

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Hiding

by Ali Giles

Even after so much time it's like peeking into someone else's house when the lights are on but they haven't yet drawn the curtains. Walking past quickly and thinking about what I saw, or what I thought I saw.

That fear, that anxious quiver, when I hold it up and look at it.

I remember how I moved through the days like a severed head that finishes a sentence; body and head would come back together again sometimes.

And I couldn't stop imagining: what if I could have told you? What if I'd warned you against what you were going to do in the future? And that you said nothing. That you just looked at me. Of course you would have said nothing. We can only die in the future, I thought; right now we are always alive.

I think of long, self-serving letters and envelopes covered with silly drawings.

I think of Shoreham and Norfolk and Eastbourne rock n roll group.

A long time ago, and your family listened patiently. Why I didn't visit when you were sick; why I never went to your funeral. The worst of it is the grubby desperation I must have shown, digging around for reasons; which after all is just another word for excuses. Like I wanted them to forgive me. I don't think anyone can – or should – forgive a coward.

I don't deserve it, but how clearly I still see both your faces today.

In memory of Lee and Jackie.