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Writing Place: Assignment

Piece 1:

Space:

A hat lies still on the floor,
in a space so dark and cold.
Once brightly coloured and full of love,
it's now discarded,
its colours faded,
the brim rolled.

Pictures hang from wall to wall,
strangers smiling from marbled masks,
before they seem to turn their backs,
like flames deserting ash
or foxes sneaking out from trash.

Speaking of foxes, one creeps by,
a sly look in its eyes
and in the distance, an animal cries
and it runs off, into the distance, of the space.

Discarded knives and forks lay,
on an old wooden table, full of lace,
once they danced and now they sleep,
no sound, no noises, no people to seek,
to use them, so they, just, lie, still.

The smell of jasmine fills the air,
something so sweet, surprising, so rare,

Tiny fragments bloom from the cracks,
surprising signs that the life may come back,

Piece 2:

The Mystery of Grafton Street.

There was a caravan parked on Grafton Street. That's the first thing I noticed when I looked out of my window, all those nights okay. It was colourful and definitely didn't belong on the council estate where the only colourful thing was (and probably still is) the language. I was intrigued, racking my brain, trying to think who it belonged to. For a second, I debated going to ask Aunty Pat if she knew anything and I turned away from the window, but then I heard the faint clink of the wine bottle and decided against it. It was safer up there. It was always safer up there.

I turned back towards the window and spied something else out of place. There was a man walking down Grafton Street. Now that wasn't unusual but there was something about that particular man that wasn't right, I couldn't pinpoint what it was at that time though. I stood cautiously a rickety chair, pushing the latch and straining my eyes against the window, moving side to side, avoiding the fluorescent light of the street lamps, trying to get a closer look. He wore a suit, carried a briefcase and by the looks of it, was talking on the phone and I thought to myself, he must not be from round here. Everybody knows that if you have any valuables on show, they'll get nicked in seconds. I pictured the residents of Grafton Street like vultures, all watching hungrily from their windows, each thinking of a plan to distract the poor man before stealing his valuables and flogging them on E-Bay.

The vulture image quickly disintegrated from my mind as the man broke into a jog and disappeared round the corner from view and I thought to myself, maybe the man got wind of the vulture people too and legged it, or maybe he just had somewhere to be and didn't realise the time. Either way, he'd gone and that was my excitement over for the night, or so I thought. Apart from the caravan but nobody had been near that so I guessed it'd probably been nothing important.

I think about Auntie Pat all and all of a sudden, I'm transported back in to that room. I turned away from the window, thinking to myself how I should definitely be asleep before she comes up to bed, when a crash from outside the window caught my attention. I turned back so fast I gave myself whiplash and saw a young girl watching a group of seagulls squabbling over a group of overturned wheelie bins. There was something different about that girl, she couldn't have been any older than ten, maybe eleven, wearing a moth-eaten jumper that looked like it had seen better days and had a shocking mop of ginger hair that looked like it hadn't been brushed in weeks. Maybe the angle of the street light was doing it or maybe my eyes were playing tricks on me but I swore there was a weird light around her, something I didn't recognise. I didn't know if she lived in Grafton Street but she certainly looked lost, neglected even. She reminded me of myself.

I didn't know the time but it must have been late, definitely way past my bedtime and I wondered what the girl was doing out. Maybe she'd been sent to the off-licence at the end of the road for someone, it was common knowledge that they'd serve you whatever in there, no matter how old you were. Aunty Pat always went on about how bad it was and then would send me down there, so she was a bit hypocritical really but I'd have never said that to her face.

I carried on watching the girl for a bit, she was watching the seagulls like she was in some sort of trance. I debated trying to get her attention when the smell of smoke drifted upstairs. My best bet was that Aunty Pat had added another log to the fire, and when that burnt out (they never took very long),

she'd be up to bed and guaranteed to check on me. I turned away from the window again, but then I heard the sound of footsteps outside, slow at first and getting faster. I was caught in a dilemma, keep watching and face the wrath of Aunty Pat or ignore it, jump into bed and maybe miss something. I turned back to the window, ignoring the growing fear in my stomach, only to see Briefcase Man reappear. He jogged slowly behind the girl who had moved on from the seagulls and was now wandering down the street. He jogged right up behind her, put his left hand out, then his right and, in a split second, grabbed her round the throat. The memory of that moment made me gasp, just as much as it had all those years ago. But what was to come was far more shocking .

