Eleanor

She felt the air biting her. It was cold and sweet and bitter. It was warmth, it was winter. It was a whisper and an echo. On the ground beneath her feet laid a leaf; a dishevelled old life, as still as the sudden change in the wind. Eleanor felt a joy spring into her heart. Oh how she loved the sight of fallen leaves! But that moment was distorted when she noticed her shadow. What was it that her mother use to tell her? Ah that’s right! Shadows meant companionship, although Eleanor could not fathom the nature of it. Sometimes The Shadow slipped on a mask and sometimes The Shadow played with her thoughts. Most times, however, The Shadow cared for her loneliness and painted her perceptions with awakening, yellow roses. A sparrow! Happiness is its heart, jubilant little thing! Eleanor saw an image in her mind; Mr Sev’s bird fountain from when she was a child. Sparrows would spring through the wind! Hop, hop, hop! And the scent of blossoming life followed their paths.

Warm! She noticed how lovely the warmth cut through the pinch of the cooled wind that had made itself a home around her. The sun was a presence; an alter amid the vast blue. What a glory! Its true beauty was unfathomable to her, but a place that she could store a slice of her happiness. What peculiar little specks she saw when she looked at the vast blue above her! They were like that time she fainted and Mrs Willow told her that her eye’s television had lost signal for a moment. Of course, there couldn’t possibly have been such a thing! She was no longer that same school girl; that doll inside of life’s decadent, pink doll-house.

Eleanor knew the world and the things in it. At times she wished her innocence hadn’t been silently peeled away; like decadent wrapping paper that uncovered a colourless, dissatisfying gift that sat beneath. So to distract herself from the grey that had settled upon her mind, she concentrated on the butterflies. Oh how elegantly they danced through the treetops above her! There one minute, gone the next, as though they were daisies on dusk; displaying their beauty for the grass-seeds and pansy flowers, before soon shrinking away into a private closure. Sometimes the wind did the same and that time when it shrunk back, it left behind a familiar scent that Eleanor focused her sense to; ah, grass-clippings!

She could envision Mr Sev once more; the day he had cut the back lawn of their antique cottage and set the clippings beside the rusted shed door. She had played amongst the tempting pile; constructed a fairy-tale with pigs, witches and pots of flowers for supper. How lovely! How utterly jubilant her childhood was!

As Eleanor walked she felt the bright light of the sky tapping her between the shoulder blades. So peaceful! Oh, just like the schoolyard! When Eleanor was three or four years prior to then, her father decided to restore the green in their backyard, where the thought had been previously thrown away; abandoned in his mind within a crumbling pile of vast carelessness and negligence. They had rarely had green grass in their backyard, only dead scatters of sharpness and displeasure. When Eleanor arrived home on a Thursday afternoon from the schoolyard, she noticed a peculiar newness, yes very peculiar indeed! Vast emptiness. Her father had dug up the old, forgotten corpse, used the whole day to do it too, and a sea of orange sand had been all that remained as she looked beyond her and saw an infinite hope of possibilities. What gladness in her heart!

Eleanor tilted her face towards studying her feet and saw a strip of black paint; such an emotional colour, on the grass in front and beyond her. The liquid drops had licked the tongues of green emerging from the fertile soil and Eleanor recovered her childhood once more. Oh how she loved to run! She was always so quick at races! Eleanor walked the black strip of paint; the grass tongues surrendering to her grace and dominance and in her memory she saw feet. She was seven again; nervous impulses politely hauled her body forward and the force of determination pulled her by an invisible thread towards the line that would determine pleasure or defeat. The other girls, in their laced up shoes, yes, just like hers, ran closely beside, but Eleanor’s outcome had exceeded the fate of the others’ and as she crossed the finish line she was struck with an unmistakable sense of awe that she could achieve.

Eleanor was alerted by a sound; a melody of crunches and sharpness. Gravel! Often it was common for the environment around her to be a trigger for what the past contained. She saw love and absence. She smelt sweetness and stench. Eleanor smiled as vague memories, like photographs, disappeared into the wind once more, as though they were only visiting friends. She felt as though echoes in her mind had replanted valuable treasures that had been stolen from her time and time again. Little snitch! Maybe the thief was herself. Nevertheless, Eleanor was quietly reminded that the world was living and capable; that trees – Oh the green, and butterflies, still existed despite the worlds uncanny ability to often blur them out. It wasn’t fear that had dulled their colours to meekness, not it couldn’t be! Rather time. Yes, the thief was time!

Was it woe or regret that had cast itself upon her? Eleanor did not know, but she had turned herself around once more and let the crisp wind mould around her body.

It was cold. It was sweet. It was bitter.