

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

He's not there

by Sho Botham

When I wake up the other side of the bed is cold. It wasn't always like this. I used to snuggle into his back for warmth, company and reassurance. There is none of that now. Just a person sized cold space next to me. I thought about buying a single bed so I wasn't constantly reminded of the days when he was there but I think I am getting used to the extra space and I quite like it. Oh, I don't use this space, at least not in any functional way. My sleeping habits haven't suddenly changed. I didn't overnight become a diagonal sleeper. I still sleep neatly on my side with the same sensible space to my right that I always had when not in need of his warmth, company or reassurance. It is just that he's not there. When I think about it, everything is the same but different. I have to accept that the other side of my bed will always be cold now. He will never again warm the space next to me. That moment when he held his hand out for the cup of tea I had just made for him and froze with a strange look on his face. I just knew instantly that things had changed forever. He didn't drop the tea. I took it from him as looked at me with confusion, not understanding what was happening. It was a major stroke but not major enough that he was spared a single bed in the bedroom downstairs with me as his carer attending to all his needs. I don't know if he remembers his side of the bed up here – a time when there was no emergency buzzer on the bedside table, a time when I could sleep soundly instead of listening for the buzzer to remain silent. It is time to get up. Time to put my smile on and go to him at the start of another challenging day.