

I'll ask for magenta tablecloths. Magenta for frostbitten cheeks that look like roses

blooming between new white tiles.

They'll ask if I want red instead. Nobody will believe in colours like magenta or ivory or sapphire anymore. I'll tell them I want red, but not really. In some places, red looks burnt. Like that rocking horse I used to love.

But not a rocking horse, just firewood.

In the next second, she'll stand beside me. It won't be anything like an obligation. No sobbing, or even a bouquet of those half-dead flowers you get at the florist beside the highway. She'll just walk up to me, more or less purely to enjoy the view. I'll pretend she knows I'd join her, too, if I could.

But I'll just watch her, hands in her pockets, crushing the mint in her mouth into twelve tiny pieces, then swallowing them methodically.

She'll be daffodil. The colour of hope, amongst other things. Daffodil for those tiny flowers that bloom after a storm as if to say, 'I'm here. It'll be alright.'

Daffodil, the colour of the sun on a day I'll call Fate. Fate won't have a colour because it'll contain so many. Lavender. Coral. Apricot. Whole gradients, too. Like the multicoloured gleams of light that'll splatter across a window I'll only glimpse at. It'll be a pretty window.

I'll know that if I was in another world, I'd call it art and take a photo to show my kids.

There'll be a man in the room, too. He'll sit beside me with his legs crossed at the ankles and a small smile stained across his face like grass on white dresses—the kind that makes your eyes wrinkle at the corners.

I'll think about how I used to smile at people on the train. I'll want to smile then, like we were taught in kindergarten. I'll be older now, though.

'I loved you,' he'll tell me later on the phone.

'Why?' I'll ask him.

'You looked lonely.'

I'll smile then instead, and hang up soon after.

He'll be amber. Amber like honey and sunsets and warnings that tell you to run, not walk, before it's too late.

It's odd, this feeling. Giddy.

That girl will still stand there. Later sometime. She'll be wearing a coat that almost touches the floor and her eyes will be the kind of blue that remind me of the sea. She'll not look sad, exactly, but thoughtful. Like everything we've ever said to each other lies stagnant in the space between us, and so does she, in a way, wondering, 'Why are you not saying anything now?'

I'll want to tell her I'm saying things: that every whisper of the wind through the trees is my voice, and all that rubbish no one really believes in. She'll put her hands in her pockets instead, shifting her weight from one foot to the other like she's waiting for a bus that'll never come.

The man with the amber smile will get up and leave, then. He'll have places to go, people to see. He'll take one last look at me, nodding like he's agreeing with something only he can hear, and then he'll be gone. I'll watch him go, feeling a pang of something like regret but not quite.

The girl beside my coffin will look at the red tablecloths and, for a moment, her lips will part as if to say something, but no words will come out. Instead, she'll just smile—a small, sad smile that doesn't quite reach her eyes—and turn to leave.

This stupid, broken world full of stupid, broken people.

As she walks away, I'll think about that day I called Fate. I'll remember the way the sun looked as it set, the way the colours bled together in the sky, and the way I knew I was going.

And maybe they'd tell me the truth: that I might never see the colour magenta again.

Only red.

Red for tablecloths at a funeral I'll never attend as a guest.