

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Remember to Breathe

by Catriona Millar

I have to remind myself to breathe ...almost remind my heart to beat.
Sometimes I can't breathe and my heart beats faster

Like the time you smiled, strayed into my eyes and told me I had spinach on
my front molar

Like when I thought I was eight stone and was ten and a half

Like when I permed my hair and looked eighty-four

When Brenda's cat died when she was on holiday in Malaga

(And her cactus which was indestructible)

When I washed everything at ninety degrees...and didn't fit dolly

When I don't shoplift or consider shoplifting

When I walk, or think about walking, how one leg follows the other, the heel,
they tell me goes down first, and then the ball

When I run like Phoebe in the park

When I don't run like Phoebe in the park

When a police car slows down at lights

When I walk, heel down first... at night

When I want to make this rhyme

(But don't have time)

Going on holiday in a caravan to Lossiemouth with a gaslighter called Joe

With a compostable toilet

Phoning up all the Cassidys in the greater Glasgow phone book asking them if
they know David

Saying "fuck off you stupid bastards!" ...after they say no.
Watching Cowboys ride in the rain when I was ten
My heart raced fast ...it shouldn't then
Bleaching my hair blonde to look like Debbie Harry
And end up looking like Mick Hucknell

Hiding your acne with hide and heal by rimmel
And sitting feeling pretty in your shortest skirt with auntie Rena
She smiles and says "that's a real big spare tyre you've got there
"And huge discoloured lumps on your face...
But don't worry no ones looking at you anyway"
Waking up at three a.m. remembering most folk die at four
Waking up at three a.m. and wondering what it's like to die in an hour

Thinking I can fly from the tin roof of an Anderson shelter
and dropping like a stone
A rusty nail goes through my foot and tetanus injections are plunged into my
teenage ass
Wondering what lockjaw feels like and telling God
(I'm just wondering ...I don't want it)

Thursday comes around to quick...it's gone and then comes back again,
and again, and again.
I guess it always will until I die at four a.m. on Tuesday.
Note to self...'remind myself to breathe'...