

Home is where the heart is buried

We pluck petals from ox-eye daisies growing on the verges: *he loves me, he loves me not.*
From the bruised stem, vitality bleeds onto my palm. I scrub at the khaki stain, at the pain of being rootless; half my life plucked by an unseen hand.

‘I’m too old for this nonsense,’ I say, shivering.

She tucks the tartan blanket snug around my legs and pushes me further along the path. From here I can see my chintz curtains and his photo, propped up in the gilt-edged frame on the sill. The hours I have lost, fingering the cut of his uniform, sharp as shears, and his victorious smile.

From the smallest seed comes the brightest flower he’d say, his ridged fingernails stiff with dirt. Even in his final hours, hope bloomed on his face.

My wheels catch on the weeds rebelling through gravel, as she twists me onto the driveway. I gasp as the jolt cracks up my spine.

‘Sorry,’ she says. ‘Worse than Asda’s trolleys.’

As she tilts me backwards, the sun kisses my face, the touch as tender as his.

We pass the lilies he nurtured in the raised bed by the front door. I brush them and let the pollen stick.