

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Afterimage

by Saffron Swansborough

When I wake up the other side of the bed is cold at my feet.
That sound downstairs is like a detonated block of flats would make
If it had a throat, collapsing in slow motion. I pat under
The covers, feel the warm patch of piss under my bum. The steel girders
Holding us up are screeching. Dust thrust upstairs thickens. Burnt toast
particles rise, a thick blackness. What I am hearing is mum and half a con
versation: Hello yes that's me (gasp scream) no! (No repeated for
A minute. Quiet) no I don't want anything to do with him
OK our son will call you back. When she says our I make fists. When
Dad left I was six, sitting on the steps in shorts picking a scab
Off my knee, inhaling fresh tarmac. He had to climb over me
To get past, I didn't see him leave but he bumped my leg, whispered
Sorry before he walked away from us. You're the man of the house
Now mum said. Yes, hearing and smell are my super powers. Footsteps
Up the stairs. My sheets are cold now, smell of ammonia. Simon
It's your dad. Is he dead? Was he on the phone? That was the Police.
They've pulled him in for drink driving, he's still listed as missing nine
Years later can you believe. He wants to talk to you. Help me up
Then mum. Meaty arms pull me upright then I feel my way forward.