I expected the girl to scream, or kick the man, or do something, but she didn't. I crouched behind the window in amazement and peered out as I saw the girl grow, first a little bit, then a bit more, then a bit more until she towered over the man, who now swung from her neck. With one giant hand (which looked green, but I couldn't tell if it was the light or her skin) with exceptionally long nails (or claws, who knows?), she grabbed the man, opened her giant mouth, took one look at him and swallowed him whole, briefcase and all. Then, before I'd had time to realise what had happened, she shrunk back down to normal size and carried on walking as if nothing had happened.

Except. That weird light I'd dismissed earlier was still there, a blue glow that shone around her as she walked. And it grew as she went past the caravan. But nothing happened, she carried on and vanished from view round the corner, just as Briefcase Man had done earlier. and I was left wondering, what on earth had just happened? Little did I know, it wouldn't be the last time that I'd see something like that.

Piece 3:

I Think I'm Losing My Mind:

I'm trapped inside a locked room and it's so filled with junk that I can't find a way out. Every time I unpack one of the boxes, it creates a mini hurricane and I'm left picking apart crumbled pieces of rubbed memories I didn't want to think about in the first place.

This room has no light, I'm drowning in an ocean poisoned with clutter. I'm confused, every turn I take is wrong, every move I make leads to somewhere I don't want to be, I don't know where I'm going, don't know what path I'm taking, all I know is I'm trapped inside a locked room when I shout for help, it comes out in a whisper nobody comes .

I feel like the biggest clown in the smallest circus, feel like I have to keep pushing, keep fighting to find a way out of this room sometimes I just wonder what this is all for but it's just so difficult and. What will I achieve by escaping a locked room? Freedom, fresh air, a chance to reinvent myself, start again? A chance to make people believe I'm not crazy?

Because I'm not crazy. Even when the voices in the room get too much and all I can hear is a cacophony of laughter and low voices and it's too much, I'm not crazy. Even when I slump down, exhausted after another day of searching for freedom, I'm not crazy.

I'm trapped here in a room that's locked and it's so filled with junk that I can't find a way out.

Piece 4:

Icarus:

The familiar scent of musty pews

Fills my nose, clogs my throat

and incense clings to my skin.

If I put my hand out,
I can feel the altar
The body solid, the legs thin
Like a runner training for a marathon
He knows he's going to win.

If I step slowly left
I can hear the candle
The flicker of the flame burning bright
When I was a child,
I used to wish on those candles
Watch my wishes float away
In the glittering light.

On my right, the stained glass windows
My favourite thing of all
The pieces fit together like a jigsaw
All colours and shapes, big and small.

I used to beg my dad to lift me
And I'd look and spread out my wings
Calling out to all the old ladies and gents
As they sang their afternoon hymns.

I used to love a Cathedral
But I flew too close to the sun.
And now all that's left
Are the memories of Cathedrals
But memories are no fun.

Piece 5:

Bowling Pins:

"Quick, get out of the way!!" I turn around and spot a girl waving frantically, she's around my age, braided hair, tatty rainbow jumper and skin the colour of caramel. "Quick, move!!!" she shouts again and only then do I realise she's shouting at me. "Behind you!!!" I turn around and spot three men on motorbikes speeding towards the busy street, firing shots at people randomly. I hear the girl screaming, strangers screaming, but it feels like white noise in my ears as I watch bodies fall to the floor, like bowling pins. Before I know it, I'm being grabbed and pulled from the scene, the sounds of the shots and the screaming ringing in my ears, over and over until my head feels like it's going to explode and the world around fades to black.

When I open my eyes, I'm presented with a cold wet tongue on my eyelids. I put my hand out, feel something furry and jump, only to find a small, scruffy terrier wearing a bandana, grinning (seriously, he looks like he's grinning) at me. I wave the dog off, taking in my surroundings. I'm not on the street anymore. The smell of damp fills my nostrils and I cough loudly, the sound echoing all around the room. I take in gold gild, and red seats as I sit up slowly, wincing as pain ricochets around my temple.

"I'd be careful if I were you". A voice reaches my ears and I strain my eyes to see the owner. "That was a nasty fall you had". I turn my head slowly and see the girl from earlier, leaning against a rotting wooden beam, eyeing me curiously. I open my mouth to reply but nothing comes out and the girl grins. "Cat, or should I say dog" she says, pointing to the scruffy terrier running round her feet "got your tongue?" She laughs, it's melodic and I want to laugh too, but again, no sound comes out.

I watch as the girl makes her way over to where I'm sitting and I notice for the first time that she's wearing glasses. They're round and thin with blue frames and they make her look a bit like Harry Potter in a good way. She sticks her hand out to me. "As you're obviously not going to say anything, let me introduce myself and then I'm out of here. I'm Maia and around half an hour ago, I saved your life, so you owe me big time".