

Coffee Pot

I scratch a long nail across my chin as I contemplate the blank page before me. The words are on vacation, out of the office. Frustrated, I knead my temple, trying to coax them back to me. My skin is taught, over stretched. Outside a lawnmower, churning its way over my neighbour's lawn, drones against my thoughts. I need to cut that nail. The white space bleeds onto my eyes. Lazy Sunday.

I'll make a coffee to get me going. Another coffee. With a stiff stretch I reach for the coffee pot, setting it on its pedestal. Bubbles rise gently through the black liquid, blooming on the surface. I open the window for some air. I need to clear my head. Freshly cut grass wafts around my nostrils. A dry mustiness that encircles me, warm and comforting.

Rivers sprout beneath my eyes, charting their course over my supple skin. I lick the salt from my lips. The air here is chalky, it sticks in my throat, making me cough. I labour along the sun-baked road, disturbing gravel with each step. "Lift your feet" mum says. I rearrange the cool box in my arms, its contents rocking back and forth.

Finally we reach the glade and I'm thankful for a cool shadow that envelops me as I approach the tree line. Hurriedly I set down my burden, desperate to rub my stinging eyes before dashing off to explore my surroundings.

The air is fragrant with the sweet smell of wild flowers and pine cones. The musky long grass sways in the breeze, the fragile strands snapping as I crouch, playing hide and seek with my cousins. Like an enthusiastic referee, a nearby cricket chirps out the beats of a shrill whistle.

Later we scramble through the trees, collecting wood for the barbecue. Rotting branches crackle and crunch underfoot, and pungent whiffs of decay issue from the clusters of mushrooms amongst the dry leaves.

With the fire stocked it's not long before the smouldering charcoal tickles our noses, the smoky plumes wafting across the glade to where we are playing. Dad puts the sausages on, their grease sizzling in the heat releases mouth-watering vapours.

We spend the afternoon playing by the stream. The waters gurgle and froth around our makeshift dam as we play hopscotch on half-submerged boulders. The warm air swarms with midges, an erratic haze clustering around the dominating hogweed. Its frilly flowering umbrella contrasts a sweet perfume with the acidic tang of its poisonous sap.

The darkening sky urges us to leave despite our protests. Weary and stubborn, we are half-dragged, half-carried away from our rustic playground. The wind in

the trees sighs contentedly as we head for home, rocked to sleep by the purring of the car engine as it drones on into the night.

The engine rumbles to an end and I open my eyes, blinking in the light. The lawnmower's work is finished. I return to my desk to find the coffee has boiled dry, a stale aroma hangs heavy in the air. The white page burns luminous. The words wait patiently in the hallway.