

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

There's Always More to It

by Mari Syrad Grieves

The War

I've been waiting for five minutes. Inside those five minutes, an entire life has been lived: the universe suspended inside a marble. During that fistful of moments, I kept count. I prepared for the battle which would either end the war or prolong it. During the gestation, I plotted. I imagined the enemy: I pictured his face, I tuned into his psyche and listened to his plans and his deceit. I sharpened the edges of my armour. I was ready, but I was foolish. Foolish to imagine that I could know anything at all about the way the enemy looked or how he thought. For he knew I was onto him and the plans were the deceit all along. I have learnt a lesson as the war rages on: you can think you know who's on the winning side, but there's always more to it.

What If?

If you could hold a firework in your mouth, and not die, would you do it just to feel the fizzing, taste the coloured sparks, and swallow the explosion?

If you could tuck slivers of glass under your eyelids without going blind, would you risk it if it meant you could see when people were lying and magnify all the good in the world so you felt less afraid?

If you were dead already, and I didn't know, would you tell me so I could get on with my life without waiting for your cold lips to apologise and, if I was lucky, beg for forgiveness?

If I was a gun, would you take the safety off, just to see what it would take for the trigger to be pulled? Not much, it turns out. "Murderer!" they crow. "There's always more to it," I whisper back.

The Waves

The waves were angry. She inched towards them; baiting them. She had waited until the sea was ready for her. The steps down to the stones had been slippery and breath taking but she took each one like a butterfly about to emerge from its cocoon: with trepidation but confidence that her wings would carry her with sheer beauty if not mechanics.

The waves inched towards her; accepting the challenge. The sea had been waiting – it remembered the girl, translucent and discarded, and swelling with rage spat its foaming hatred towards her. With a momentary change of heart, the waves withdrew, scuttling back across the stones, before lurching forward again with renewed agony to ensnare her.

On its last attempt before the receding tide took control, the sea stole the land from beneath the girl made of plastic, and swept her into its dark waters, on and on across the rippling surface. It ignored her excuses and promises to change, swallowing her whole. There's always more to it.