse. In the corridors, her friends were crying next to her old locker, and there was a big bouquet of fragrant lilies there and little bunches of smaller flowers, but even more at the staircase, and black ribbons tied around the banisters. No one seemed willing to forget her, not yet. A photo went up on the left of the old door to the Headmaster's Office, and with it several silver trophies that her friends had offered to clean, awards and things she had won.

But who was Lottie White, really? I don't think anyone *really* knew her that much, except from her parents and younger sister, knew that she liked climbing up mountains and taking pictures of wildlife, and I didn't know until Lottie White's dad told us all at the funeral. He had the same pale blue eyes, except his windows were closed and filled with tears but he stood firm and continued his speech. Her mother couldn't say anything and her sister couldn't either. I felt sorry for them, someone you love being taken away from you at such a young age. Their house, once full of parties and laughter had blinds down, shutting off the rest of the world, cars usually away and the welcome mat gone. They were all signs to tell you to go away. Hiding the soul, the heart, so it couldn't be hurt again, like Lottie White's dad's eyes.

It's been 4 months since The Accident. Now, the trophies have dust all over them and you have to wipe it away to see the name. Everyone has adjusted, or moved on. Her friends are no longer crying in the corridor, but laughing and chatting, and all the flowers have wilted away, taken away. I still hang my ribbon on the banister, just to remind me. Remind me of Lottie White. I think she would be glad that no one was crying anymore, because people said she was always selfless and kind, and wanted the world to be a happy place. She didn't want to be an actress, singer, fashion designer or any of the things her friends wanted to be. She wanted to go and help people in Africa.

The blinds are still in Lottie White's dad's eyes, and on the house, but at least there is a welcome mat now.

If you ask anyone, "Who is Lottie White?"

Before, they would have replied, "She is the most popular girl in our year, the kindest, the cleverest, the sportiest and the most musical!"

Now, they say, "The Girl Who Fell Down The Stairs."

